

Third Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLAN, Nancy | St. Vital | NDP |
| ALLUM, James, Hon. | Fort Garry-Riverview | NDP |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob | Wolseley | NDP |
| ASHTON, Steve, Hon. | Thompson | NDP |
| BJORNSON, Peter, Hon. | Gimli | NDP |
| BLADY, Sharon, Hon. | Kirkfield Park | NDP |
| BRAUN, Erna, Hon. | Rossmere | NDP |
| BRIESE, Stuart | Agassiz | PC |
| CALDWELL, Drew | Brandon East | NDP |
| CHIEF, Kevin, Hon. | Point Douglas | NDP |
| CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon. | Kildonan | NDP |
| CROTHERS, Deanne | St. James | NDP |
| CULLEN, Cliff | Spruce Woods | PC |
| DEWAR, Gregory | Selkirk | NDP |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna | Charleswood | PC |
| EICHLER, Ralph | Lakeside | PC |
| EWASKO, Wayne | Lac du Bonnet | PC |
| FRIESEN, Cameron | Morden-Winkler | PC |
| GAUDREAU, Dave | St. Norbert | NDP |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Liberal |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin | Steinbach | PC |
| GRAYDON, Cliff | Emerson | PC |
| HELWER, Reg | Brandon West | PC |
| HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon. | Fort Rouge | NDP |
| IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon. | Fort Richmond | NDP |
| JHA, Bidhu | Radisson | NDP |
| KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon. | Swan River | NDP |
| LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon. | Dawson Trail | NDP |
| MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon. | St. Johns | NDP |
| MALOWAY, Jim | Elmwood | NDP |
| MARCELINO, Flor, Hon. | Logan | NDP |
| MARCELINO, Ted | Tyndall Park | NDP |
| MARTIN, Shannon | Morris | PC |
| MELNICK, Christine | Riel | Ind. |
| MITCHELSON, Bonnie | River East | PC |
| NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom | Interlake | NDP |
| OSWALD, Theresa, Hon. | Seine River | NDP |
| PALLISTER, Brian | Fort Whyte | PC |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine | Midland | PC |
| PETTERSEN, Clarence | Flin Flon | NDP |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle | Arthur-Virden | PC |
| REID, Daryl, Hon. | Transcona | NDP |
| ROBINSON, Eric, Hon. | Kewatinook | NDP |
| RONDEAU, Jim | Assiniboia | NDP |
| ROWAT, Leanne | Riding Mountain | PC |
| SARAN, Mohinder | The Maples | NDP |
| SCHULER, Ron | St. Paul | PC |
| SELBY, Erin, Hon. | Southdale | NDP |
| SELINGER, Greg, Hon. | St. Boniface | NDP |
| SMOOK, Dennis | La Verendrye | PC |
| STEFANSON, Heather | Tuxedo | PC |
| STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon. | Dauphin | NDP |
| SWAN, Andrew, Hon. | Minto | NDP |
| WHITEHEAD, Frank | The Pas | NDP |
| WIEBE, Matt | Concordia | NDP |
| WIGHT, Melanie | Burrows | NDP |
| WISHART, Ian | Portage la Prairie | PC |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 1, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 68—The Child and Family Services
Amendment Act (Critical Incident Reporting)**

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): I wish to introduce Bill 68, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable minister needs to introduce it first with the seconder.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Braun), that Bill 68, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Critical Incident Reporting); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille (signalement des incidents critiques), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, these proposed changes to The Child and Family Services Amendment Act will build on existing processes in order to strengthen protections for children in care. These amendments are intended to increase accountability in the child-welfare system and foster a culture of learning from adverse events. Once enacted, there will be legal requirements for the immediate reporting of a critical injury or death involving a child in care.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Any further introductions of bills?

**Bill 214—The Neurofibromatosis
Awareness Month Act**

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I move, seconded by the member for Lac du Bonnet, that Bill 214, The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Rowat: Neurofibromatosis is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,500 births. There is no preventative treatment or cure for NF. It causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body. This results in disfigurement, blindness, deafness, cancer and many other conditions.

Mr. Speaker, by creating an awareness day, there is need to promote awareness, education and discussion about NF. It helps to ensure that the needs of NF patients are acknowledged and research is supported that may bring hope to patients and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

**Beausejour District Hospital—
Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the northeast region of the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by M. Duke, C. Duke, E. Bukoski and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they're deemed to have been received by the House.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Reversal and Referendum Rights

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the provincial government broke the law by failing to address the referendum requirement before imposing the PST tax increase on Manitoba families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

And (2) to urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on the increases to the PST.

And this petition is signed by M. Foster, C. Westphal and G. Simpson and many other fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the provincial government broke the law by allowing—or by failing to address the referendum requirements before imposing the PST tax increase on Manitoba families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on increases to the PST.

This petition's signed by S. Bauereiss, E. Koss, A. Ramsden and many more concerned Manitobans.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

(2) Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

(3) The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the government broke the law failing to address

the referendum requirement before imposing the PST tax increase on Manitoba families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

(2) To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on increases to the PST.

This petition is signed by T. Nemeth, R. Ripcik, L. Aleyiuk and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Are there further petitions?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports.

Committee of Supply

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports? Ministerial statements?

* (13:40)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests to introduce.

And seated in the public gallery today, we have with us Darell Hominuk and members of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Manitoba, who are the guests of the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino). On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

And also seated in the public gallery we have from Carberry Collegiate 40 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Raegan Dyck. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese).

And also in the public gallery we have from Warren Collegiate 40 grade 11 students under the direction of Mrs. Lee Stewart, and this group is

located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome all of you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Member for Interlake

Apology Request for Media Comments

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we all signed up for this, but our families didn't necessarily do that, and recent comments by the member for the Interlake in the—published in the media in his riding concerning my wife are not appropriate comments to make.

And there is a line that should not be crossed here by any of us. People in our families deserve respect and they deserve to be treated with respect and that should be an absolute in this place.

And so I would ask the Premier to admonish the member for the Interlake and to rise and in his way say what I have just said, that the people of this workplace respect one another's families and will not—will not—ever try to score political points on their backs ever.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I want to thank the leader for the opposition for bringing this issue to my attention. I'll review the facts and I will get back to him and—once I understand exactly what has transpired.

But I would ask the member to consider making the apology that we've been waiting for from him for the horrible letter that he wrote that tried to suggest that some people were getting preferential treatment with respect to the health-care system, and this Legislature has been waiting for an apology for many, many weeks now. And if he wants to do the right thing, he could start by setting an example.

But I do undertake to look into this matter.

Mr. Pallister: The Premier's asking us to believe that with 192 communications staff he doesn't know what's going on in his own party, and that's hard to believe—that's hard to believe.

Now, the reality is that a real situation has occurred in which a member of this House's family was brought into a debate on a public issue unnecessarily and inappropriately, and he needs to act as a leader should and make sure that it doesn't happen again. So his opportunity stands before him

to do that, not to make excuses or delay, not a hypothetical situation, a real situation.

I recognize that the Premier and his colleagues have chosen to lower the bar in respect of me and my colleagues, and I find that deplorable, but I accept it—I accept it. But my spouse and my children should not have to accept it, nor should any of yours, never. And that's an absolute.

So I ask the Premier again if he would simply rise in his place and make sure that this does not happen again.

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, I've undertaken to look into the matter, see what the facts are in this situation, and if any apologies are required we will consider that carefully.

But I do say to the member opposite, he put a horrible letter on the public record under his signature that implicated members of this Legislature in terms of their preferred access to health-care treatment. It implicated members of this side of the Legislature's families. He was admonished for that widely throughout the media in Manitoba and recommended that he apologize. He's never taken the opportunity to do that. And if he wants to set an example, he could start in his own backyard with his own personal behaviour and put an apology on the record.

But I will undertake to look into this matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pallister: When the Deputy Premier (Mr. Robinson) makes racist insults, the Premier does nothing. When the Health Minister refers to the previous administration as baby killers, he does nothing. He seems incapable of exercising leadership when it comes to the deplorable conduct of his colleagues.

But this is not a hypothetical situation; this is a real situation and a real situation which impacts on my family. Members on this side of the House have dealt with personal tragedies. They have dealt with relationship difficulties. They have dealt with problems with their children. They have dealt with problems with their spouses. And those problems are real for members of this place, because we are in a stressful workplace, and it's important to accommodate and respect the needs of all of us here to protect our own families from wrongful behaviour and misconduct when it occurs.

This behaviour has occurred and the Premier is fully aware of it. And I ask, again, the Premier to respond to a real situation, not make excuses and delay but rather simply act as a leader should and say this is enough. Leave your family out of this.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable leader's—official opposition's time has elapsed.

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, I have undertaken to look into this matter, establish and verify the facts and get back to the Leader of the Opposition. I said I would do that. That's the proper course that any leader should take when they're asked to look into something. They should actually go and do a thorough investigation, understand the facts at hand. That's what I've undertaken to do.

There is no doubt about the horrible letter that the member put on the public record, Mr. Speaker. It was a real letter. It wasn't a hypothetical letter. It wasn't an imaginary letter. It was a real suggestion that some members elected to this House were getting preferential treatment for health care, and it slurred all the families of the members of this House. And the member has had weeks now to apologize for it after being widely condemned for that behaviour. He has never demonstrated any leadership in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen other incidents from the leader opposite, Mr. Speaker, when he used a very derogatory term with respect to people with intellectual disabilities in the middle of a debate on antibullying, and he never took responsibility for that either. It's very unfortunate.

We will do our due diligence, and the leader opposite could take the opportunity right now to apologize—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Stroke Patient Care Government Priority

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, many of us were appalled to hear this Minister of Health say that stroke patients were not a priority for her. Her priority was cancer patients.

It seems to me that all patients should be a priority for this Minister of Health.

So I would like to ask this Minister of Health to tell all Manitobans: Why is she picking winners and losers in health care?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I would ask the member not to take my words out of context and to let me speak for myself, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this morning, of course, we had the folks from the heart and stroke association here. I had a very quick chance to speak with them this morning. We have done great work together in this province. We value the input of experts both in the medical field and, of course, families and advocates as well.

Together with the help of the heart and stroke association and foundations, we were the first province to bring in legislation to make defibrillators in public places because we know that 85 per cent of the time when people have a heart attack, it's not in a hospital. We're leaders in this field.

We're also leaders in making sure that people who have had a stroke get those drugs that they need in a very timely manner. That makes all the difference in the person's recovery, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

Dedicated Stroke Unit

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that the Heart and Stroke Foundation were here this morning. They were guests of ours. And we are trying to raise an issue with this government, and this government does not seem to want to address it.

Mr. Speaker, stroke is the third leading cause of death in Manitoba. The one thing that could address this better is a dedicated stroke unit. But we are the only province in all of Canada that does not have a dedicated stroke unit.

So I have to ask this Minister of Health: Why is Manitoba again dead last in providing some of the best service in Canada?

Ms. Selby: Actually, we are first when it comes to door-to-needle time, Mr. Speaker. This refers to how quickly a patient showing up at a hospital with symptoms of stroke gets that life-saving medication. The national average is 74 minutes. The recommended time is 60 minutes. Health Sciences Centre has a time of 15 minutes.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker, we know it's important that people get care not just in the hospital but when they leave it as well. It's why we brought in ways to help people get rehabilitation at home, and we also want to make

sure that people can get that help anywhere in the province.

But, as I've said before, we know that folks are looking at the best practices of having a stroke centre. It's something we're investigated and it's something we want to learn more about.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health does not seem to understand the question, and I would ask her again.

A dedicated stroke unit would decrease the chances of death and disability by 30 per cent, yet this morning this NDP government refused to pass a resolution that would establish a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba.

So I would like to ask this minister: Why does she not care enough about patients and families and address what is desperately needed in Manitoba, and that is a dedicated stroke unit? We're the only ones in Canada that don't have one. Does she not care?

Ms. Selby: Well, as I said this morning and as I've said previously, it is something that we're investigating and we are working with our medical professionals to look at it.

The other thing we're doing is prevention, Mr. Speaker, even better if we can prevent someone from having a stroke in the first place. In the last 10 years we've done a lot to talk about prevention. It's why there are 25 per cent decrease in the number of Manitobans having strokes in Manitoba.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I don't understand is how this member can't see that when you cut the medical spaces of training doctors and when you fire 1,000 nurses, when you cut a half a billion dollars from the budget, that doesn't result in better health care for anyone.

Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program Update

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): And speaking of prevention, this government doesn't have a great track record.

Last year, through an opposition private member's bill, Manitoba became the first province to provide access through legislation for universal hearing screening loss for newborns.

As May is speech and hearing month, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to update Manitoba families on the progress made since the UNHS program was proclaimed last year.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I thank the member for bringing this topic to the House, and, of course, yes, we did unanimously pass legislation that would allow for the universal screening.

Certainly, Manitoba is a leader in this area, both in the things that we do to help moms get ready to have a baby but also what we do afterwards. We screen for—I believe it is 40 different things that a child may be born with. This is more than anybody else in the country, and we're always looking for ways to improve it, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, we know that in finding out quickly if a child has a chronic condition, a disease or any other area that they may be of concern, the quicker we can help a family and bring supports in, the better the child's outcome.

So I'm glad to see that everyone in this House did recognize how important this is, and we'll continue to work to making things better for new children, for families, for moms, for everyone across the province.

Mrs. Rowat: In a recent article in The Globe and Mail they actually rated Manitoba insufficient: 15 to 20–15 per cent of babies are being screened, no program in place.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba families struggled for seven years to bring this legislation forward. The NDP declined to support it. Now they're—they've—we've proclaimed the bill; it's going to be another three years before they actually implement it. Today, many people are confused about why the implementation process has taken so—such a long time, 2016, with nearly 2,000 babies in Canada being born with a hearing loss each year.

Does this minister support her own healthy child act which requires the government to invest in prevention and early identification for childhood hearing loss? Why the delay?

Ms. Selby: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member said, we did all work together to pass this legislation that will make sure that all newborns are screened for potential hearing impairment.

I would like to let the member know, though, in the meantime, while we're working towards having that universal care in place, babies currently do receive basic hearing screening, and more advanced universal screening is in places, in Brandon and in several communities around the province where we're piloting it out, Mr. Speaker, as we move towards

having this as a universal thing as well for all parents.

We're also targeting, of course, at-risk newborns in Winnipeg and the rest of Manitoba. Should a family have a particular concern or a risk for their child, they will get that screening.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to offer the broadest newborn screening of every province, and we're always looking to ways to provide better maternal care, better newborn care.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, an article in the April 2014 RN Journal stated, and I quote, new legislation has been introduced to Manitoba regarding screening newborns for hearing loss, but there has been some confusion in this new act.

Mr. Speaker, The Globe and Mail is saying that Manitoba is insufficient in their programs. Why not eliminate the confusion and red tape by just implementing this very important child initiative?

On this side of the House we support universal newborn hearing screening. We support the program this government has failed to implement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why?

Ms. Selby: Well, Mr. Speaker, there has been some confusion, but it's been on the other side of the House.

I should point out that this member is the one who made the amendment to proclaim the act to come into force September 1st, 2016.

Investors Group Field Outstanding Payment Claims

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): During the Estimates process, I asked the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Sport if all subcontractors had been fully paid for their work on the construction of the Investors Group Field.

After tabling a list of 13 companies in Estimates and raising this issue in the House yesterday, I would like to ask the minister: Confirm for the House today whether or not these companies will now be fully paid for their work on Investors Group Field by June 1st, 2014.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Once again, I'd just like to compliment all the hard work that's gone into building a fantastic stadium and for the investment that's gone into the stadium of this high quality, built for the price it's been built for.

You don't have to go very far to the west of us where they're looking to build a stadium in Saskatchewan for about \$300 million for less seats and not the quality of this particular stadium. That's their choice.

But the people we consulted with in Manitoba have told us repeatedly that this is the kind of stadium they wanted. They wanted a first-class stadium and not cut it in half as they did in Hamilton, half the size, Mr. Speaker.

So we will have professional sports like football, also World Cup soccer, FIFA Women's World Cup. Hopefully, we'll host a Heritage Classic here, Mr. Speaker. The Bisons will do fantastic. The Bombers will as well.

It's a facility, as I told my critic, we should be—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

Mr. Schuler: Paying compliments, Mr. Speaker, doesn't pay the bills.

In a letter sent by Stuart Olson Dominion yesterday to all Investors Group Field Ovations concessions and club lounge subcontractors and suppliers re outstanding payment settlement, it says: For reasons of confidentiality, I am unable to release the details of the settlement. However, you will be pleased to hear that all remaining overdue progress payments for the Investors Group Field will be released by SODC by June 1st, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister inform the House what the total outstanding overdue amount is for the subcontractors, and, on top of that, have they and will they now be fully paid as of June 1st, 2014?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, it was certainly deemed in the best interests of the taxpayer that we sit down with Stuart Olson and reach an agreement and a settlement which was amicable and to ensure that, for one example, that the workers would be paid.

And I'm sure the member opposite knowing, and being a former business person, that if people lived up to the contracts that they were asked to do and they provided that service, did the job as they were—said they would do under the contract, that they would be paid for that. And we—all members of the Chamber here would certainly want to ensure that that happens.

And so, Mr. Speaker, once again, I can tell you that this stadium, this facility, Investors Group

stadium, and has—the name of it itself should suggest to the member opposite that a company of the reputation that Investors Group has would not put their name to a facility that wasn't the best in Canada, and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, on Monday, we asked the minister these same questions, and he sat there with nine staff and knew nothing. Yesterday, we asked the minister, with him and his nine staff, the same questions, and he sat and he knew nothing. Yet the letter was sent out, and one of the parties to this agreement is the Province of Manitoba, his own department. And yet he stands in this House and clearly knows nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we have a question for the minister. Maybe he can get this one straight.

Will he now tell who is on the outstanding payment settlement list and how much is owed to these subcontractors?

Mr. Speaker, the public who funded this entire project have a right to know, and if this minister doesn't know, he should get up and say so, and perhaps he should ask his department what's going on, because they were party to the negotiations.

* (14:00)

Mr. Lemieux: One thing I do know, that members opposite were against the MTS Centre, they're against investors stadium.

And, Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Estimates, let me quote, yesterday in Estimates my critic says, oh, even though the stadium—there was never a vote and—nor any part of it, it never came up for a vote in the Legislature. In fact, neither did the arena.

I'd like to table a document, Mr. Speaker. I refer the member to July 4, 2001, when there was a vote on the MTS Centre, and the member opposite, the MLA for River Heights, the MLA for River East and the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) all were on the record, an official vote, voting against the MTS Centre.

So until that member—get your act straight and get the facts straight.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable member for Morris has the floor.

Zebra Mussel Infestation Harbour Closure Consultations

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking of facts and public records, members opposite stood and voted for an illegal PST hike.

During Estimates, I asked the minister about aquatic invasive species, in particular zebra mussels, which could be economically and ecologically devastating. The minister was aware last year that zebra mussels had been found in our waters, including the harbours of Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Balsam Bay and Arnes.

Now he is planning on closing these harbours during a time of overlap with the commercial fishers. Fishers are saying that these closures are news to them, that there have been no consultations with them to date. The minister had the entire winter to consult and develop a co-operative strategy with fishers.

Can the minister advise why fishers were not consulted prior to yesterday's announcement?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): It's get-the-facts-right day in this House, Mr. Speaker. There have been discussions, in fact, since zebra mussels were discovered in Lake Winnipeg last fall.

But as the member heard from me a couple of weeks ago, I admit to being an optimist and I admit to writing my crosswords in pen. But it has been tested, Mr. Speaker, and it was certainly tested most recently when zebra mussels were discovered in Lake Winnipeg, because it is very, very difficult to ever overcome that infestation threat and the undermining of our fishery that that infestation can bring.

But I leave this with the House, Mr. Speaker. This has been very fast occurring. The rapid-response protocol kicked in. Decisions were made. Leadership is being taken. We're consulting. We're making sure we're going to do this right and not—and ensure that—we want to ensure that fishing continues uninterrupted.

We're not slow. We're the first in the world to do this.

Decontamination Unit Plans

Mr. Martin: The minister knew about the zebra mussel infestation last year. He had all winter to consult.

While eradication is a key component of any zebra mussel strategy, so is decontamination. In co-operation with the fish enhancement fund, two decontamination units have been purchased. Placement of a unit at each affected harbour should be considered.

On May 16th, I'd asked the minister whether there are plans for the purchase, through the fish enhancement fund, of any additional decon units. I did not receive an answer then.

Today I'll ask again: Are there plans to put a decon unit at each of the four affected harbours, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member will benefit from a briefing. We'll set that up sooner than later because the events are fast-moving.

But I do remind the member that some are criticizing us for making our moves and consulting and moving ahead with contingency plans, making sure that fishing continues uninterrupted and that we invest in the long-term success of Lake Winnipeg's fishery. They're complaining sometimes because they're saying, you are moving before the federal approval. We're not going to wait for that. We're moving ahead and making the contingency plan.

Again, I remind the member, we're moving ahead on a timely, unprecedented basis, Mr. Speaker, and we are not slow. We're the first in the world to try this effort.

Biological Treatment Alternatives

Mr. Martin: Yesterday, the minister announced that at these four harbours they will be injecting potentially hundreds of thousands of litres of potassium chloride, which I understand is the predominant method of dealing with zebra mussels.

However, I'm wondering if the minister has investigated any biological alternatives to that product, include Zequanox, a naturally derived biological toxin that shows kill ratios of up to 97 per cent in test sites in both Illinois and Minnesota.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the options were very limited and chemical application was considered.

And I should advise the House, first of all, that the science advisory committee that was put together on a very rapid basis was comprised of scientists from Manitoba, from the University of Guelph, from

the institute—International Institute for Sustainable Development and from the federal government. We have looked at the best science that is available. There is a rare opportunity for us to have a fighting chance against this invasive species.

And, well, I just—if I can just ask members opposite to support saving Lake Winnipeg in more ways than one, even now, and that is with zebra mussel eradication. Please stand with Manitobans and let's get on with it.

Municipal Amalgamation RM Four-Year Extension

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): In committee, the member for the Interlake promised that municipalities in his constituency would be granted an extension due to the work from the 2011 flood. The RM of Eriksdale and the RM of Siglunes were promised an extension due to remaining work from the 2011 flood. Their MLA promised that. These RMs were promised an answer to the extension.

Mr. Speaker, has that extension been granted to the RMs of Eriksdale and Siglunes?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, let's at least acknowledge the good work that local leadership has done on this file and so many others right across Manitoba.

The reeves and mayors and councillors from Siglunes and Eriksdale met on a number of occasions. They talked about what their communities should look like and how they want to organize on a go-forward basis. They were committed to being ready for the election that's coming up in October.

Both Siglunes and Eriksdale have put forward plans that they are pleased with, and I'm pleased to report that Cabinet has looked at those plans, found some areas of consensus and have approved a plan for the new RM that incorporates both Siglunes and Eriksdale.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer was simple. The government lied to the RM of Eriksdale. The government lied to the RM of Siglunes. Their MLA broke his promise to their own—to his own constituents.

The government said they would not desert the municipalities who were impacted by the 2011 flood. The government said they would be there for the landowners, for the farmers, for the municipalities,

and this government lied to each and every one of them.

Mr. Speaker, why did the member for the Interlake break his promise to his own constituents?

Mr. Struthers: I'm not sure what this member has against local leadership. I'm not sure what this member has against local consensus building. I'm not sure what they have against organizing these RMs into an entity that can better serve the ratepayers of Siglunes and Eriksdale. I'm not sure what they have against that.

But, Mr. Speaker, this new entity can count on this government to make sure that they have staff and support there to make sure that this is a smooth transition towards the next election. The—this new entity in this part of the Interlake can be assured that this government will stand with them to invest in water and sewer projects, to invest in highways projects, to make sure that they have flood protection, not like members opposite who went AWOL on all those projects.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, three portfolios for this minister, three broken promises. He said he would be there for the flood victims, strike one. He said he wouldn't raise the PST, strike two. He said he would be there for the municipalities, strike three.

Just yesterday, the Town of Birtle has asked for an extension on their amalgamation due to flooding that has taken place this spring. They will have significant cleanup efforts to take on and they simply do not have the resources to focus on flood cleanup and an amalgamation plan.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister provide an answer to the Town of Birtle, or is this just another broken promise waiting to happen?

* (14:10)

Mr. Struthers: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the noon hour I spoke with the leadership at the town and at the RM of Birtle, including the RM of Miniota.

That—again, those three municipalities showed good local leadership, showed local vision, forward thinking. They have put forward a consensus plan that was approved by Cabinet. It was a consensus plan from each of the three municipalities, who want to work with this government to make sure that we address their water and sewer needs, who want to work with this government to address their highways projects or their transportation networks, who want

to work with this government to protect their people from floods.

And they want to work with this government to put people to work and to grow a strong Manitoba economy for Manitoba families, unlike members opposite.

Manitoba Health Coverage Psychological Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I recently held a forum to discuss with Manitobans whether coverage for psychological services should be enhanced under Manitoba Health. Limited psychologist services are covered now at institutions, but these same services critical to mental health are not covered by—for psychologists with offices outside of institutions.

Experts have shown strong support to enable people with mental health issues to get coverage for psychological treatment under Manitoba Health, as the document *An Imperative for Change* shows.

I ask the Premier: Why is the government limiting access to psychological services by not covering them under Manitoba Health as the document I tabled says should be done?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): We opened the first crisis response centre in Canada for people with mental health issues that need to be addressed, and that centre is world class. It's got all kinds of health professionals in it—doctors, nurses, psychiatrists—all the services that people need. And it's unique in that it provides a one-stop shop for people that are experiencing issues with respect to mental health.

And, Mr. Speaker, we were very proud to see that opened up. I was fortunate enough to be there for the opening, saw the people there, saw their dedication to service, saw the non-profit organizations and the community organizations that were working with them, and they were delighted that we had put this resource in place.

Psychological Services for Children

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I have invited Dr. Andrea Piotrowski, who's the president-elect of the Manitoba Psychological Society, to be here in the gallery today, and she is. She has expressed very strong support for additional psychological services for children to be covered under Manitoba Health.

One grandmother wrote to me about the need for her granddaughter's psychological care because she

was depressed and had suicidal tendencies. Her coverage under a private insurance plan would soon run out. This woman is very fearful for her granddaughter.

Will the Premier consider covering all psychological services for children under Manitoba Health?

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the specifics the member has identified, if he would bring that forward to the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby), we'll definitely look into that.

We have put resources in place to address mental health prevention issues. We put specific investments into our public schools. And one of them is our Good Behaviour Game, which has been recommended to us as a game that teachers can use working with young people to improve their resiliency in terms of the issues they have to experience, in terms of stresses in their life.

We've provided very significant funding to our public schools, including the clinical services that we put into our public schools, including psychological services. We remain open to looking at other ideas on how we can improve and prevent stress that cause mental health issues with young people, as well as youth, as well as adults, Mr. Speaker.

We have a suicide prevention program in Manitoba. And now, for the first time ever in the history of this province, we have a mental health court, and that mental health court has been quite successful now because it provides not only a point of intervention within the legal justice system but support services from the health-care system as well.

Postpartum Depression

Mr. Gerrard: Psychological services are of critical importance to treat postpartum depression. I table the results of a randomized control trial which shows that for women with postpartum depression, intervention is a better option than routine care.

Successful treatment with psychological therapies is not only effective, it also reduces overall health-care costs. It's vital that people with mental health challenges have access to this type of care.

Knowing this, will the Premier include psychological services by psychologists for depression and anxiety under Manitoba Health?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member raises important issues with respect to the health of young parents in Manitoba, young mothers in Manitoba.

Our Families First public health nurse visits ensure that every new mom is contacted by a public health nurse after they leave the hospital to offer support and advice. And they are a part of teams that can provide additional services as necessary for folks.

But we recognize the value of supporting families, young families, when they get started with the responsibilities of being parents, and we know that they need additional support.

And I can only say this, Mr. Speaker. We've put additional money in every single budget to support young families in this province. The member asking me the question has never voted once for those additional resources in our budget.

Child Daycare Centres Funding Announcement

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): I recently had the privilege of leading a province-wide consultation on child care, and through that time I learned how much our hard work on child care has meant to parents. We know families count on our child-care system to ensure that their children are safe and cared for while they are at work or they're in school and training each day.

Today, during the 23rd annual Week of the Early Childhood Educator, I was pleased—very pleased—to be part of the announcement of our government's next multi-year plan on child care.

Pat Wege, director of the Manitoba Child Care Association, noted today that each consecutive long-range plan that has been introduced by this Manitoba government has included strategies that have taken us ever forward to a bigger, better and stronger early learning and child-care system. Today's announcement is another step in the right direction.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Family Services to tell us more about this government's commitment to child care.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): I could think of no better way to celebrate ECE week than to announce our next five-year phase of Family Choices. It builds on the success from the last five years. We have announced today 5,000 more new child-care spaces, a \$25-million

capital grant program, as well as supports for the workforce.

I'd like to bring to the attention of the House what the opposition leader, what he endorsed when he was in government. They endorsed a plan which he said was the best thing for Manitobans, provided them with—in these—provided them with lots of opportunities. What did they do? They capped the number of subsidized spaces. They refused to license new spaces. They increased the parent subsidy—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

ER Services (Arthur-Virden) Opening Hours

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, today is day No. 3 that the Virden ER has been closed with a sign on the door stating that ER will be closed indefinitely. For emergencies, call 911.

How much longer is the residents of Virden going to get a closed sign when they get to the medical—for medical treatment when they drive up to the ER entrance with an emergency?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): We do believe that families deserve and want to have health care closer to home. It's why we put in a commitment to everyone in Manitoba who wants a family doctor to have a family doctor by 2015, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, we know that two physicians who were providing ER coverage in the Virden area have left. A third one has now taken an unexpected leave. This does leave only two physicians in place to cover. Mr. Speaker, I should be very clear, though, that acute in-patient care will remain in Virden as well.

But we do need to support the two physicians who remain there. They have agreed to provide some ER service during peak times, over the weekend. But for patient safety reasons, that is all they can do at this time.

But I can tell the member our commitment remains to fill those staffing positions, and we'll keep recruiting to do that.

Mr. Pivniuk: Tomorrow will be the fourth day that the Virden ER is closed. The message to the community is, come back during peak hours.

Does this minister under—in their government realize that the oil industry and the farming industry operate 24 hours, seven days a week? What is this

minister going to say when the emergency arises and the ER is closed? Why is it—why is she not ensuring the safety of the hard-working people of these industries?

* (14:20)

Ms. Selby: Mr. Speaker, we weren't the ones who closed ERs overnight in Winnipeg. They did that when they were in office.

Mr. Speaker, if families are concerned about getting care during those times when the ER is closed, it's important to remember there is acute care available, but anybody facing an emergency should still call 911.

The Manitoba transportation co-ordination centre in Brandon is always aware on the ground of exactly where people should go. They can direct people and send people the service that they need, Mr. Speaker.

But it's important to make sure that we support those physicians in place, who are very, very committed to the Virden area. They are going to provide ER coverage during those peak times. Otherwise, we do ask people to call 911, and we will make sure they get to the place that has the co-ordinated effort for serve them.

Great Manitoba Food Fight Food Safety Concerns

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow and Saturday MAFRD is hosting the Great Manitoba Food Fight at Red River community college's culinary arts building here in the city.

Mr. Speaker, last year after taste-testing the winning entry, the Minister of Agriculture had MAFRD move in and shut down Harborside Farms' operation a few weeks later.

So the question today is: Can this year's winner once again expect the minister to do a costification?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): First and foremost, if the members opposite would give me a chance to make a comment here, let's first and foremost recognize the grain producers in the province of Manitoba, what the issues they have to put up with and weather—let's show a round of applause of the challenges they face with weather.

Maybe more importantly to the question that the member opposite brought forward, I'm suspecting that—let's get serious about it. When we talk about

food safety—I suppose what the member opposite is saying is that food safety is not their priority when we talk about leading food—healthy food to the people. When people buy products, they want—when they take it home, they can sit at the family table and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

The time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It's time for members' statements.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Today marks the start of the Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in Canada. Multiple sclerosis, or MS, affects thousands of Manitoba families.

Mr. Speaker, this unpredictable disease can cause mental and physical impairment on a small or large scale, and these changes can be difficult for those with MS and for their families.

Even though MS and its consistent flare-ups can be very challenging, many people still work hard to lead active lives. They are stand-out workers, inspiring athletes and dedicated family members.

Mr. Speaker, the MS Society of Canada has been supporting those affected with this debilitating disease since 1948.

The MS Society works hard to deliver programs, services and awareness campaigns. These activities will be in high gear for this special month, including the World MS Day on May 28th, 2014, and the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries MS Walk this Sunday. We know that every step matters.

Mr. Speaker, there's still no known cure for multiple sclerosis. Although there are many mysteries surrounding the disease, what is known is that those suffering from MS and their families are not alone.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join in me thanking the MS Society of Manitoba for providing support and guidance to individuals and families through this difficult journey.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Today, I had the opportunity to introduce for first reading a private members' bill that would create May 1st–or May as a neurofibromatosis awareness month. NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,500 births. Mr. Speaker, there is no preventative treatment or cure for NF, and it causes tumours that form on nerves anywhere in the body, which results in disfigurement, blindness, deafness, learning disabilities, abnormal growth, epilepsy, cancer and other afflictions.

Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group was formed in 2005 and will receive charitable status in August 2017. They've been very active and committed to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by NF. They've provided opportunities for families and individuals affected by NF to share their stories and resources, and those stories and resources are available on their website. Manitoba NF organization publishes an annual newsletter and holds support group meetings a couple times a year. They've raised funds for research to improve treatment and to find a cure. They've raised funds for the rehabilitation centre for children and the Ronald McDonald House. And they've also raised funds for a set of goggles that young children can wear when they're receiving treatment at the Health Sciences Centre through an MRI. It keeps them very still as they have to remain still for several hours while their bodies are being scanned for tumours and other afflictions caused by NF.

Mr. Speaker, in short, as is quoted by Tracy Gregorash, who is the executive director of MBNF, in a nutshell, NF is hard to say, harder to live with, and without awareness it makes it hard for a group to get the community to support our efforts. It makes it hard for those living with NF to be a part of the community. They can be afflicted with disfiguring appearances and executive functioning deficit.

So I encourage all members to consider supporting this bill. I do believe that comments were made with regard to not–

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has elapsed.

May Day

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): As we recognize the signs around us of a strong economy and good jobs in Manitoba, whether that's helping

our kids apply for a new program at Red River College or congratulating our nieces and nephews on getting their first job, it's important to pause and remember those who have struggled for their rights as workers.

On May 1st of each year, people around the globe celebrate May Day, a day to recognize the vital contributions workers make in our economy, businesses and industries. They build our bridges, plow our snowy streets and grow our food. They fix our pipes, our cars, our computers. They are making Manitoba an extraordinary place to live and raise a family.

I'm grateful to live in a province where we do everything possible so that each person can come home at the end of day safely and healthy. It often seems commonplace that workplaces are safe, but it's not so simple for others. Unfortunately, throughout the world people still face the daily struggle of working unsafe, dangerous and life-threatening jobs.

This May Day we should all remember the thousands killed and injured in last year's factory collapse in Bangladesh. It's a stark reminder of the fragility of the value of workers' rights. I urge all members to join me in commemorating those who lost their lives in this disaster. It is my hope that no one will have to endure this tragedy of this magnitude again.

Mr. Speaker, one death or injury in a workplace is one too many. This week, our government tabled groundbreaking legislation aimed at ending claims suppression. This builds on our commitment to make Manitoba the safest place to work in North America. During this May Day, I'm proud to say that I stand with a government committed to workers and the rights that they've so bravely fought to secure.

I would like to acknowledge two of those people today in the gallery who fight for workers' rights every day, Tara Peel and John Doyle from the MFL.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): The month of May is recognized as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month in Canada.

Multiple Sclerosis, or MS, affects the lives of thousands of Manitobans and their families daily. Today marks the 'commentment'–commencement of MS Awareness Month, and, as such, the MS Society will be busy raising awareness and working towards

helping to find a cure. The MS Society of Canada will be launching its red carnation campaign next week to raise money for MS research. The red carnation is Canada's oldest symbol of the hope of finding a cure to end MS. We are proud to wear our red carnations in honour of that today.

* (14:30)

The campaign will be occurring in over 280 communities across Canada. As women are diagnosed three times as often as men with MS, many people who suffer from it are mothers and daughters, and in recognition of this, the campaign falls on Mother's Day weekend.

It is estimated that every day three Canadians are diagnosed with MS, which can occur at any age and can cause such symptoms as memory loss, muscle strength loss, vision, speech and hearing loss. There is still no known cure for MS. We stand today to offer our support and let all those with MS and their families know they do not face MS alone.

But, Mr. Speaker, this does not mean that those living with MS and their families live without hope. There are individuals across Canada who work day in and day out to find a cure and advance treatment options through important research.

We also stand today to acknowledge the extraordinary work of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, an organization that works tirelessly to ensure that everyone with MS in Manitoba has the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of life and to educate the public for the benefit of all who live with MS.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

St. Mark's Anglican Church 100th Anniversary

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, this month, St. Mark's Anglican Church is celebrating their 100th anniversary.

The church has humble beginnings. In 1914, a group of settlers in the St. Vital area met at Glenwood School to discuss building an Anglican church in the community. United by their beliefs, these individuals founded St. Mark's Mission, and on June 14, 1914, they held their first service, led by Reverend G.L. Armstrong. There were 28 people in attendance at their first service.

For years, St. Mark's Mission held their services at Glenwood School until property was purchased in 1917 and a new church was built by hardworking

parishioners. Reverend Charles E. Cooke oversaw the construction, and on June 17, 1917, he delivered the first service held in the church. Only three years after that modest first service in Glenwood School, Mr. Speaker St. Mark's has grown to more than 70 parishioners and was proud to have—finally have their own church to call home.

Through the following decades, St. Mark's church faced many challenges. They navigated a harsh Depression and sadly lost several parishioners to the Second World War. In the face of hard times, the tenacity of their 'parishers' held true.

Thanks to the dedication of the community and strong leadership of Reverend Canon Lot Swalwell, the church continued its ministry and service to the St. Vital community.

Mr. Speaker, St. Mark's church has stood the test of time. Though the face of St. Vital has changed, over time they have remained true to their roots, providing our community with a strong and lasting Anglican presence. They have long provided a welcoming atmosphere for families to build friendships and share their faith.

The devotion of their parishioners and strong leadership from the pulpit have made St. Mark's a fundamental part of our community, and I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating St. Mark's Anglican Church for 100 years of service.

House Business

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered on the next sitting Thursday is the resolution on 20th anniversary of becoming an outdoors woman, sponsored by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Martin).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that will be considered on the next sitting Thursday is the resolution on—entitled 20th Anniversary of Becoming an Outdoors Woman, sponsored by the honourable member for Morris.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances? No grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY*(Continued)***GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader):**

On House business, could you please call for second reading, Bill 21, and following that call for debate on second reading on bills 52, 53, 55 and 59.

Mr. Speaker: We're going to call bills in the following order, starting with debate on second readings, we'll start with Bill 21, and then we'll move to second readings of bills, starting with Bill 52, followed by bills 53, 55 and 59.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS**Bill 21—The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act**

Mr. Speaker: So we'll now resume debate on second reading of Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Infrastructure, who has unlimited time.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I'm very pleased to continue debate on this very important bill, and I started yesterday by talking a little bit about the history of the Port of Churchill, why it is so much a part of who we are and what we are. I think it's important to note that it was the dream of prairie farmers in the 1880s to have access, with the Prairies having its own seaport. They identified Hudson Bay as providing tremendous opportunity for the shipment of grain. They understood, too, that by having Churchill they could break away from some of the vested interests that so much controlled the shipment of grain in the emerging Prairies.

And when, if you think about, what kind of vision it was at that time, it was an incredible vision and it was an incredible story in terms of the construction of the Bay Line. After various attempts to put the financing together, construction began just before the First World War, and it was an incredible achievement in and as of itself, but incredible amount of sacrifice. There are literally unmarked graves in virtually every stretch of the Bay Line of workers that died in the construction of the Bay Line.

Now, there's some other interesting aspects of the history of the Port of Churchill, most notably the fact that the original destination was Port Nelson, which is York Factory. This was changed after the First World War, Mr. Speaker, and was eventually moved to Churchill. But, when it was first opened in 1929, it was possible to travel by train from

Winnipeg to travel to Churchill, to travel by boat to London, England. And I know that because someone actually wrote a book about their experience in the 1930s of doing exactly that.

There were a lot of elements that went into the initial period of time which the port was established, and one of the key issues was always shipment, shipment in and out of the port.

You know, at a time when we're still working very hard to get not only exports but imports into the port, it's important to note that there were, for decades, shipments of pretty well anything and everything back and forth using the Port of Churchill. And I found out, actually, quite accidentally, this particular aspect of the history of Churchill, because there used to be the Dalgliesh lines that came into Churchill every year, based out of Newcastle in the United Kingdom. And they shipped back and forth for many years pretty well anything you can imagine. So there's a lot of mythology that goes with the port, but one of the clear aspects, Mr. Speaker, is we've proven in the past we can ship virtually anything through the port or import anything.

Most recently, the port, of course, has gone through some significant changes. The probably most significant change, in recent years, when it was privatized by the then-Liberal government, the government of the day established the short line, brought in OmniTRAX in 1997. And I do want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that, certainly, in the early days OmniTRAX made a pretty significant effort to develop the port and promote the port. But one of the clear weaknesses in the port was always the lack of infrastructure funding, the lack of dedicated infrastructure funding.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that our government, actually, in 2007, worked with the federal government and with OmniTRAX to come up with a very significant investment in infrastructure, the most significant infrastructure investment we've seen in that period of time, a commitment of \$68 million. We have, by the way, spent \$21 million of that, and I do want to stress that it was an important investment in the port's future.

Now, I mentioned yesterday, briefly, the vision of the port in its original days. There is actually a town plan for the Port of Churchill that was predicated on the assumption that the port would have and the town of Churchill would have 100,000 people. What's interesting is if you look at

the rapid growth that was taking place in Manitoba at the time, it's not surprising why.

I mean, at that time, Winnipeg was the Chicago of Canada, in many ways was rivalling not only Chicago in terms of transportation, but Montreal in terms of finance—and, of course, a few things that interfered with that growth pattern, most notably the Panama Canal. But what is interesting is many of us have always thought that Churchill's day would come. And I do believe we're on the verge of a golden era in terms of western Canada, in terms of northern Manitoba and in terms of Churchill and the Port of Churchill, and I want to talk a little bit today about why and how this legislation fits in with that.

* (14:40)

Now, why would I say a golden era? Well, first of all, the port has proven its ability to survive many things, most of all the degree to which vested interests have always had it in for the Port of Churchill. I mean, let's be upfront. Vested interests, whether it be in terms of grain or rail, have not supported the Port of Churchill because it was a competitor.

And it's interesting to note that even this year when we had a grain shipment crisis—and I want to put on the record the degree to which I've been proud to work with my colleagues—the co-chair, our Minister of Agriculture, our Minister responsible for Municipal Government, Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald)—we've been working with solutions in terms of shipping grain. And what's important to note is, certainly, Thunder Bay is a key part of that, and grain is shipping through Thunder Bay, it's about 64 per cent of the grain that's shipped from Manitoba. But we identify with Churchill, how Churchill can play a role—it played a role last year with 640,000 tonnes—and how it can play an increased role in the future.

Now, what is important to note is there's been a very significant change to the negative side for Churchill that I think has to be clearly put on the record, and that was the decision by the federal government, supported by members in this House, to do away with the single-desk marketing of wheat, of board grains, Mr. Speaker. What that did is that took away the one agency that, on behalf of farmers, had consistently managed the logistics system so that farmers could ship their grain when needed, and they specifically used and committed to the Port of Churchill because the Port of Churchill was reliable and was available access for the Wheat Board to ship

grain to many markets—markets in Latin America, markets in North Africa, markets in Europe.

And I say that because we're now in a transition period. The federal government, putting ideology first, has eliminated the single desk. What they've done, to compensate in the short term, is they put in place a five-year subsidy for shipping grain through Churchill. We've now had the second year, and I can tell you if you meet with officials from OmniTRAX they will tell you that there's three years left in the subsidy and that three-year subsidy is not a long enough period for the Port of Churchill to attract the kind of investment it needs. So we have seen, despite that \$68-million commitment by federal and provincial governments and OmniTRAX, we're now in a position where because of the unilateral move by the federal government to eliminate the single desk, we now have Churchill very much in an uncertain situation.

Now, I want to stress one thing again here. There's evident opportunity to use the Port of Churchill to solve the grain crisis even today, even going to the upcoming years and continuing to—the kind of work they did this year, but the Port of Churchill continues to have barriers, whether it comes in terms of access to railcars, the logistics of assembling them, and not the least of which is the lack of storage facilities in Churchill. There are storage facilities, but they're not sufficient to provide the kind of commitments that we need from grain companies.

And we have been working, along with OmniTRAX—OmniTRAX have been very aggressive on this—on attracting the interest of grain companies, because without the single-desk Wheat Board we're back to the 1930s in terms of the grain trade internationally. And, in fact, if anything, it's more controlled now than it ever was. One of the things that's been completely missed with the federal government's allowance of the—of Glencore taking over significant grain interests and the Xstrata deal is the degree to which now a handful of grain companies controls the grain trade. And, without the single desk, essentially we've recreated that scenario here in western Canada.

Now, I want to put that to one side for a moment, because I want to talk about the opportunities on the other side, and I want to talk for a moment about why I said we're on the verge of a potential golden age in terms of western Canada and northern Manitoba and the Port of Churchill. First of

all, we have what the world wants. We have commodities, and we have significant commodities. In my area, we have nickel, of course, we have zinc. In the area of—represented by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen), we have still a very important forestry industry in The Pas. We've got hydroelectric power as well, too, and that could play a very key goal.

But we have commodities. We also have probably the most strategic commodity over the next number of decades that the world will be looking for, and it's called food, and it's anything to do with food, whether it's the production of food, whether it's the fertilizers that go with food, the potash, of course, in Saskatchewan, and there are some deposits here, any and everything connected to food.

We also have something else that the world is looking to. We have the diversity, we have the intellectual and human capital, we have the know-how. And I've certainly seen that when I've had the opportunity to promote the Port of Churchill.

What people are very interested in us, Mr. Speaker, it's not just our agricultural commodities but our agricultural know-how and our transportation know-how. Notwithstanding any of the difficulties we have, we are still seen across the world as having significant ability to ship. It was one of the big advantages of the Wheat Board, quite frankly, was the reliability of being able to produce grain, to control its quality, to ship it when and where needed. That was a key part of who we were and what we were.

And when I talk about the golden era, it won't just happen. And if we're not careful, I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that we will be in a position where we will allow others to control our destiny, and others that, perhaps, will not have our best interest in mind. And I look at the fact that we've given away the lever of—one of the best levers for us to be able to control that destiny in terms of the single desk of the Wheat Board.

But I want to talk at some other aspects, as well. Let's look at the Port of Churchill. Let's look at the uncertain situation it's in. Let's look at the kind of ability it could have with proper supports to be a strategic port that would have—play a huge role in the development of western Canada and northern Manitoba and Manitoba as a whole.

Let's start with the Northwest Passage. It is opening up because of climate change, and for

members opposite, I want to stress: climate change is real. We're certainly seeing the evident—evidence of it in the Arctic. And what it means is not only is the Northwest Passage opening up, but shipping lanes across the pole to Norway, to Finland, to Sweden, to Russia, any of the northern ports are now increasingly viable, and there are clear evidence that probably in the next five or 10 years, there will be a significant ability to have Arctic shipping. And Arctic shipping that will revolutionize the way we see shipping today.

What do I mean by revolutionize shipping? Well, let's start with the Northwest Passage, the holy grail of transportation, a key driver of our history. If we're able to use the Northwest Passage, we can dramatically cut the travel times to a good part of Asia, particularly in Korea and China. It does what polar air routes have done to air travel. If we are able to connect across the pole, whether it be to Russia or Finland or any of the Baltic ports, we, again, have an advantage. It's called travel time and distance is much less.

Now, how are we going to look at that opportunity? Well, first of all, I want to start with one thing that I believe, and I think is important to put on the record, is not necessarily going to be a part of the future for the port. There's talk of shipping crude oil through Churchill. Our government's position has been clear: We do not support OmniTRAX's proposal to ship back an oil field on a federally regulated short line through the Port of Churchill. We've made it—that abundantly clear.

But, you know, there's some that have a bit of a misnomer that somehow this could sort of connect Churchill, perhaps, through the Northwest Passage, you know, that somehow the vision would be moving oil tankers through the Northwest Passage might provide some economic opportunity. Well, apart from the obvious environmental issues—and dare I say, the Exxon Valdez is a reminder to all of us of the fragility of northern and Arctic environments—it's also a logistical issue. And that is, that the Northwest Passage is relatively shallow and, actually, it's a very narrow passage and would not actually support the shipment of oil through conventional oil tankers.

Now, shipping grain is another thing. If you were to put Panamax freighters through, and Panamax freighters do come to Churchill right now, it would be feasible. So a lot of what needs to be

looked at is not just the immediate opportunities but the longer term opportunity.

* (14:50)

What other opportunities are out there? There are all sorts of them. I mentioned potash. I've mentioned fertilizer. I've mentioned urea, for example, in many of the things I've talked about. Again, it's a component in fertilizer.

We can be shipping a lot. We can be shipping through the port into Nunavut. Nunavut's got some of the greatest potential for the future in terms of development. What do they need? They need resupply. Churchill's played that role in the past. With the Port of Churchill—redeveloped Port of Churchill—we can expand on that and perhaps provide not only, you know, shipments through Churchill—but I know, certainly, my colleague, the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson)—we were at a forum, a round table—the Hudson Bay round table—just recently in Churchill.

We also talked about power. Nunavut is interested in power. There's talk of an all-weather road, but this—in the short term, far cheaper option, a very important strategic opportunity—it's called a winter road. We, as the government, have extended a winter road into every community in this province. And we are more than interested in talking to Nunavut about putting forward their agenda, which includes, quite frankly, not only potentially down the line an all-weather road but in the short term, a winter road.

And what is the key here? Well, part of it is, is to make sure that we create an environment, and we're prepared to put in place the investments that take advantage of these opportunities and think out 10 and 20 and 30 years. That's why we committed to the \$68-million upgrade to the port and to the rail line. And I'm very proud of the fact that our government took a leadership role in that and brought the federal government onboard. It's also why we're bringing this legislation, because the 'churchik'—Churchill Arctic Port Canada provides for Churchill the equivalent of CentrePort for the transportation hub that Winnipeg is.

I've said it's really Churchill's CentrePort, and the CentrePort is clearly, to my mind, one of the most visionary initiatives of the last number of years and I would say one of their most remarkable initiatives. It's only a few years ago that we were

talking on very general terms, and we have taken CentrePort Canada Way—we've established it.

With CentrePort Canada Way, we went from idea in 2008 to the fact that we opened it earlier this year—actually, just a few months ago we opened it—with the Prime Minister and the Premier (Mr. Selinger). And the bottom line is CentrePort Canada Way is now built. CentrePort is well on the way to development. And with the Headingley bypass—again, with our investment, with the decision we made—the long-term courageous decision to invest in infrastructure over 10 years—and, yes, with the one cent on the dollar. You know, I think people will look on that as one of the wisest decisions that were made in this province in decades.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? The member for—*[interjection]* Well, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), you know—I mean, only the member for Steinbach would be critical. I know he's been critical of some of the money we've brought to deal with some of the load issues in Steinbach recently. You know, I'm very proud of the fact that Steinbach is probably the fastest growing community in this province. After 14 years of NDP government, you can see the degree to which there's growth happening all throughout this province, including in Steinbach, including in Morden, including in Winkler. And I see the same potential for northern Manitoba as well.

Now, let's talk for a moment about what is needed. I mentioned about this legislation, what it does. It really is the evolution. It moves beyond the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation, which has done a fine job in promoting the port, and it moves to further development of the port.

Let's talk about some of the needs in the port and why this legislation could be very critical. Let's talk about storage. I mentioned it earlier. The Port of Churchill needs storage: storage of grain, storage of commodities. With that storage, it can ship by train in off periods and ship when the port is open. It can greatly expand the capacity of the port.

I want to talk about why that is so important. I mentioned earlier about grain. Clearly, we need that. And I want to put on the record that with this entity and with some of the discussions we've already started, we believe that there's a real potential to expand the shipping through the Port of Churchill that starts with the storage.

I want to talk about some of the other things that are important in terms of Churchill itself. Obviously,

having ice-reinforced ships and icebreaking is important. And we have put forward that vision as well. It's interesting that in the 1700s there was a longer shipping season than there is today, with wooden ships. Why? Because they didn't worry about insurance in those days. And we have, by the way—a number of years ago, we talked to Lloyd's of London. There has been significant progress in the insurance side.

But we have to clearly establish that in this day and age, with climate change, with much of the navigation technology that's out there, with much of what we have in place already and with some of the improvements we can put in place, there's no reason to see shipping through the Port of Churchill as anything other than having standard commercial risks. It is not a high-risk port. In fact, it's one of the most reliable ports in Canada and probably in North America in terms of its ability to perform, to get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, so we need to take this. We need to be looking at expansion of port facilities. And one of the advantages here is what we are able to do, is very similar to CentrePort, we're able with this entity to be able to provide a venue to provide a way in which we can bring in other investors, other private-sector investors. Of course, OmniTRAX is a private company, they will be making their own private investments. But with this we will be able to not substitute for, but supplement what OmniTRAX is able to do. And I want to stress that over the next 10 and 20 and 30 years one of the big challenges that we're going to have as Canadians, especially in western Canada, is not all these tremendous economic opportunities that we have, but the degree to which our logistical system is beginning to fail us, and I want to stress beginning to fail us. This year's crisis with the shipment of grain was a classic example.

You know what, I know it was a cold winter, exceptionally cold winter. I know that there was a bumper crop. But the degree to which we were unable to ship, and we have been losing customers has to be a wake-up call for Canadians. We have lost customers because we could not get the grain to port. And, you know, we are working co-operatively, we've met with the two rail companies, with Hunter Harrison, the CEO from CP, with Claude Mongeau, the president of CN. We have been working—I know my colleague the Minister of Agriculture has been working with his federal counterpart on their legislation on various other aspects.

You know what, regardless of how we got here our—you know, I guess it's the kind of Manitoba way of doing things. In this case, we are working with them notwithstanding some obvious disagreements on agricultural policy, you know, particularly on the Wheat Board. But what's important, I think, to note here is it was a wake-up call with, you know, a bumper crop. We ended up with—let's take Manitoba. We had 116 per cent of storage capacity, that much, 116 per cent. We had grain overflowing from the storage capacity that we had, and yet, and I want to stress this, and this—I want to put on the record that there's been a lot of fingers pointed at rail companies. But it was interesting that the rail companies themselves pointed out the lack of a winter shipping season even where we did have storage. We had empty storage sitting in Thunder Bay and we had grain overflowing at storage here in Manitoba. So storage is important.

I know there have been announcements of private sector investments. I want to put on the record, and it's certainly an issue that was raised by the member for The Pas (Mr. Whitehead), it's been raised by the mayor from The Pas, it came up at the Hudson Bay Route Association when I spoke just recently: there's real potential for The Pas to be a storage point for grain. It's in an agricultural area. It's very much in the catchment area of much of the Port of Churchill, much of which in Saskatchewan. We're doing our bit, by the way, with the investments on Highway 283. So we're investing already. But there's some real potential to not only store in Churchill, but to store in The Pas as well. So storage is a key part of it.

Now, what I want to suggest, as well, is absolutely critical, is understanding the degree to which there's so much potential in northern Manitoba. I was very fortunate yesterday. A number of other MLAs attended a reception with Jean Charest, the former premier of Quebec, who pioneered with the Plan Nord, the northern plan in Quebec, and certainly the things we could learn from Quebec's example.

But I would like to put forward that I believe there are many things that other jurisdictions can learn from our example. Let's take hydro development, for example, it's often not talked about to any great degree, but, you know, look at the relationship, the changed relationship that we have been forging with First Nations. Look at the fact that we now have a development agreement for Keeyask with the First Nations, the Keeyask partner First

Nations. And I'm proud to represent three of them: the Tataskweyak Cree Nation; York Factory First Nation; and the War Lake First Nation. I know the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) represents the fourth community, Fox Lake. Four First Nations partners in a historic development, and this follows from the Wuskwatim development where we're very proud to partner with the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation in Nelson House in Manitoba.

* (15:00)

But we also have, on the board of Manitoba Hydro—I'm not sure if this is a case Hydro could back, I'm not sure it's the case—we have three Aboriginal board members—three Aboriginal board members—historic firsts, and what it shows, I think, is that—four, I'm advised, four, actually—and it shows the degree to which we have made a historic commitment to not only reconciling many of the, you know, the past difficulties from hydro development, but forging a future in partnership.

And I know members opposite have a different view of that. I know they were very critical of the Keeyask Centre. I know the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) went on and on and on. It's interesting, I suggested he visit Tataskwayow; I don't know if he has, he advised me he hasn't. It's actually under construction. But, you know, that's how you develop partnerships, not by cheap shots and criticism like we saw across the way. What you do is you sit down and you work with people.

I want to talk about how we're changing history on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, not only protecting the east side, the traditional use, the environmental integrity of it, but the degree to which we're now building an all-weather road, again under the leadership of the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs throughout the east side. We have set a goal of putting an all-weather road into every community on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and we're actually now working with committees outside of the east side. It's about serving those committees first and foremost, but it's also about developing the huge potential—if we can work in partnership with the First Nations of those communities, the sky is the limit in terms of the potential development that we can have, sustainable development with those communities, again, that over the next number of decades can dramatically change what we have seen.

But all of this development, whether it's in terms of hydro, all of it in terms of, you know, the

infrastructure side, what is really happening, I believe, is a historic shift in northern Manitoba, and it's the degree to which northerners, northern Aboriginal people have increasingly been playing a key role in terms of development of this province.

I'm very proud to be a part of a government that represents every area of the province, including northern Manitoba. I'm 'ploud' to sit with colleagues, including my colleague, the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, who's Deputy Premier, my colleagues from northern Manitoba, including the MLA for The Pas, the MLA for Flin Flon, and the Minister of Agriculture, who represents northern communities. I'm proud to sit in a government where many other MLAs have either a connection to the North or a special place in their heart for the North. Many, actually, of our caucus members have lived in the North at some point in time. I look at the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) who studied in The Pas. And what is, I think, evident when we have any discussion about northern Manitoba in our government is the degree to which we not only see the challenges, but we see the tremendous opportunities—the tremendous opportunities—and what I believe, you know, as we discuss this today with the role of the Port of Churchill, I think it's time for us to remind us of that—ourselves of that fact.

You know, we stand in this Legislature, the Golden Boy faces north. For nearly 100 years, actually, the Golden Boy has been facing north. We've been talking about this great project called Manitoba, when we just recently celebrated, in fact two years ago, northern Manitoba becoming part of this province. We've talked about it, we've invested in it but shouldn't we be at a point where the Port of Churchill shouldn't be fighting for its survival? Shouldn't we be at the point with all of the work that we've done, the blood, the sweat, and the tears that went into development of the port, shouldn't we be at the point today where this becomes a priority for all Canadians?

I mention about the port. What about the road? Can we not connect from coast to coast to coast with a road network that can connect into Nunavut? Can we not connect to the world with the Port of Churchill, ship our grain anywhere in the world, including through the Northwest Passage to Asia and across the pole? Can we not seize that opportunity, this potential golden age, over the next 10 and 20 and 30 years? I think we can. I am absolute convinced that this government has that vision. That's why we brought this bill in. It's not the only element. It may

be just a small part of that. But what it says clearly is that we are going to go to the next level with the Port of Churchill.

So I would urge all members of this House to support this very important initiative. But it's a critical time in Churchill's history. I want to repeat what I said when I spoke at the Hudson Bay Route Association in Nipawin, Saskatchewan, just recently. It's time we stopped fighting to save the port. That should not be a question in this day and age. The Port of Churchill should be a given. It should be a priority for all Manitobans and for all Canadians. What we should be fighting for now is the Port of Churchill's future, a future that can be greatly enhanced. It has to be sustainable. And we make no apologies, Mr. Speaker, for ensuring that that is the case, and that has been our concern in terms of that. But we have to make sure that we end the vicious cycle that the Port of Churchill has had to deal with—vested interests, with politics that were stacked up against them from the start—and we have to turn it around and make it a national priority, part of a northern vision for Canada that connects Manitoba, connects western Canada to the rest of Canada including Nunavut and to the world and fully enhances the port to take the opportunity of all of those great potentials.

And I just want to finish, Mr. Speaker, I've been very fortunate to have been involved working for the Port of Churchill for many years. As a newly elected MLA, I was on the then-Port of the Churchill Development Board. It brought together the three western provinces and put forward a common front in terms of a common voice for Churchill. I have been fortunate to be part of a government that led the way, actually, many years back in terms of getting insurance improved in the port, of doing some of the investments in terms of port facilities.

And I can tell you I've never been more proud than to be part of this government that over its tenure in office has made historic investments in the Port of Churchill, historic investments in northern Manitoba, a part of a plan, a northern plan, Mr. Speaker, that is going to be—I think, it's going to change this province for many decades to come.

And what I want to say is, just on a personal basis, how proud I am to stand here today, to be able to speak in our Legislature about Churchill. And I hope that as members speak to this bill, that people look back on this period as a pivotal turning point for the Port of Churchill, the beginning of that golden

era. And I hope we will be seen as a generation that will have captured that vision, understood its huge potential and done the hard work to make it happen.

This legislation is part of that hard work, but it's part of a broader vision. And, again, I want to stress that no more should we be talking about the survival of the Port of Churchill. The future of the Port of Churchill can and should and must be a bright one, because this is something that is a tremendous asset for all Manitobans and all Canadians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I rise today to speak about Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, and the benefits of having a port of national and international significance in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, with developments leading to an ever increasing access and mobility through Canada's North, Churchill stands to become one of the important gateways to the world for Canada's West. In designating a Churchill Arctic port area similar to that of CentrePort, the government seems to hope that measures and initiatives will create further growth for business around Churchill and increase employment potential for local residents. It is also hoped that this will help lead to further economic development throughout our province's North.

I'm well acquainted with the port, Mr. Speaker. I put my own money into a group of entrepreneurs, private investors—I know that's scary to this government—that tried to buy the port. We were competitors to OmniTRAX. It was an interesting group of entrepreneurs throughout Manitoba. A great deal of work went into this proposal, and, as I say, I am well acquainted with the port and its challenges and, certainly, its opportunities.

* (15:10)

I would not have put my own money into this project, Mr. Speaker, had I not believed in the opportunities available to this port and the future of Manitoba, that we could help pave the way for exports through the Port of Churchill along the bay line. As I said, very interesting group of entrepreneurs. We worked hard on that, did not win that bid. OmniTRAX became the operator and they have been doing interesting things ever since, and I know they have great plans for the port and we'll be working to continue to—the export.

I'm interested to also listen to the minister talk about Lloyd's of London. In another one of my lives, I've also spent time with Lloyd's and met many of the names that put their personal money, again, into the syndicates that fund insurance for Lloyd's, and an interesting process that they go through. But, again, companies such as Lloyd's are the ones that dictate the shipping through that port and what is available. The shoulder seasons have always been the question on where you could push them, how wide, and that certainly is up to companies such as Lloyd's to determine that. We can try to convince them but, of course, they look, as with all insurance companies, at history. What is the history, and they look back many years to see what those—what the history is on the seasons of the port, and they are reluctant to move at the request of a government or even a private corporation to open those up because they are risking their own money to insure the ships that would be coming in to that port, and that is something that they protect dearly.

So well acquainted with this, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, the minister also talked about the challenge of moving grain, and I also have worked a great deal on that, as well, in past years—shouldn't be a surprise. You know, we took a—this happened several years ago, that there was similar glut on the prairies and we couldn't move grain. We had the wrong grain in the ports, we had the wrong grain in the terminals, the companies that wanted to load the ships wanted a different type of grain. And the joke was at that time that if you needed repairs done to your ship, you sent it to Vancouver because you'd get paid demurrage by prairie farmers while your ship sat there, and you got your repairs paid for by duty of the demurrage paid by the prairie farmers because your ship couldn't load the grain that you'd contracted for.

So we took a resolution to the Canadian chamber, and I'm not sure if you've ever been to a Canadian chamber event, Mr. Speaker, but it is a lot of large organizations. And we are—in Brandon, we're a small chamber but a very active one, took this resolution dealing with grain exports, and I was told by the chair of the transport committee that it was a regional issue. And quickly we pointed out that grain was a signature export of Canada, well recognized around the world, and against the advice of the chair and parts of his committee, we passed that resolution and eventually it did get accepted unanimously by the chamber. So we have been working on this issue for a long time, it's nothing new.

And, you know, surprisingly it's not just grain that was having trouble this winter. Speaking to a number of car dealers in western Manitoba, they've been waiting for cars. Now, you would think that a car might be a different value of a commodity than grain, and, yes, it is, and there's been discussion in the House that grain may not be the most important commodity—the rail companies want to move, perhaps oil might be, but you would think that cars would be something that these—that the rail companies would want to move too. So some of these car dealers have been waiting for three months for the cars to come on the train, and I'm sure many in this House have seen the car trains going through. But, again, another product that's been delayed by this winter.

So, when we look at the Port of Churchill, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting when I read this legislation—and the minister talked about, well, it's kind of like CentrePort. Okay, CentrePort is public land, not private land. This is private companies that are involved in Churchill that own the rail line, OmniTRAX, that, as I said, have been successful and have many plans for the future development of Churchill. They own the port and they put money into the port. So they're a private company and so there's not quite the same circumstance here where we're talking about CentrePort with public lands and the Port of Churchill act where it's private lands.

I know the government does have trouble with the private sector. They have a—they don't seem to understand what the private sector does, how someone can, you know, invest their own money and risk their own money for a benefit. And I know the government doesn't like to see individuals having a benefit. They like to tax it away, and we've seen that many times. So, yet, there's concerns around this bill on how do you deal with the private company, and it's not very well determined in there where the private company fits into this. And, indeed, there are portions, when I look at the CentrePort act, that are missing from this act, and I think would be a necessary part of it and perhaps we can look to add some of those sections in.

So it's not quite the CentrePort idea, Mr. Speaker. I think there's been some things missing here. And it is a bit mystifying to—I listened intently to the minister on what the direction was for this act, what does his act actually plan to do? And I'm still not clear on that, but, you know, perhaps we need to listen to more speakers on that. I don't know, because I couldn't get it all from the minister.

Because, obviously, we know that this NDP government has a long history of deception with Manitobans. And whenever the NDP says, you know, here they say, you know, don't worry about it. We're going to do—it'll all be clear when the regulations come out. Hmm, okay. Because they say, trust us, and what do Manitobans think of that, when the NDP says trust us, or when they promise something? That just, again, highlights their failures, and Manitobans should exercise extra caution when they hear those words from the Manitoba—the NDP government.

You know, it—a perfect example of this, I'm sure, pops to mind when we hear deception and promises, might be the ones made by each and every not only NDP member that's in this House. But each and every one of their candidates that ran unsuccessfully in the last election promised to every Manitoban, what did they promise? That there would be no new taxes. There would be—that hiking the PST was utter nonsense, was, I believe, the word that was uttered, according to the Premier (Mr. Selinger).

Well, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans, you know, are fed up with this government and they're fed up with the NDP's cheap tricks.

What is perhaps more shocking about this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP government feels they are better positioned to go it alone rather than work with local stakeholders and businesses. There's—I know we talked about consultation in this House, and perhaps the government really doesn't understand what that means. We saw, even today, they were going alone on the lake, putting in an experimental process on zebra mussels, not talking to any of the stakeholders there. Don't worry, don't worry, trust us, yes, yes, we're going to put all this money into this experimental process that has been tried once rather than investigate things that may work and may be less toxic to the lake. But, well, that's the way this government seems to work. Stakeholders and businesses, they're not really comfortable talking to them and establishing clear parameters.

And so, certainly, this bill leads—a large portion of it is to be determined in the regulations, and, again, regulations with this government seems to be just another opportunity, another back door to exploit the interests of Manitobans. And, surely, if this government had nothing to hide, they'd let it show all in here in the initial tabling of the bill. I would have heard more information from minister even, on what

it would all do. But that seemed to be missing not only from the bill, but also from this government.

And, while shipping grain is an important part of Manitoba, and I've talked about that already, Mr. Speaker, I think that the opportunities that Manitoba has is not as much in shipping of the grain, but in shipping of the finished product. That is where the greatest opportunity lies for Manitoba. What sense does it make to ship wheat over to Italy so they can create pasta and sell it back to you in the store? What if we had a concept of doing that here? Why are there pasta plants just over the border in the United States? Why have we not held those opportunities here? And those are the types of things that we need to help foster, and we have to create a confidence in Manitoba that people will come here and invest their money in creating value-added products for our agricultural goods. There is the opportunity, when we are shipping value-added products offshore, not just the raw wheat commodity or whatever else might be raw that goes through the port.

* (15:20)

That is where I think I differ with this minister, and there—we need to look at that—moving that commodity off of the ships, and then that would solve a whole bunch of our shipping problems. Mr. Speaker, if instead of shipping tonnes of grain or hoping to and planning to across the rail or through the Churchill port, what if we shipped the finished products? Much more valuable, think of the taxes that this government could extract from those value-added industries. Wouldn't that be of interest to them, you wouldn't think? But, again, they'd rather just take the taxes on what's here now rather than help to develop something for the future.

You know, it's also the flip-flopping of this government on shipping products. It's a great concern for Manitobans. Their ever-revolving priorities and backtracking on commitments does nothing to help the Port of Churchill—its port, its area, its town or the North of our province in general.

Need—we need to have consistency, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the things that private sector companies like OmniTRAX do. They put their own money at risk and they have a plan going forward. The group of entrepreneurs that I was with had a plan going forward. Whether or not the Wheat Board existed, there were several 'signarios' that we looked at. What would happen if this would happen? What would happen if the Wheat Board weren't there? Those were all opportunities the private sector knows

and they look at, and they have plans for developing the future—long-term plans, not the short-term plans that we see, the annual five-year plans of the members opposite. But business partners do look for assurances and stability when they're looking at establishing and investing in our province, and that is not something that we see from this government.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to see clear, continuous, and comprehensive consultations with all those that would be affected by this bill, and we urge the government to do so. Talk to people. It's how you learn, and perhaps that's something that this government should learn better.

So I look forward to any further comments by the minister or other government members who might give a hint to their plans for this other than the vague terms and, you know, sort of odd descriptions in here, leaving large, large portions of the legislation to regulations as this government now seems wont to do. It's something that all Manitobans, especially the residents and stakeholders in and around Churchill should be very wary of.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill. I'm sure there are others that wish to speak to it, and I know that some have gone on for time, but we'll see what others have to say.

Thank you.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): I just have to say it's an honour to speak on this, on Bill 21. It's an honour to speak after the golden oracle, the minister from Thompson, spoke. I have to say that I know there's little kids running around in Morden and Winkler and Steinbach with Captain Asphalt on it, and I know up north the golden oracle is well known and knows a lot of the issues that the North is working on and what the government is working on.

I happen to really believe that there is a future in the North. I happen to believe that the North, with the Golden Boy looking north, the North happens to be the opportunity for people from all over Canada. I happen to believe that the Port of Churchill and with Bill 21 just solidifying the importance of it.

Bill 21, this legislation will create Churchill Arctic Port Canada, a non-government agency to develop long-term economic opportunities, spur job creation and ensure viability of the Churchill gateway system. Also, we see Churchill Arctic Port Canada playing a vital role similar to CentrePort Canada in terms of promotion and development for

the benefits of users, investors and owners while promoting Churchill and Manitoba around the world.

So, basically, what we're saying is let's take advantage of the opportunities that Churchill have. Let's let it reach the potential that we all think Churchill has. I know there's been times when it—the shipping has not been used as much as—that it should be.

And I know we have the technology to actually have that port be year-round. I know it's a shortcut to Murmansk and Vladivostok and Asia and Europe and Africa, and we should be taking advantage of that, and, like, with icebreakers—and with global warming we might not even need the icebreakers, but the opportunity is there to really use the potential of Churchill.

But I have to reflect. My dad was a pilot, and one of his last flights that he flew was in the early '70s, and I happened to be lucky to fly with him and we decided to fly up to Churchill. And we flew up to Thompson from Flin Flon and then followed the railway. And what you realize when you're flying north from exactly when it heads—when it's going east and then heads straight north, you realize the amount of water that's around there. You're in the Hudson Bay Lowlands, and I think the minister from Thompson has—is eloquently spoke about the early history where they thought the port would be in York Factory but they realized it wasn't deep enough so then they switched to go to Churchill.

And, when you look at the map of Manitoba and see the railway, you can see that jog. And remember, this railway was built around the time of World War I, so working in the Hudson Bay Lowlands at that time, I just think about the mosquitoes, everything else there. It's amazing that a project like that could be done at that early time. But it was done because the Manitoba know-how was there and the can-do attitude of Manitoba. And that's—I'm not feeling the love on the side over here. I—everybody is negative. I can't feel that. And yet—and yet—Mr. Speaker, three days ago I opened up the paper. I thought I was reading the paper from Regina or Saskatoon.

But, in the paper there was talking about a Saskatchewan company, and they were talking about development. And I thought, my God, they're developing in Yorkton or Moosomin or Weyburn, Estevan or even the town beside Flin Flon, Creighton. But, no, the Saskatchewan company was talking about development in Manitoba. But not just for Manitobans, for people from North Dakota and

Minnesota, and they also wanted people from Saskatchewan come—come on down, you know, to Manitoba.

So I think, you know what, you need this optimism. I would like to be in a huddle with these guys, in a team, just to build them up because you know what? You can't go anywhere when the glass is half empty. And I'd like to, you know, be there in that huddle to say, you know what? Come on, we're Manitobans. Stand up—stand up for Manitoba and stand up for the Port of Churchill.

Getting back to that, on that flight—I know you're—some people are wondering how far did they go. Well, we finally flew up to Churchill. We stayed there a couple days. We got to see a beluga. There was a grain ship being filled up—this was in October. And we also got to see a couple early polar bears. And so you could realize the potential of tourism.

But getting back to the flight, as you got closer to Hudson Bay and Churchill, which is on the west side of Hudson Bay, you realize the environment, how fragile it would be. And so it's great we're talking about shipping products to Churchill. I think, you know that's its legacy, it's going to be about shipping. But we got to be very careful. I know OmniTRAX was talking right away that they wanted to start shipping oil. I know they've done it on a very small basis, but there—they were trying to get in on the increased oil shipping from Alberta and Saskatchewan. And I think we got to be careful, and our government has stood up—has stood up—for the environment and said that we have to be very careful here. We have to have regulations and we also have to make sure that there's insurance on the rail and the oil or whatever that's being shipped, that that—that there's insurance enough for any spills that—or whatever that takes place. That is important. And I think if we have that in line, then we can start thinking about shipping other oil or whatever.

But there is potential for potash. There is potential for ore. I know I've talked to the general manager of HudBay, and they're looking at shipping some of the ore that they have, some of their concentrate, out through Churchill. That—I mean, that would be a step. So there's many uses that we can use there.

* (15:30)

There's—my friend across the way, from Brandon West, talked about bringing in interested—people that have an interest in the port—bringing in Alberta,

Saskatchewan and First Nations. I think that's a great idea. I think we have to bring all the interested parties to the table and look at the potential of HudBay, of—and Churchill and look at it and look at the best way that we can develop it.

And I know the minister from Thompson—honourable minister from Thompson, talked about what we need there—you know, larger storage containers. We need—the rail has to be upgraded. And we have to study, I know—the member from the Interlake talked about when he was over in Russia that they've got a system of building rails—railways in the permafrost, and we got to look at that, because when the summer comes, the rail up to Churchill is very, very erratic and there's more derailments. And we got to make sure that that railway is second to none for transportation. So that's something we have to look at.

But what is the potential? The potential for Churchill to be a major port not just in Manitoba or in Canada, but in the world, it has a great potential. I think the minister from Thompson said, you know, one time they were envisioning the population would be 100,000. Well, it's a bit laughable because what we're saying is that the potential's there but has never, you know, rose to that potential, and yet it can. Yet it can, if it has a supporting government like ours, a supporting government like the federal government and people that believe in it. Then that potential can be raised.

I think you also have to realize that there's potential for other industries around Churchill. We talked about tourism and some people from all over the world are—go there to look at the different ecosystem that Churchill offers: the polar bears, the Arctic, and so on. So there's facilities there that maybe have to be upgraded. So that's important.

We also have to make sure that in Winnipeg here and with our government working towards CentrePort—CentrePort is, you know, what many people thought was the northern end of a rail route from the States and Mexico and the centre from east and west of Canada, you know, and they're looking at CentrePort. But we also got to think north—that Churchill can be the northern end of CentrePort and the shipping, and take advantage of that. So I'm very excited about the potential from the North.

Like I say, if you're a northern, you have that built-in optimism. You have that quality where, you know, you're never going to give up and you realize that you're in the North, the North is good for you,

and you're going to work well and hard so that the North can retain its special flavour that everybody realizes that northern have.

I also want to put on record that from Flin Flon—many people from Flin Flon have moved or worked up in Churchill and vice versa. So, I mean, people in the North move around. And the opportunities in the North is not just for the Port of Churchill but for mining towns like Flin Flon, Thompson, but also shipping areas like Le Pas for storage of grain, but also for other mines in the area. We have the cheapest source of hydro in North America. We should be taking advantage of that.

And I'm not going to get into a calculator argument with my friend across the way. I mean, you know, you know, you know. Well, let's take this kilowatt, divide it by two, times five. Let's not figure it out. Let's look at the facts. The facts say we have the cheapest power in North America, and I can't believe that they would stand up and even argue or even think about that.

So, having said that, what can we do with this cheapest power that we have? Well, other industries need that cheap power. I know that I was looking on Up Here magazine when I was flying up to Winnipeg last week, and they're talking in Northwest Territories—get on the Saskatchewan grid because they need power. They need power for their mines. They use so much diesel that—and it's scary how much diesel they use—but Saskatchewan doesn't have the power. There's only one place that has the power and that's here in Manitoba, and with our power we can sell more to Saskatchewan. But right now they want to spend \$10 million on trying to find clean coal, yes, clean coal. That's what they want to do.

And, like I say, so we have this power. There is visions out there to use it. We in Manitoba can use this opportunity to try and work with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for power in there, and the Port of the Churchill can be a base. It can be a shipping area for Nunavut and the North; it can also be one of the top ports not just in Canada, but in the world.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me put a few words on the record. And I just have to say after hearing the golden voice, the golden oracle, I know what I have to say is on a much lesser level, but I just thank you for giving me that opportunity.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a few minutes about this bill and about the future of the Port of Churchill.

I have been one of those who have been, who are and who will be fighting for the future, a strong future for the Port of Churchill. I have done this for many years, including as a Member of Parliament and as an MLA. I think this bill could potentially be quite helpful, but I think that we also have to be cognizant of the fact that supporting this is so much more than just passing a bill; it is making sure that there is a strong future for Churchill.

There have been many Liberals over the years who have fought very hard for the future of the Port of Churchill, and I would name them among—among them Lloyd Axworthy, who has fought while he was an MLA, while he was a Member of Parliament, and continues to be very interested in the future of the Port of Churchill. I would name Terry Duguid, who has been involved in numerous efforts in relationship to the future of the Port of Churchill and trying to make sure that there is a strong future. And there have been many others as well; our present leader, Rana Bokhari, has been, in the relatively short time she's been 'leaver,' up to Churchill and is concerned about making sure there is a strong future for the Port of Churchill.

I was rather surprised, I must say, to listen to the MLA for Thompson when he got up and he said in his words with great clarity that the future of the Port of Churchill is in doubt, that everybody must fight for the future of the Port of Churchill because there's so much uncertainty. I'm a little bit surprised as to why, after 14 years of this government, the future of the Port of Churchill is not a lot more assured than was indicated in the speech by the member for Churchill. I would have assumed that after 14 years of a government which was very concerned about the Port of Churchill and its future, that there would have been measures put in place in those 14 years to make sure that the Port of Churchill had a very, very strong future. But that appears not to have been the case.

And so we are facing a situation where the government itself is saying the future of the Port of Churchill is on the line. The minister was issuing a clarion call for help from everybody to make sure that there was a strong future and he was implying that there is a great deal of uncertainty about the future of the Port of Churchill. And if—that was really what surprised me, that the member for Thompson

and what he's done in the last 14 years, hasn't been able to do much better in assuring that the future of the Port of Churchill is strong so that we don't have to have this continuing uncertainty.

* (15:40)

You know, there is a lot that needs to be done, I think that is clear, about the future of the Port of Churchill. I was involved together with Lloyd Axworthy in—at the federal level in ensuring that there was some major investments in the '90s in upgrading the port and the rail line. But there is continuing work that has to be done in this area.

And there is also some critical issues that have to be addressed in the transport of goods to the Port of Churchill. Is there an adequate plan that the Province has in place if there were to be a spill? What is the Province putting in place to make sure that the environment in this area is looked after well? In view of the light of the fact that the federal government and OmniTRAX are apparently saying that they already have the clearances to transport goods like the oil, or products coming from the oil, perhaps liquefied natural gas coming from Alberta, and, certainly, we have seen no plans from this provincial government, you know, to deal with the situation to ensure safety of the environment, should that, in fact, be the case, that there would be transport of goods that could have issues in relationship to the environment. And, certainly, this is something that one would expect, that there would be a very strong concern for the environment and that there would be very strong plans in place both in terms of assuring safety of goods, but also ensuring a safety environment should there ever—let's hope not—be a spill, for example.

The future of the Port of Churchill is closely tied to the future of Hudson Bay, and one of the things that would be expected is that there would be significant effort by this government to improve the co-operation among people around the Hudson Bay. This is—there are, at the moment, of—I'm aware of some efforts through the institute—International Institute for Sustainable Development, but there has not been any initiative from this government to reach out to people in Ontario and Quebec and in other areas to have a co-operative effort.

Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker. You know, the—what has been done and was done in—for the lake of Winnipeg, was that the federal-level government assured that the Namao could continue and would operate as a scientific-research vessel for

Lake Winnipeg and that we would gather a lot of scientific information and science data. And one of the reasons for this was the recognition by many—and scientists like Lyle Lockhart have frequently talked about this—is that there wasn't a good scientific base of knowledge around the—for—around Lake Winnipeg, that if you compared Lake Winnipeg to Lake Erie, that there was a tremendous amount of work and scientific knowledge around Lake Erie, but relatively little around Lake Winnipeg. Now, fortunately, through the co-operation of many governments, the scientific base of knowledge for Lake Winnipeg is growing. It might have grown faster if Stéphane Dion had been Prime Minister and there was a major effort to improve the—and funding for Lake Winnipeg. But, you know, that vision was drastically cut back under the Conservatives. But, nevertheless, I mean, let's acknowledge that there has been a significant improvement over the last 15 years, particularly, of the knowledge base for Lake Winnipeg.

Well, there should be, I would suggest, a similar effort undertaken co-operatively with all the jurisdictions around the Hudson Bay for scientific research and probably a scientific vessel like the Namao to undertake science studies in the basin of the Hudson Bay. And this is clearly particularly important at the moment given climate change and global warming and the potential that there may be increased traffic through the Hudson Bay. But it's also important in terms of the future of—well, for example, polar bears, which we're very concerned about, and gathering the information now in terms of the current situation for Hudson Bay so that we're laying the baseline for the future and have a really good and strong science-based understanding of the whole Hudson Bay.

And out of this sort of scientific co-operation, as often happens, one could get other types of co-operation. You know, there's some very interesting topography around the Hudson Bay. Is there a potential for a ship in summer that would take tourists to various places around the Hudson Bay so that people could go on—you know, whether it's wildlife or other excursions, looking at understanding and visiting and seeing, as tourists, what is happening in the Hudson Bay?

I note that, you know, in February of this year, Naomi and I were in New Zealand, and they have done very well in earmarking particular islands as wildlife sanctuaries, but not only that, in improving the understanding of those sanctuaries by having the

potential, the opportunities for many people to go out and visit and see in a way that assures the long-term, you know, survival and well-being of species in that area.

We went to Tiritiri Matangi, which is an island north of Auckland, and what was surprising is that the effort that has been taken to build this up as a wildlife sanctuary to make it interesting for people to visit—and now there are regularly ships going out to this island and taking people. And they have a variety of people employed and volunteers and others helping to make this a fascinating and interesting experience for people who go as visitors or tourists.

I think that if we are going to move forward and secure a future for Churchill that we need to be thinking in this broader context about what we can do to give people a better understanding of the Hudson Bay and a better future for the whole Hudson Bay. And, in doing so, we will help the future of the Port of Churchill in that process.

So I think the effort that I have seen, you know, in this bill, that I heard a lot of rhetoric from the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and I appreciate his enthusiasm. But it is the results, you know, which are so important, that after 14 years there is still uncertainty—I heard that. But we need to be doing things which are going to not leave the Port of Churchill in uncertainty but make sure the Port of Churchill is very, very strongly positioned so there will not be uncertainty about its future.

I suggest to the members on the opposite side that there are some very considerable opportunities that can be built upon, the federal-national park in the Churchill area, Wapusk, from the provincial park, which we understand is going to be around Wapusk.

*(15:50)

I was asking—I think it was the Premier (Mr. Selinger)—some questions about this in Estimates, and it seemed that, you know, the concept of any planning is rather vague at this point. But there are some opportunities here that clearly need to be built on to give greater certainty about the future of the Port of Churchill and that can facilitate co-operation with, you know, the various First Nation communities in that area and give people employment opportunities.

It was a little disappointing, as I recall, when I asked this question in Estimates, that the total dollars

allocated for the consultation for this provincial park and to, you know, make sure that ideas had been collected, that people in the First Nations communities and living in the area had an opportunity to participate was something like \$50,000. And my suspicion is that, you know, this should have been given a little bit more priority if, in fact, it was important as, you know, the member for Churchill and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and others are suggesting that it may be.

I also think, Mr. Speaker, that there needs to be a little more attention to essential things in the North. We were debating and discussing the treatment of stroke in Manitoba. And we're now, you know, 19 years after the establishment on a scientific basis of the use of tissue plasminogen activator to treat people with stroke, but that treatment needs to be given, it was thought best, within two hours but can be given maybe a little longer that. People are now looking at maybe three or four. But the problem in northern Manitoba is that you don't have time to transport people to Winnipeg from Thompson, that, in fact, we need to have the ability to treat people with tissue plasminogen activator in a high-quality environment in Thompson.

And you know, it's—Brandon had the ability to do this in 2005. Why was the North neglected? Why was Thompson not assured of such ability to treat with tissue plasminogen activator in Thompson in a competent and assured way, just like there has been that ability in Brandon since 2005? Why was Thompson neglected? Why was the North neglected?

This government talks a—you know, it talks as if it's doing wonderful things, but then neglects some very essential things. People in the North have strokes just like people in the south. This is not a medical problem which is unique to southern Manitoba, and so we should make sure that this treatment is available to people in Thompson as well.

And so I stand up today to, you know, support moving forward on this legislation. I hope that it will help to move from the uncertainty that the member for Thompson talked about with respect to Churchill, that we have today to a strong future. I believe that there needs to be a broader vision of the future. There has been some talk of the varied products that can be transported through the Port of Churchill, and I think that there—those opportunities clearly need to be looked at, expanded, built upon and figured out as part of this whole effort. That notwithstanding, I believe that there's these—at least a variety of other

opportunities that can also strengthen the position and the future of the Port of Churchill.

So let us move forward. I think I hear that people from around this Chamber are wanting to see what we can do for the Port of Churchill and, certainly, I'm one who has been and will continue to fight for the future of the Port of Churchill. Thank you.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): It's my privilege to stand in the House today to add my words of support to The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, Bill 21. I'm very excited to have an opportunity to talk about this. Having recently, within the last six months or so, been made Minister of Jobs and the Economy, certainly, the importance of being able to transport goods in a variety of manners from a variety of venues, it becomes very clear to me, and I believe that this act is going to serve a very important role in ensuring that Churchill continues and, indeed, grows to fulfill its, what I believe to be, awesome potential.

Mr. Speaker, and I was listening to the not exactly dulcet tones of the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), who seems very confused today, and I think I can provide some information for him to perhaps mitigate the enormity of that confusion.

It's very clear, Mr. Speaker, when you look at this bill, that the legislation itself is going to create Churchill Arctic Port Canada Inc., a non-government agency, which will work to develop long-term economic opportunities. Of course, that will spur job creation, which is music to my ears, and continue to work to ensure the viability of the Churchill gateway system.

So the very function of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, the point, if you will, is to ensure that there's a dedicated entity to ensuring that Churchill and the port thrive and grow. Now, I listened to the member from Brandon West, who was talking about, well, wouldn't it be really great if we could have, you know, a dedicated entity that would work to help Churchill thrive and grow, and that would be what this legislation is all about. So I hope that that takes, you know, a little bit of the confusion out of the situation for that member and others.

We certainly do see the 'churchick'—Arctic port Canada playing a very vital role. It's going to play a role, Mr. Speaker, that I believe in many ways will be similar to that of CentrePort Canada, in terms of that very aggressive, exuberant, enthusiastic promotion and development for the benefit of users

and investors and owners and, of course, it's going to just serve to promote Churchill generally and Manitoba all around the world. So I think that that's critically important.

Now, we know, on this side of the House, that northern Manitoba holds huge economic potential. Always has, always will. And we believe that investing in steady economic growth and good jobs for northerners is important, just as we believe that's true for all Manitobans. That's why this legislation, as I said, Mr. Speaker, has been introduced, to create this new agency that will have as its mandate attracting and co-ordinating investment linked to the Port of Churchill and support partnership development in Manitoba's North.

We know that as Canada's only Arctic port, it needs to play a larger role. Churchill needs to play a larger role in shipping goods across the country and elsewhere. We know, of course, the cost savings of using the port to cross the Atlantic versus other ports has always been significant, not to be trifled with, Mr. Speaker, and the new port authority can build on the existing strengths and create new partnerships and agreements. So this will be very important.

Listening to members opposite, of course, one is always, I think, taken aback, you know, those with the positive view of the future—is always taken aback by the darkness and the doom and gloom that comes from members opposite, and it's probably never more true than coming out of the lips of the member for Brandon West. But he certainly does open his window every day, Mr. Speaker, and look through the dark, hazy clouds of doom and see no opportunity for Manitoba, and I'm just glad, first of all, that, you know, he is not on the radio. I would hate to hear that voice first thing every morning. But it really is out of step and out of tune with what we're hearing about what's going on in Manitoba.

The Conference Board, of course, predicts that Manitoba's economy is going to grow and grow and grow. We know, Mr. Speaker, on—we read in the Winnipeg Free Press that Murray McNeill said on, you know, just in December—or was it January, I beg your pardon—Manitoba's economic prospects are continuing to improve. The goods and service industries will perform better over the next two years. Employment growth is expected to pick up and household disposable income will advance strongly.

* (16:00)

So, I mean, certainly I don't expect the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) or any member on that side of the House to embrace my passionate thoughts, but when we have the Conference Board of Canada or, indeed, we have the Canadian manufacturers, exporters, Mr. Kozlowski's—Mr. Kozlowski, the vice-president of the Manitoba division, saying very clearly—also earlier this year—our members are starting to see stronger sales to the US, 2014 definitely seems to be the year where we're going to see some progress, some positive signs and more good news for our industry.

So, Mr. Speaker, these aren't individuals that, you know, are card-carrying members of our party. These are individuals that are entrenched in the business community, in the manufacturers' community, that are saying that absolutely we're moving forward, we're seeing steady growth.

I would remind members opposite Cereals Canada announced new corporate headquarters. You might want to ask where, Mr. Speaker. Well, I'm glad you did, because it's right here in Winnipeg. In their news release, Cereals Canada said the city offers an affordable locale for Cereals Canada operations and future staff, with access to a large workforce population that has many ties to production agriculture. And the chair of Cereals Canada said a great deal of thought and consideration went into making this decision. Through this process it became clear to us that Winnipeg will serve the long-term needs of this organization.

And I know that the members of the House, once again, will want me to inform them about the exciting opportunity of Canadian Tire's computing—cloud computing centre, Cloud Nine, Mr. Speaker. I can hear the heckling of members opposite, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who hasn't visited Cloud Nine, literally or figuratively, I suspect, for lo these many years. But I would say to him that this kind of opportunity, put into a competitive situation, Canadian Tire looked long and hard at where they wanted to put down their roots for this massive investment wherein, of course, we're going to see many, many new jobs, highly-skilled, high-paying jobs that will all—be all about transforming retail as we know it. They looked all across Canada and they chose Manitoba. And they chose Manitoba not by accident, but because of investments that we've made to create an environment that was exactly right for them.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, as I was listening to the member for Brandon West and the series of negative, negative, negative comments, I just feel inspired to try to help him, to try to let the sunshine in a little bit because I'm actually feeling badly for him. Even just on the subject of the budget—let's even narrow that focus even further, you know, beyond my expectation that the member could have any hope and passion and optimism about the North—let's just talk a little bit about what people have said about our budget. And I can say to him, you know, that certainly we've seen the president of the University of Manitoba, Dr. Barnard—I think it's very helpful to us and for the people who are coming to our university. It allows us to keep providing a way—a wide range of very high-quality services.

You know, we've seen members from the labour community, which I'm suspecting members opposite will dismiss out of hand—call it a guess—Mr. Rebeck, the president of the Manitoba Federation of Labour—we're glad to hear that this government is working on stimulating the economy and continuing the infrastructure investments and skills training. It's something that we need.

Mr. Northcott from Winnipeg Harvest said, this is the best budget I've seen in two decades. Overall there's some money on the table to do good stuff. Mr. Angus from the chamber of commerce recognized the work on our infrastructure plan, and he said, I do commend the government for actually listening to the stakeholders because what we see is something that is transparent, accountable and measurable. And what I also like, and probably the most about it, is the annual review and the commitment to a third-party review so we can assess the impact and whether this investment is making the difference.

So, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the investments that we're making, \$5.5 billion over five years in infrastructure all around this province, there are people that are validating our plan and that are positive about it.

When it comes to introducing legislation that is about developing an organization that will have a very clear focus on developing the economic opportunity for Churchill, whether we're talking about the budget broadly, there are many people in Manitoba that are speaking very, very positively. And I would suggest to members opposite that it would seem only reasonable and fair to acknowledge that when you make investments in infrastructure, of

course, you're going to be making investments in building an economy.

We know that it's important to note also that Diane Gray herself, the president and CEO of CentrePort Canada, is also in support of this plan and in support of fulfilling Churchill's potential. She said, CentrePort Canada supports the creation of Churchill Arctic Port Canada Inc., which will spur development around the Port of Churchill in a focused way, Mr. Speaker. She said—she goes on to say, the port represents an important node for accessing the Arctic gateway and enhancing its connections to CentrePort will lead to more opportunities, investment and jobs for our communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, the nattering continues over there—dark, desolate, bereft of hope. But we know that those people that are keenly involved, that those people that intersect, that come together to work on building infrastructure in Manitoba to help our economy, so they're loaded with optimism. You know, they're absolutely brimming with optimism and enthusiasm.

And here's something that they understand, Mr. Speaker, that I have to think that members opposite could do a little work to come to understand, that when it comes to Manitoba, I think it's critically important that regardless of your political stripe, you at least take a day, a week—I'd prefer seven—but a day, a week, to come together, to row the boat in the same direction, to co-operate locally so that we can continue to compete globally.

There are members of every political stripe that are involved in organizations like Yes! Winnipeg, for example, and that will, indeed, come forward for this very organization on the legislation that we're speaking of today, that will put aside their partisan politics and that will really focus on doing what is better for Manitoba. And I think that, from time to time, we ought to take an opportunity to do that, to recognize a good idea about how it's going to support and help the North flourish and just take a break from the nattering and the negativity for a moment, a precious moment, Mr. Speaker, to come together to support a good idea and to say this is going to help all Manitobans.

No matter where they live, Mr. Speaker, no matter their economic circumstances, no matter what political party they should choose to join, there are moments in our time where we should come together and dispense with the negativity, work together,

support legislation that's about having the North flourish, and I encourage members opposite to take that opportunity.

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure, as well, to speak to the bill presented by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) on The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act.

I've had the honour and the pleasure now of serving Churchill for the last two decades, and also, before that, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of being—of growing up not only in Churchill but in several northern communities as a young man, as a young boy. And I want to say that, indeed, that we always view northern Canada, and northern Manitoba, in this case, as holding huge economic opportunities and potential.

* (16:10)

And we also believe that investing in economic growth and good jobs for northern people and all Manitobans is—should be and always has been a part of this government's agenda. And that's why we've introduced legislation to create this new agency that will attract, I believe, and co-ordinate investment linked to the Port of Churchill and support partnership in Manitoba's North.

One important development that has occurred in recent months—a couple years ago, in the fall of 2012, we assembled the mayors and the councils from the hamlets in the Kivalliq district of Nunavut and the northern communities of Gillam and Churchill, along with the Sayisi Dene First Nation at Tadoule Lake and the Fox Lake First Nation at Gillam, along with the mayors and the MLAs that represent that part of the Kivalliq district in the Nunavut government. And together we have a collective vision on how we re-establish Churchill to what it is historically and that being the gateway to the Arctic.

Now, historically, the community of Churchill has been a community that's always been the centre place of trade and commerce, dating back to the 1700s. People will know that at one time the fur trade wouldn't have occurred and therefore the fur trade in western Canada wouldn't have opened up if it wasn't for a woman named Thanadelthur—I can recall the appropriate spelling—who was at that time captured by the Dene people—or the Cree people, but she was a Dene native woman.

Now, as a young woman at the age of 22, she knew enough about the Cree language to be able to broker a deal between the fur traders—at that time, the British—and also the Aboriginal people inhabited that region, which were the Inuit, the Cree and the Dene people. And if it wasn't for her intervention and being able to broker this treaty of peace and friendship among the Aboriginal people, the fur trade and the trade and commerce that we've come to understand centuries later would not be here. Thus, Churchill's historical significance quite often is overlooked in the history of our province.

Two years ago, as I was beginning to say, we began again the Hudson Bay roundtable which consists of those communities—Fox Lake, Tadoule Lake, Gillam, Churchill—and we, along with the communities in the Kivalliq began talking about areas of mutual interest between the communities, because we do have—prior to 1912, of course, Churchill was not even considered to even be a part of the province of Manitoba, it was still part of the old Northwest Territories at that time.

At a meeting that I recently co-chaired along with Tom Sammurток—Minister Tom Sammurток, the MLA for Rankin Inland North and Chesterfield Inlet, was also the Minister of Community and Government Services in the Nunavut government—along with five other MLAs, including three other ministers, including the minister of energy for the territory of Nunavut, the honourable Paul Okalik. Some—that name will be familiar with some because he was a former premier of the territory of Nunavut since its inception in 1999 until very recently, I believe, 'til 2011.

And again we had the opportunity of talking about these areas of mutual interest, and among them was the need for a power—a transmission power line from Churchill to serve the communities in the Kivalliq who will be requiring power in order for the activities that have been created in that region at Baker Lake and in Rankin Inlet with respect to their mining activities.

So those were among the items we talked about in addition to the needs of—the medical needs and the health needs and the health requirements of those communities that don't have the benefit of having a doctor located in their communities in the Kivalliq, and many northern Manitoba communities can relate to that as well. So we had a thorough discussion for a couple days, and we also had an opportunity to partake in that. And, together with the Minister of

Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), we had a thorough discussion on many of these areas that are lacking and require our collective attention.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me outline some of the background and the intent of this bill. In 2012, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the Prime Minister established a task force on the future of Churchill to identify commercially viable short-, medium- and long-term opportunities that could position the Port of Churchill as an Arctic gateway, something that's always been there. The concept of this legacy in the Port of Churchill was first raised by the Canada-Manitoba Task Force on the Future of Churchill. This task force suggested a more inclusive governance model that would enable the port to handle multiple commodities with multiple shippers. And during an extensive consultation process, it was found that the task force heard a more inclusive port governance model that could help the port handle multiple commodities with multiple shippers. And, consequently, the task force cited interests from stakeholders to move forward with the establishment of a transportation authority to better position the port for future opportunities.

Now, we have some tremendous opportunities that have never been presented to us in our history, Mr. Speaker. I know that sometimes the future of Churchill has been up in question, and I think that now we have a tremendous opportunity to move forward, not only on the shipment of grain but, indeed, at the same time, have a thorough dialogue on some of the resupply opportunities that exist with the Nunavut communities.

And I know that in your previous role, Mr. Speaker, you had the opportunity of chairing the 2020 committee and you had the opportunity of hearing first-hand some of the vision that people like Michael Spence and other people had, in terms of the viability and the ongoing life of Churchill.

And I know my colleague from Elmwood will probably have more to say about the experience—his personal experience that he's had with respect to Churchill, so, in summary, that is why we've introduced this legislation. It is to create a new agency that will attract and co-ordinate investment linked to the Port of Churchill and, at the same time, support partnership in Manitoba's North. Canada's only Arctic port—it needs obviously to play a larger role in shipping goods across the country and elsewhere. The Port of Churchill has always been very important to our economy and has play—and is

poised to play an even bigger role in the future of this province.

And we're not only talking about Churchill, but we're also talking about the Bayline and the communities within the Bay Line and the importance of their ongoing life, as well, and the role that they play overall. When we talk about Churchill, we're not simply talking about the town of Churchill; we're also talking about the entire Bay Line where the rail line runs.

So we have some tremendous opportunity and I look forward to further ideas. And I know that members opposite are quite aware of the opportunities that exist in northern communities, and I certainly want to hear what they have to say about the ongoing life of the Port of Churchill.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks at this time and thank you very much.

* (16:20)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, and, Mr. Speaker, ever since I was elected to the Legislature back in 1986, I can recall numerous times when the NDP members in this Chamber spoke to resolutions involving Churchill, and the efforts that we did in opposition and in government to make certain that Churchill survived and prospers—prospered. And the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) clearly spelled out in his address this afternoon of how difficult it's been for Churchill. A matter of fact, you know, I have to admire Mayor Mike Spence, who I've met several times, and other people in Churchill who have stuck with the efforts to keep Churchill alive and keep Churchill expanding. And they've done this at quite a cost because it's been many, many years that the Churchill history has been an up-and-down one. It's actually a miracle that it's still surviving, and numerous towns have risen up and prospered and died over the last 100 years, but Churchill is very resolute and it will not fail.

Now, just in my lifetime, I remember back in the early—and many of you here will as well—back in the early '60s, there was a Black Brant missile that was being tested and developed in the port—at the rocket range in Churchill. And, as you'll recall, there was a military base—matter of fact, Churchill has a world-class runway there where big planes can land, and so it has a military background in that there was a military base there. *[interjection]* And, as the

member points out, the rocket range was there. And I remember all the testing of the Black Brant rockets of the day.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, it was those Conservative and Liberal governments, particularly Liberal governments, over the years that were in power, and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) is up here, you know, talking about how great a job he's done keeping Churchill alive and all the great things he did for Churchill, but, you know, just—it was 1987, I believe, that—the—no, sorry, 1997, that OmniTRAX took over from CN. And that's—and who was in government federally when that happened? The former—the member for River Heights was the—in the government at the time.

And then we had the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that I didn't realize that he's the tycoon that he is, because he was talking about his history involving Churchill, and I was totally unaware of this, that he actually made a bid to take over OmniTRAX. Now, when you understand that OmniTRAX was sold to the—sorry, the OmniTRAX bought—the Denver company bought the railway from—brought the railway for only \$1, and they won the bid, the question then becomes: How much did the member for Brandon West actually offer?

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And then he goes on to admit—you know, I guess it's a day for admissions—but he admits that he's the—he was a Lloyd's name. And that sounds really impressive, you know, because I remember years ago, when the NDP government of Howard Pawley was in government, and we had to—the government had to go cap in hand, fly over to London, England, because that's where every year the reinsurance contracts are signed for all the insurance companies, all the insurance companies that you're all familiar with. They insure your houses; they insure your cars. And, but there is kind of one exception to standard insurance companies, and that is a company called Lloyd's of London. It's not really a company itself, and it operates on the basis of what they call names. And so it's not as impressive as you think. You can get in with as little as \$100,000. Matter of fact, some dentists in Winnipeg, a number of—20 years ago, invested \$100,000. And guess what? They lost it all because it's an open-ended contract. So, presumably, the member put his \$100,000 into a Lloyd's name. He doesn't say whether he lost his shirt, whether he made anything. Maybe it all disappeared for all we know.

But, presumably, when he bought that Lloyd's contract, he might've tried to find out what they were reinsuring, and maybe it was shipping. Maybe it was ships. So, in a roundabout sort of way, he's kind of indirectly responsible for all those shipping regulations we've got that won't let the ships come into Churchill in the first place. So, you know, he draws—and I assume he's representing the Conservative policy on Churchill here, but his presentation seems to suggest that government investment is bad and private investment is good.

So I think if we were do a tally sheet here, and add up how much government investments have been put into Churchill over the years—I mean, I don't have the list, but I'm sure it's a huge amount of money to build that port. And now let me add up all that private investment again. It was a dollar for OmniTRAX.

Okay, so I'm all in favour of having private entrepreneurs involved. That's a good thing. But let's not stand up here and make all kinds of speeches about how awful the government is and how they can never get anything right, and how private business is going to solve all our problems. And the question is, what have they solved up 'til now? I mean, it's the taxpayers that are expected to go and build the railway in the first place, and then go sell it to private sector for a dollar; that's good Conservative economics, I guess.

So I really do think that there's a really good future for Churchill in spite of the pessimism out there. And one of the avenues that we have to look at here—and we go back to the origins of Churchill and its past as a military with—as a military component to it—and the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) knows this. We have a—we had a defence argument for things like pipelines, for things like power lines. Well, we also have a defence argument for the Port of Churchill.

The Prime Minister has gone to great lengths to, you know, run up to the Arctic every summer, and hide from the Parliament, and their asking questions about the Senate. And he—and the Prime Minister rightly is trying to exercise some sort of Arctic sovereignty, because, you know, he might go up there and find Putin's there before him, and that would drive him totally crazy; he would not enjoy that.

So, I mean, anything that we can do to promote Arctic sovereignty, you know, and support the Prime Minister and the federal government in that

endeavour, I think, is something we should be doing. So that should be an argument that they should be making to the Legislature here and to their counterparts in Ottawa, that we support, that they support, developing the Port of Churchill, and keeping a military presence up there, in that area. And the minister for northern and native affairs, summed it up well, and he's meeting with the participants in the area.

And, you know, a number of years ago, I heard that member—the new member talking about—well, the new member from Morris, I believe it was—who was suggesting that we shouldn't be banning cigarette smoking in the public. I think I saw it today, because it was kind of an interference in private business. So I kind of overheard him making a speech the other day, talking about gas prices and stuff like that. I think he's been reading some Hansards, you know, back a ways.

But you know, in my many visits up to Churchill, I did discover that in fact it's no secret up there that there is gasoline up there, and there's big storage tanks, at the port. And, as a matter of fact, what they do is they bring in the gasoline and they actually put it in the tankers and then they go and send it up north to Rankin Inlet. And they service that whole area.

And our argument at the day—and this was a number of years ago now—was, well, if you can do that, then why can't you send some of that gasoline south? But there was no suggestion at the time that somehow you would be doing this without the proper authorities, without the environmental hearings, and without making sure the track could handle it.

Now, anybody—you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) should come up there and take a ride on that railway. He's going to get quite an experience. I bet you he's never been on this railway, but I tell you, he'd be jiggling around back and forth. He'd have to spend his time in the bar car, I would think.

* (16:30)

But it's an awfully slow process. I mean, that railway track, you know, is lucky to carry the tourists that are going up there. And so, you know, obviously, money would have to be spent, and we'd have to do the environmental studies to do something like this.

Another capacity of the—of Churchill is the tourism industry. For example, in the summertime, when we get into the season of the beluga whales in August and then the bears—the polar bears—in September, you can't even rent a sleeper up to Churchill on the train. The sleepers are sold out.

As a matter of fact, I think a few years ago when I was talking to Mike Spence, they were actually booked online, that the Japanese tourists would be booking the sleepers, and you can't get one because it's a big destination for Japanese people, and the northern lights are a big attraction. So I would highly recommend it to people here, especially on the Conservative side of the House, and either book those sleepers early or you'll be sitting with me in the bar car 'til midnight and rocking around.

But this is a very, very important tourist industry that we would've not noticed back in—back years and years ago. Len Evans, a member of this House, always told me a story about how he, when he was 20 years old and newly married, you know, went up to Churchill, and there was 1,000 or 2,000, 3,000 people there. He worked for Statistics Canada, and he told me that he wasn't enamoured with the size of the mosquitoes up there and the quantity of the mosquitoes. And so, after a year, Len was quite happy to be leaving, as it turned out.

But those were the days before the tourist industry that we have today. I mean, the fact that you have people paying top dollar from Japan booking online and coming out to Churchill to see the beluga whales and then to see the bears in September and the northern lights is really something that we have to appreciate and something that we have to promote for the future.

So, you know, that's why the North, you know, needs a party like the NDP who concentrates on the North issues and actually can be counted to support the North at different—at the different junctures.

You know, let's go back to those great Liberal days, back in the 1960s when we had the grain going to Thunder Bay and Vancouver. That was the only place. Basically, the federal government supported those two ports—supported those two ports—at the expense of Churchill. Churchill wasn't in the equation. Churchill was always squeezed out as a viable option. So the Conservatives and—the Liberals and the Conservatives, interchangeable, you know, are coming to the table rather late on this.

When I hear the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard)—I guess he's getting ready for the big convention this weekend and has to get some words on the record on different issues here—but, I mean, he's telling us how he was involved in somehow saving the port or promoting the report—the port. But, I mean, his party had been in power forever, and they were—and they basically ignored the Port of Churchill and let things slide and then, at the end of the day, went and sold it, sold it off to OmniTRAX.

And then let's look at the Conservatives. I mean, how have they been any better in this? As a matter of fact, we can't even get them to come up and debate on this bill. We've been here all afternoon hearing presentations, and all we've had is the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) telling us how much money he's got, or thinks he's got, depending on how things worked out with that name that he invested in. So, I mean, he's making the argument, presumably representing their argument, that somehow private investment is the only answer to Churchill and, presumably, other so-called problems in Manitoba.

But, you know, I have to ask him and ask the member, who's chirping from somebody else's seat, I'd have to ask him just what does he think that the private sector is going to accomplish here? I mean, you know what, what have they accomplished so far on their own? Because, like I said, I don't have any problem with the private sector being involved in Churchill or anywhere else. But don't go and give your great speeches about free enterprise and how free enterprise is the only way to approach the problem and then—and, you know, and make a speech to the media—interview with the media, speeches in the Legislative Chamber, and then come in with your cap in hand through the backdoor and meet with the minister, go to the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) and say, oh, well, that'd be great, I mean we'll do the investment provided you give us the money, you know, you guarantee the loans. Right? And that's typical what we've seen from—now the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I mean, provided a historical overview for and history of the town of Churchill, and I wasn't totally up on all the facts that he mentioned, but the fact of the matter is that he goes back and he points out that when we were using wooden ships in the 1700s, that there was actually no need for insurance in those days. *[interjection]* And, well, but that's—I mean that's how long the Port of Churchill has been around, and there are many, many reasons why, regardless of how bad the economy is or how poor things have been

historically in Churchill, for us to keep a positive and keep supporting development there.

And what would the member have us do? You know, once again, the member who's chirping from someone else's seat, you know, what would you have us do? We have to be looking forward, and this bill offers a new approach and allows us to—allows this independent Churchill Arctic Port Canada Inc. to explore new ideas, get new people. The very private sector that he is talking about is going to benefit by this because they're going to be engaged. They're going to be approached and they're—it's going to be—issues are going to be discussed with them and see where they can have opportunities involving Churchill.

As the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) pointed out, this ties in with CentrePort, this ties in with making Manitoba a—the centre—we're the centre of North America. And, as a matter of fact, a number of years ago, when I believe MaryAnn Mihychuk was the minister, I remember—*[interjection]* I'm glad you asked that. I woke them up a bit here. They've been kind of nodding off on me except for the odd one—but I have to tell you that I did speak with her on some occasions and suggested to her that, you know, one idea would be to approach, like, Dell Computers. It would make sense that you have a huge company like Dell Computers and, you know, they're not as popular as they once were, but there was a time when a majority of people were probably buying their equipment from Dell, a very well-built product. It was very reliable and the price was very reasonable. Well, the fact of the matter is, that most of their parts are shipped in from Asia, from China. And so it made sense, to me anyway, that we should be talking to Michael Dell and try to get him to build a distribution point up here.

Now you can't win, and the members should pay attention, you can't win unless you're in the game. You know, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) spends his days and time looking for opportunities for Manitoba, bringing mining companies into Manitoba, not scaring them away like the members opposite. And so the point is that if you're going to make a case for, say, Dell Computers to build its warehouse here, so it could fly its parts in from China and then ship them south. We're in the proper time zone. We're very centrally located. We have the facilities. I mean all of the arguments are there for getting a company like that involved, and then when you get a company like that, that's your core, your

anchor, from there, many others will—will show interest and will follow.

* (16:40)

So I—clearly the Conservatives don't understand this, or don't want to understand this, or just not happy that they didn't think of it first, you know, because they were here. There was the Sterling Lyon incarnation here four years; well, it didn't last long; wasn't really a happy time, as I recall. And then there was Gary Filmon's 11 years. That was a little happier and a little longer, but it, too, kind of came to an end. But all these possibilities were there, but they didn't—they didn't follow up on it at all.

So it's taken the NDP, the current government—they haven't—it's taken the NDP to not only, you know, to push this file along, and I don't think the residents of Manitoba can afford having that group on this side of the House. It's like almost a wrecking ball—pardon me; I see I have somebody's attention. But, you know, I mean, the Conservative government—Conservative governments in the past have been like wrecking balls in government. *[interjection]*

I remember—yes, I mean, the minister wants to talk about the Eaton's building, and certainly, you know, when they were in government last time, you know they wanted to shut down the Concordia Hospital? Like, they just don't go—the Conservatives just don't go halfway here; they don't look at, you know, small cuts; they just whack the whole thing. They want to whack the Concordia Hospital, and the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), she was here at the time. I don't know what happened to her when she heard that. She must have got quite excited. I think the Misericordia, weren't they going to whack that one, too?

But that's their kind of accountant's approach to situations. It doesn't matter whether they look at the budget; they say, well, we've got to get rid of such and such, right? So, well, let's just shut the hospital, right? We don't have any seats up there anyway, and the one we've got we can do without. So we'll survive. And that's what they've done.

So, you know, the public cannot afford to take a chance on these guys because they see what they've done in the past. When it comes to Churchill, who thinks for a moment that they won't develop the same approach? They'll look at their little map and it's going to say, well, we don't have any seats up there; there's no blue up there, right? And they

look at the economics and say, well, it's going to cost the government so much money to build this infrastructure so the entrepreneurs can have their day, and they're going to decide at the end of the day to pack up and go somewhere else.

And we remember, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) remembers, back in the Schreyer days, when they uncovered one of the studies from the previous government, from the Roblin government, and I think I have that around somewhere. I'll have to bring it in for the next time I get to make a speech in this House, but it was very interesting. It basically had an overlay. This was kind of a top secret memo that was sent out to their planning committee, and they basically recommended—they classified all the ridings, and they recommended that every program—every program that was costed out that the government introduced was to be looked at in the view of how it would help the sustainability of the government on a riding-by-riding basis. And I remember Sid Green standing up here, and, yes, he probably rode this issue for a couple of years. But that's the kind of planning that the Conservatives did in the past. It was all based on what would help them in the short run and keep them elected in their seats.

Contrast that to the NDP who built roads—as a matter of fact, didn't we build a hospital, I think it was recently, and—was it a hospital? Well, we built something in Steinbach. Yes, there is lots of activity. Well, we have built lots of infrastructure in Conservative ridings, you know, personal-care homes. We've done all sorts of things—schools for the benefit of the people of Manitoba, and that is something that the people of Manitoba know.

At the end of the day, that's why the NDP core support is so solid, because they know at the end of the day that, you know, maybe some mistakes get made occasionally, but, you know, at the end of the day—and they know that the NDP members are not out trying to make a buck through the back door on some private deal using inside information. They know the NDP are working very, very diligently to get projects moving.

And—I mean, it goes—it—the member, you know, the member wants to talk about taxes. They are the biggest bunch of hypocrites you could ever find. They stand up here and they ask questions about, you know, build me a hospital and build me a road, and they're not even subtle about it. They don't come up to the highways minister after question period like

they used to do, and they'd ask you at least—ask you about the road privately and maybe separate it a little bit from question period. Now they include it all in the same question period, like, it's—just got to get it over with; we only got 40 minutes. Let's go in there and ask—we'll ask for that road, ask for that hospital, ask for this, ask for that, and then turn around and say, you got to cut the taxes. You know, taxes are too high. You got to deal with the deficit. Oh, well, then how are we going to do that?

You know, so—but we know what they do when they are in government, and what they have done, basically, is a broad-axe, broad-brush approach to things and just cut entire programs. And that's been the history of the Conservatives here provincially.

So, you know, I really would like to know why the members have not, you know, why the Finance critic—I think she's the Finance critic—nope, maybe not—but the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), you know, hasn't got up and spoken on this Churchill resolution. Well, I mean, you only had one speaker for the whole afternoon; that was it. Well, I would—I mean, if they had more speakers, I wouldn't have had my chance. They obviously want to hear me—hear what I have to say, because if they didn't, they would have got their own speakers up. And we wouldn't have had it. We wouldn't have had all—so now you have to put up with it, I guess. You don't have a choice, but it's your own—you did it with your own hands.

So, you know, there's a lot of reasons why this is a very, very good idea. You know, we get back to the whole issue of the single-desk selling of grain—you know, on one hand, they open it up, degrade the single desk and promote the private grain companies, the very grain companies that have been the historical enemies of Churchill in the first place.

You know, when the Wheat Board was fully operational, what was it doing? It was designating grain shipments to Churchill; that was happening only a couple of years ago. What is going to happen when they get rid of the subsidy, right, their year two of five-year subsidy? When that goes away, you tell me what's going to happen. I would like to hear the members—the members—any of those members stand up and explain all this to me, right. So far it's been an ideological group within the Conservative Party that promoted this whole agenda. In spite of votes I believe that the farmers had, they simply brought it through and they're sitting there agreeing to this.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And then all of a sudden what's going to happen in a couple of years, when the subsidies disappear in three more years, you tell me what's going to happen then. And then what are they going to say? You know, maybe we're going to see the same old argument from the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), if he's still around. We're going to hear that same argument from him saying that well, we got to leave it to private enterprise. Private enterprise is going to solve all our problems. Private enterprise is what we have to promote. And that's what scares the most of the people in my—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member's time has elapsed.

* (16:50)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I—it's always a difficult task following the MLA for Elmwood. He's articulate, well-spoken and very knowledgeable member of this House, and I would just like to follow up by just making a couple of quick comments, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as a former minister of Transportation, Government Services, Infrastructure and Transportation, I had the opportunity to meet with my colleague, Minister Baird, Minister Lebel, in Ottawa, with regard to Churchill. And I really want to congratulate, quite frankly, the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister not only has invested money in the Hudson Bay rail line, goes to Churchill, but also wanting to invest in Churchill as a port and realizes and knows the significance of this particular port.

For years, members of the opposition didn't really care too much for the North. I'll give you a quick example. The election, I believe it was in, maybe even 2011, but certainly 2007. The critic, and the member for Arthur-Virden at the time was my critic, and he stood up, but with their leader of the day, and said, we're going to take money out of northern Manitoba, take the highways money out of northern Manitoba and put it down in the south where there's some investment and real money.

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, we have the minister responsible for mines that is working closely with the industry. The kind of development that's going on in the North and just taking a look at Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting and the kind of opportunities that are taking place because of the minister for Kildonan making the effort to work with

the companies to ensure that the North is not only viable but is going to grow and will be a tremendous asset for Manitoba as a whole.

When you take a look at the Port of Churchill, Mr. Speaker, its geographical location, and the Prime Minister wants to have a port and a sense of being in the North, Churchill is the place where they really wanted to take a look at and really want to be. You have the Russians who—maybe today, the Russians have submarines going underneath the Arctic Ocean, we don't know. But the point is that you have to have—you have to be present in the North in order to do that. And the people that live in the North wanting to be assured that in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and the Yukon that we have a federal government that cares about them but also is prepared to be up there and to invest in the North.

With regard to the Port of Churchill and this particular act, The Churchill Arctic Port of Canada Act, is really important for a number of reasons. I'll look back, and I think the MLA for Elmwood was referring to a study that was done early, a royal commission that was put together by Duff Roblin, I believe, and Art Mauro, Arthur Mauro chaired that particular body. And, Arthur Mauro, to this day, will still talk about the importance of Churchill, and he's one of the best supporters of it. When he was on CentrePort board and also on the Airports Authority board, talked about Churchill and the importance of Churchill. And Arthur Mauro, I believe everyone in this House respects and knows of him or who have met him and worked with him, has the highest degree of respect for Art Mauro. And Art Mauro will be one of the first people to stand up and say that CentrePort will be—not only is important for Manitoba but will really be successful when we can take better advantage of the Port of Churchill to the north.

We talked about the Arctic Gateway, we talked about the northern bridge, flying from Krasnoyarsk, Russia, for example, as one location, or flying from India into Winnipeg, and then distributing whatever product we have into—that has come in into the rest of North America. And the other one is the Arctic Bridge, which uses the Northwest Passage—with global warming, whether people believe in global warming theories or not, the fact of the matter is, the Arctic ice is shrinking. Now you've got icebreakers that can keep the northern—Northwest Passage open 12 months of the year, and Art Mauro, he actually was a true visionary because Art Mauro talked about the day when there would be shipping through the

North, through the Northwest Passage into the Port of Churchill, and that everyone—everyone—should get on the same page with regard to this particular port.

So you had a military base there, you had a rocket range there that has gone by the wayside. The people of Churchill—and this is where the mayor of Churchill, Mike Spence, deserves a lot of credit doing whatever he can to ensure dollars are invested in Churchill as a community but as also as a port.

So, as the member from Elmwood pointed out, there are a lot of good examples to point to why Churchill is important, strategically, militarily. You know, as I mentioned today, we don't know what's going on, quite frankly, under the Arctic Ocean and whether it's submarines or who is there. There are days—we've seen Russia and what's happened to the Ukraine where you have a nation encroaching on other people's territory. Well, guess who's just across the Pole from us? It's the country of Russia. And so, I mean, Sarah Palin can see them from her front porch, but in Manitoba it's a little bit farther for us to look from the—from Churchill and look across the North Pole to see Russia.

But I can tell you that I've had the opportunity to go to the Port of Churchill with the Russian ambassador to Canada to take a look at the port, to view the port, and that was a number of years ago. We certainly disagree on many things, but he pointed out that this particular port is, strategically, for Canada, is one of the most important ports; it's the only deep-sea Arctic port we have. But Ambassador Mamedov pointed out that this particular port—Canada would be absolutely stupid not to invest in this port in the future.

So, if you take a look at what's going—what's happening politically around the world these days and, regrettably, what's happening in Russia and having them encroach on their neighbours, I think there are many people in Ottawa who are starting to pay attention that we need to do something with regard to our sovereignty in the North, and it's more than just planting a flag on an iceberg or going there and waving the Canadian flag and hoping that everyone will just say, oh, yes, of course, it's yours; your flag's there. Well, it doesn't work that way, and you have to be able to invest in the North, invest in Churchill.

And I believe that the Prime Minister has taken actually a very good first step by investing in northern Manitoba and the Hudson Bay line, trying to fix that line, so, as the member from Elmwood

pointed out, that there's no danger of spilling your drink on that train if it's going two kilometres an hour all the way from Churchill—or from The Pas all the way to Churchill and takes you a long time to travel VIA Rail to this particular port. So congratulations to the federal government. They realize its significance. It needs more of an investment, and we would hope that the federal government would partner with Manitoba and others to ensure that Churchill really reaches its true potential, as we all know that it can.

As Minister of Tourism, you have polar bears in Churchill, you have beluga whales in Churchill, you have the northern lights. Churchill is a tremendous asset for us strategically as far as tourism is concerned, and we have people that travel and spend a great deal of money coming from Germany and other countries around the world to visit Churchill. They pay a lot of money to see polar bears in the wild. It's our version of a safari. It's the northern safari, if you will—no different than going to see lions in the Serengeti. You can go to Churchill and see polar bears live right up against your Tundra Buggy looking you eye-to-eye. And if you've seen the latest ads that were run on—while the Olympics were playing, while the Oscars were on, tremendous promotion by Travel Manitoba and launched a new promotional package to try to encourage people to go to Churchill, go to northern Manitoba and really take advantage of what we have with regard to tourism.

So you have Churchill as a huge, huge positive economic driver for us. Prime Minister Harper knows it. He's seen it; he's looked at it possibly strategically, maybe at its location, for a lot of reasons. But, in Manitoba, we'd like to think that the North really means something to Ottawa; it certainly does to us.

I hope members opposite would agree with that. And I know, when we came into this building in 1999, the map ended just, I think, just south of Thompson some place—the province of Manitoba map, you know.

And in fact, you know, in fact, I talked to the member from Steinbach, and I said, if we really had an opportunity to do something, what would you like to see done to the map? He said, put the town of Pansy back on the map. The member from—the MLA for Steinbach—his family's from the town of Pansy. If you take a look at the provincial map today, the town of Pansy is on that map, and I know the member from Steinbach would be the first to thank me for

that, and I know he has. And—but the case is being made how important strategically Pansy is to Manitoba, and so all I'm making the case to the members opposite is that strategically Churchill is very, very important. So please don't forget—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Tourism will have 20 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, May the 12th.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 1, 2014

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