

Fourth 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	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon.	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Greg, Hon.	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	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	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	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Thomas, Hon.	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa	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, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Government Record—Apology Request

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Government members have been quoted as stating that Manitobans no longer trust the current government.

Sadly, these same members have reportedly stated that since 2014 the government has been focused on its own narrow political interests ahead of what was once a government plan and what would be indeed the priorities of Manitobans, and the Premier is driven by his desire to hold on to his leadership rather than by the best interests of Manitobans.

According to comments from government members, their caucus is divided by fundamental differences and animosity and that deep divisions are not just amongst the MLAs and caucus, but they exist at the staff level as well.

Regretfully, the dysfunction and infighting within the provincial government has nothing to do with addressing the fact Manitobans are paying more and getting less. A Winnipeg family pays \$3,200 more in sales and income tax than they would in Regina but receive some of the worst results in health care and education in the country.

Government members have said in the media that caucus dysfunction is entirely related to internal polls that indicate they are in annihilation territory, saying that, our numbers are down and the status quo is not good enough anymore; our own party pollsters have told us we're facing oblivion.

Little has been done by government members to end the infighting with the Premier, claiming retaliation is justified because of public comments such as, people have civil rights, but we also have an organization to run. Government members acting on behalf of the Premier have said publicly, we are not on a witch hunt, and have also said, we have to look at who caused this and who are the ones that have damaged us the most.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier of Manitoba to take responsibility and apologize to the people of Manitoba for the social and economic damage created by his failed leadership and the disgraceful conduct of government members that has destabilized the provincial government and hurt Manitoba businesses and families.

This petition is signed by J. Vermeersch, B. Cornbear, G. Paddock and many other fine Manitobans.

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

Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Every day, hundreds of Manitoba children walk to school in Oakbank and must cross PTH 206 at the intersection with Cedar Avenue.

(2) There have been many dangerous incidents where drivers use the right shoulder to pass vehicles and have stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left at this intersection.

(3) Law enforcement officials have identified this intersection as a hot spot of concern for the safety of schoolchildren, drivers and emergency responders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government improve the safety at the pedestrian corridor at the intersection of PTH 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank by considering such steps as highlighting pavement markings to better indicate the location of the shoulders and crosswalk, as well as installing a lighted crosswalk structure.

This is signed by A. Martin, D. Cann, C. Swayze and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Beausejour District Hospital— Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, 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 C. Mickey, C. Woloshyn, M. Loeb and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Community-Based Brain Injury Services and Supports

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Brain Injury Canada, cited at <http://braininjurycanada.ca/acquired-brain-injury/>, estimates that 50,000 Canadians sustain brain injuries each year, over 1 million Canadians live with the effects of an acquired brain injury, 30 per cent of all traumatic brain injuries are sustained by children and youth, and approximately 50 per cent of brain injuries come from falls and motor vehicle collisions.

(2) Studies conducted by Manitoba Health in 2003, 2006 and the Brandon Regional Health Authority in 2008 identified the need for community-based brain injury services.

(3) These studies recommended that Manitoba adopt the Saskatchewan model of brain injury services.

(4) The treatment and coverage for Manitobans who suffer brain injuries varies greatly, resulting in huge inadequacies depending upon whether a person suffers the injury at work, in a motor vehicle accident, through assault or from medical issues such as a stroke, aneurysm or anoxia due to cardiac arrest or other medical conditions.

* (13:40)

(5) Although in-patient services including acute care, short and longer term rehabilitation are available throughout the province, brain injury patients who are discharged from hospital often experience discontinuation or great reduction of services which results in significant financial and emotional burdens being placed on family and friends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to develop and evolve community-based brain injury services that include but are not limited to:

case management services, known also as service navigation; safe and accessible housing in the community; proctor or coach-type assistance for community reintegration programs; community access to community-based-improved access to community-based rehabilitation services; and improved transportation, especially for people living in rural Manitoba.

(2) To urge the provincial government to encompass financial and emotional supports for families and other caregivers in the model that is developed.

Signed by B. Fanzega, P. Viskemp, A. Osted and many other Manitobans.

Amendment to The Mount Carmel Clinic Act— Board Membership Reduction

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) In 1926, the Mount Carmel Clinic, MCC, became incorporated under The Mount Carmel Clinic Act.

(2) Since 2011, the Mount Carmel Clinic board of directors and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority have supported a reduction in the number of board members which currently stands at 25.

(3) After external consultations and a review of its governance model, the board of directors adopted a resolution in 2013 to reduce the size of its membership from 25 to best practice of 12 members minimum to 15 members maximum, with quorum set at 50 per cent plus one.

(4) This decision was due to the board size being unusually large for a non-profit, often resulting in difficulties maintaining a full complement of members and board members missing meetings.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the Mount Carmel Clinic RSM 1990, chapter c. 120, section 9 be amended to have the affairs of the corporation managed by a board of directors consisting of a minimum of 12 persons to a maximum of 15 persons, elected in such a manner to serve for such term as may be prescribed by bylaw, but such bylaw shall have no force or effect until

approved by the minister responsible for The Health Services Insurance Act.

This petition is signed by A. Shpeller, acting executive director, and E. Bishop, chair.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have no guests to introduce at the current time, and so we'll proceed directly to oral questions.

Fiscal Management Government Record

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Quite a session, Mr. Speaker, broken promises and a government that has stopped listening.

The NDP promised no tax hikes in the last election; they broke their promise and imposed the largest back-to-back tax grabs in Manitoba history. They promised a balanced budget by 2014, broke their promise and have now given up on balancing the budget at all.

Moody's downgraded our debt outlook last year, the first time in a generation, and the NDP ignored the warning. Moody's has described the NDP budget as credit negative, and the NDP has ignored the warning. This Premier has doubled the debt, and NDP waste threatens front-line services, and still the Premier can't stop the debt train and the ribbon cutting.

Why is this Premier putting his need to buy votes ahead of Manitobans' needs to protect essential front-line services?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, certainly the text that the Leader of the Opposition read out is not unfamiliar to us on this side of the House. He wants to invite Manitobans to experience austerity under his policies, cut \$550 million out of the budget. He wants to privatize daycare. He wants to privatize social services.

These are what he calls being positive. This is his positive approach for the future of Manitoba: less resources for the people that really need it in our society, more bled off to investors, some of which may or may not contribute to the Conservative Party

of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. Only the Leader of the Opposition would know the story on that.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's economy is performing among the best in Canada right now. Our job creation record is the strongest in the country, over 14,000 new jobs. Wage growth is extremely strong in Manitoba, among the best in the country. More people are living and working in Manitoba than ever in the history of the province, and we can do more if we keep on the path that we've chosen.

NDP Severance Packages Compensation Disclosure

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): The path the Premier has chosen is to bleed off support from his own people, Mr. Speaker.

Six senior staffers got the axe. They took off for a new address. But pity not these sacky hacks. Big bonuses won't see the press. We gave them a departure tax. We're paying more and getting less.

If paying the super bonuses to former friends is the Premier's idea of the right thing to do, why is the Premier hiding the amounts from the public? When will the Premier stop hiding from the public and release the numbers of severance payments made to his former friends?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Another example—another classic example of the Leader of the Opposition's double standard. It took 16 years to discover what the severance payments were to people that worked for the former government that were involved in vote rigging, Mr. Speaker. That's his standard.

Mr. Speaker, our approach is to focus on making a better Manitoba for Manitobans. Our infrastructure program, which the members opposite have voted against every single year, creating 59,000 opportunities for employment in Manitoba over five years, \$1.1-billion lift in the economy last year, which is doing tremendous things. Roads are being paved all across Manitoba, in the city of Winnipeg, outside of the city of Winnipeg. Sewer and water projects are being done all throughout Manitoba, making for safer communities.

Those are being done while we increase the apprenticeship opportunities throughout the province: over 10,000 young people training to be apprentices in Manitoba, getting good jobs with good wages, deciding to make their lives in Manitoba.

More people moved to Manitoba last year than ever in the history of the province. Over 15,000 people moved to Manitoba last year, Mr. Speaker. That's a story we can be proud of and the members opposite—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time on this question has elapsed.

Emergency Services Government Record

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, well, the net—the Premier can look it up, net—the net out-migration from Manitoba leads the country for the last eight years. Eight years in a row and getting worse under the NDP.

For the second year in a row, the Canadian Institute for Health Information—the members should listen; this concerns a lot of Manitobans—had the worst ER wait times in the country—the worst ER wait times in the country. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has admitted that the NDP approach to ER fixes has failed. The problem is getting worse, not better.

Under the NDP, taxicab medicine continues. There have been recent reports of taxicabs dropping patients who should be in hospitals at overcrowded homeless shelters, a practice so pervasive emergency shelters even have a name for it: dump job.

Now, the response from the NDP: desperate deflection, denial, disinterest as Manitobans are forced to wait hour after hour for emergency health care they urgently need and deserve. Languishing in 10th, this Premier's failed to act to address this crisis.

Why does he insist on spending more and getting less for Manitobans?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, not uncommon for the Leader of the Opposition to only tell part of the story. ER wait times include the lowest number of people returning because the procedures didn't work out to their advantage. The results are very strong when it comes to the quality of care that people receive when they go to an ER.

And over 100,000 people have gone to QuickCare clinics throughout Manitoba. That's a concept and a support system that did not exist under the members opposite.

Let's look at the approach they were taking. They wanted to close ERs, Mr. Speaker. They were

looking at shutting down hospitals such as the Seven Oaks hospital, such as the Grace Hospital. We've improved investments in those hospitals. We've made sure that there's more people working there. We've trained more doctors to work in Manitoba, and the results are starting to show.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Non-Profit Organizations Steady Growth Campaign

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Last is last, Mr. Speaker, but it doesn't stop the Premier from trying to advertise.

Steady growth in health-care waits and missing children while in care. Steady growth in wasteful spending. Steady growth is everywhere.

Put a sign up. Advertise it. Shout it out loud if you dare. Last in reading, math and science. Steady growth is everywhere.

Steady growth in hiking taxes. Debt has doubled. Cupboard's bare. Bipole III won't cost a penny. Steady growth is everywhere.

* (13:50)

The AG said, please, shop smarter; sole-source contracts just aren't fair. What's 5 million, said the Premier. Steady growth is everywhere.

Why did the Premier do a 16 per cent clawback in the last quarter of our non-profits that work with Manitoba's most vulnerable people? Was it to help pay for his Steady Growth ad campaign?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, one of the most stark contrasts we see in the Legislature is that's the Leader of the Opposition being positive. That's his version of a compelling vision for the future of Manitoba: privatizing social services, privatizing daycare, hammering down on public sector workers that are doing a good job.

What has our approach been? To have one of the stronger economies in Canada within partnership with all of the communities, making sure that we invest in people so that they can get a good education and good skills so that they can enter the labour force, making sure families have the support of quality daycare spots in Manitoba with high-highly qualified and well-trained early childhood educators, with one of the few provinces—only one other—with a pension plan for daycare workers so they can have a career there.

The Leader of the Opposition's approach: Take one of the best daycare systems in the country and privatize it. That is not a positive vision for the future of Manitoba.

Floodfighting Equipment Contract Tendering Process

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, if the Premier's vision was that positive, he wouldn't have half his caucus against him.

The rebel five caused quite a fright. The Premier's team worked day and night. Taxpayers paid them. That's not right. But, oh, the drama. It was tight. The Premier won, the lucky guy. Is it Kumbaya or kum-bye-bye?

The union bosses called the shot. They brought those rebels to their knees. The cost of winning is a lot. They got the forest, not the trees. The Premier won, the lucky guy. Is it Kumbaya or kum-bye-bye?

He won the battle, not the war. The rebels lost, but will they quit? The whistle-blowers have much more, and they'll keep blowing bit by bit. The Premier won, the lucky guy. Is it Kumbaya or kum-bye-bye?

Will the Premier admit that his government approved a \$5-million order from a friend and donor, without tender, of Tiger Dam floodfighting equipment? Will he admit that that's what he did?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Seuss is looking better and better, I must say, in terms of the quality of the literature that we're getting.

The comments from the Leader of the Opposition demonstrate once again why he should stay in opposition, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. He has no compelling good ideas for the future of Manitoba. What are some of the things he's promised? We will never build hydro for export. He wants to kiss off \$10 million in export contracts and thousands of jobs for the future of Manitoba. He stacks that on top of what he calls two-tier health care, a system, he says, whose time has come for Manitoba.

We believe in universal health care to meet the needs of all Manitobans with more doctors, 640 more, not 200 less. We believe in having more nurses trained and being available to provide front-line service where people need it; his approach is to hammer down and reduce their opportunities and actually fire them. We believe in having more

universal daycare which is affordable in Manitoba; his approach is to privatize it.

That is not a compelling vision, no matter how he tries to make it rhyme.

NDP Performance Record Election Request

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Premier is fortunate Alex Forrest didn't realize Dr. Seuss was his first choice and switched over to the Premier.

You know, the fact of the matter is all the Premier has left is fear. He's afraid and he wants everyone else to be afraid along with him. All he has is empty promises, ribbon-cutting tours. All he has is secrecy: hide from the public, hide the facts.

You know, Manitobans are tired of paying more and getting less. The NDP has driven taxes and the provincial debt to all-time highs. The results in health, education and social services are dead last in Canada; they continue to reach all-time lows. The crisis deepens and they have a desperate, divided and dysfunctional government mired in an increasing number of scandals and under investigation by almost every independent officer of the Legislature. And they are divided and they remain divided, and they do not believe themselves and they do not trust themselves and they do not like themselves.

Will the Premier do the right thing? Will he walk over with his caucus to the Lieutenant Governor, introduce his caucus to the Lieutenant Governor and ask the Lieutenant Governor to call an election?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, a noted columnist in one of our daily newspapers has said of the Leader of the Opposition, he has adopted a glib, almost adolescent tone that is disturbingly short on real policy and routinely fails to offer voters a clear choice.

That is in evidence again today in his performance in the House. He's trying to pretend that he can rhyme his way away from explaining what his agenda is for the people of Manitoba. We're just seeing the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Speaker. The hidden agenda is just starting to raise its ugly head above the horizon. It means private daycare; it means private social services; it means a program of austerity; it means a program of shutting down the redevelopment of our Hydro assets in the province.

When will the Leader of the Opposition come clean and put his positive agenda, so-called positive

agenda, on the record for the people of Manitoba so they can make a real choice about the future of this province?

We will grow the province. We will educate young people. We will look after people in the health-care system. We will do it in a balanced and prudent way, Mr. Speaker, while keeping Manitoba affordable. The member opposite has none of those visions and goals for the future of Manitoba.

Floodfighting Equipment Contract Tendering Process

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Fear and misdirection, that's what we hear from this Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the minister for MIT issued a request for proposal or tender for rapid deployment flood protection systems on December 12th, 2014. It closed January 28th, 2015, five months ago. The tender has not been withdrawn, closed nor awarded.

Why is this tender still open?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I—first of all, I note it's the final day of the spring sitting. I would've thought members opposite might have wanted to ask questions about the record increase in our highway construction this year. We're looking at about 45 per cent increase.

I think they might want to look at asking questions about our investments in terms of core infrastructure in dealing with some of the flood-impacted communities, the 80 bridges in 2011 and 2014. I thought they might want to ask a question about flood mitigation, the fact that we're moving ahead in terms of building the permanent outlets from Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin, building up Assiniboine dikes.

Instead, what they're doing now is, after several days of talking about an untendered contract, asking about a contract that was tendered. And I remind them again the only flood equipment that has been given to the Interlake regional tribal council has come from the federal government.

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

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, the tender was first issued over six months ago but has not yet been awarded, even though the minister had a press conference almost a year ago promising flood protection systems. It was apparently urgent at that time.

Mr. Speaker, submissions have been received for this tender, they've been evaluated, and a recommendation would've been made.

Why has the tender not been awarded? Is it because Tiger Dams were not selected as the preferred flood protection system?

Mr. Ashton: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting watching the questioning, the line of questioning, from members opposite over the last number of days.

I note, for example, that—I nearly fell out of my chair when I read about the Leader of the Opposition on the weekend, where—I quote from the Free Press; these aren't my words—it said: "Goodbye, Mr. Cranky Pants. Hello, Mr. Optimistic."

You know, Mr. Speaker, within a matter of days of this member putting on the record scurrilous comments, unfounded allegations against myself that he conveniently will not repeat outside of the House, when they talk repeatedly about untendered contracts, we now on the final day of the session, have they—have a question about a tendered contract?

Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest members opposite get their facts straight. And as for Mr. Optimistic, I haven't seen too many signs of that yet.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, the minister of MIT has gone to great lengths to avoid the proper process to purchase Tiger Dams. When he finally exhausted all attempts to sole-source this contract, he was forced to tender it by the Premier (Mr. Selinger).

The tender has not been awarded, cancelled, closed nor withdrawn.

Is that because the recommendation was not for Tiger Dams but, indeed, for another company?

Mr. Ashton: You know, Mr. Speaker, I'd invite members opposite to go through Hansard.

* (14:00)

I point out on the record again that the Leader of the Opposition has not withdrawn those comments or repeated them outside of the House.

I'd point out the degree to which, over the last week, they kept talking about an untendered contract. I point out, again, that we have not issued a contract for flood equipment and it's been the federal government—the Harper government—that recognized the needs of the First Nations for flood equipment. Mr. Speaker, we did go to tender and no contract has

been awarded. They got equipment from the federal government.

So, again, all we've seen in the last week, I suggest they get their facts straight, because they have repeatedly put false information on the record and they still have not withdrawn the scurrilous comments that were made last week.

Children in Care Graduation Rates

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the Child and Family Services minister has over 11,000 kids in care. More than two thirds of them do not even graduate high school.

We know that this minister, by her own admission, doesn't track attendance of kids in her care. Taking on this responsibility as minister, her job is to promise to protect, educate and provide skills to the most vulnerable kids in our society, which includes a high quality of education.

Will she stand up today and apologize to those 11,000-plus kids in care for 16 years of broken promises and poor education results?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): What I will report to the House is that we have more than tripled the amount of funding to child welfare, that we have devolved the system, that we are working with the First Nations and the Metis communities across this province to provide prevention, intervention and protection services for Manitoba children. We are working alongside them. We are making a difference.

We have a lot more work to do, we know that. But by investing in prevention, by reducing poverty, by creating jobs and employment, by ensuring that we have one of the strongest child-care systems, we're going to make that difference. We're going to work with Manitoba families—all Manitoba families—and ensure that they have opportunities across this province.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, some more broken promises coming out of this minister's mouth this morning—or this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been in power for 16 years, more than doubled the number of kids in care, more than two thirds of those kids do not even graduate from high school.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are tired of the NDP broken promises and want a change for the better.

Will the minister of Child and Family Services and the Education Minister both admit that they promised to fix the issues and have failed?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: What I will commit to the members of this House and all Manitobans is that we will continue to invest in their futures every day. We will not threaten them with reckless cuts. We will not privatize child care. We will continue to provide support to Manitoba families.

We are going to—we have an education task force that is being led by community leaders that are going to help us identify the way forward to ensure that we're providing a good quality education for all Manitoba children. What we're also going to do is make sure that we are protecting children when that is necessary.

But our most important initiative that we have to in-focus on is prevention, ensuring that families have the resources that they need so their children can prosper and can stay in their home communities.

MRI Wait-List Reduction Promise

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): This NDP government promised voters, vote for us and we will slash MRI waiting lists to eight weeks.

Can the Minister of Health explain to Manitobans why they have failed miserably and broken that promise?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): I'd like to thank the member for the question.

MRI wait times, as well as other wait times, are of crucial importance to all Manitobans. I can assure Manitobans if they need an MRI urgently, they will get it urgently and promptly. We are working with a variety of partners to increase the capacities on MRI. It's a part of the long-term capital investment plans that we have been fulfilling at a variety of locations.

And I am proud to say that a hospital that serves both the critic's community and my own is going to be the first community hospital—the Grace Hospital—is going to be the first one with an MRI.

We're going to keep investing. We're going to keep building.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, it appears that this NDP government will say anything to get elected.

I'd like to table a chart which shows skyrocketing MRI waits. Mr. Speaker, average waits this

March were 21 weeks, far above the eight weeks that this government promised to deliver on. Patients on that waiting list, 13,600, double what it was three years ago. Things are getting worse, not better under this government.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health to tell the over 13,000 patients who are on the waiting list: Why did her NDP government break this promise to Manitoba patients?

Ms. Blady: Again, I'd like to thank the member for the question.

Family know—families want to know that the government is on their side, which means investing in diagnostic imaging equipment that helps patients get the care that they need sooner. And rather than freezing health capital spending like the former government did, we are continuing to make sure that there are more MRI machines operating in Manitoba, not less.

Over the last 15 years there has been a massive increase in the number of MRI scans that take place in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, in 1999 there were 10,622 MRI scans. That's compared to the nearly 72,000 that happened last year, a record-setting sevenfold increase. And at the same time that the demand for MRIs went up, the wait time has gone down from a high of 29 weeks with members opposite to 21 weeks today, and we'll continue to bring it down further.

Premier of Manitoba Caucus Support

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's been quite the spectacle, of course, this session. We had former senior ministers of this government turn their back on the Premier (Mr. Selinger) while he was answering questions. We saw former senior ministers of this government shake their head in the negative while the Premier was answering during this session. We could hear the screaming from the caucus rooms when the NDP were having their caucus meetings. That's what's going on in the NDP.

Now, we know—we know—when we used to ask questions of the Premier, well, people on this side didn't believe the answers, but now even people on that side don't believe the answers.

If nobody in this House believes the Premier, why should anybody outside of this House believe the Premier?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): You know, Mr. Speaker, I actually wish that the—I appreciate the Opposition House Leader, you know, sitting in the front row, he doesn't have opportunity to see the looks on his members' faces, but he might've wanted looked at the looks on his members' faces when the Leader of the Opposition turned his lead questions into some pale imitation of Dr. Seuss.

And I want to say that members opposite do have some experience in terms of leadership issues, Mr. Speaker. I note that the Leader of the Opposition actually campaigned when he was Member of Parliament to be Leader of the Opposition at that time, and I do recall and I think it was Charles Adler was quoted the time saying that he expected that the Leader of the Opposition hoped that the public will forget the way he sponged off taxpayers when he was running for leader 10 years ago.

Former Cabinet Ministers Reasons for Leaving

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): That's a little rich for a guy who tried to give a \$5-million untendered contract, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know, members who've been here for a while remember that Gary Doer once said that he would be the chief ethics officer for the NDP. Well, boy, things have changed, because now the Leader of the NDP, he's involved, he's involved with trying to ensure that ethical issues don't come to the forefront and that they're hidden. That's what's happening now.

We didn't get all the answers to the questions that we wanted in this session, but we did get a partial answer. The question that was raised by many people is, why did the rebels resign? Why did they leave Cabinet?

Well, we got part of the reason, but the answer that we didn't get—the answer that we didn't get—is why didn't the rest of them resign and go and ensure we have an ethical government and call an election, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Opposition House Leader confirmed just what I said a few moments ago. A few months ago, it was a tendered contract; then it's an untendered contract. They can't get their facts straight.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know it bothers members opposite that after some issues back in the fall that we're a united caucus. And I want to put on the record that one thing we're very happy to do is to debate our agenda, and it's been a very positive, progressive agenda for the province.

What we've learned, though, from the members opposite is a couple of things. First of all, they're stuck in the '90s. They—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, they're stuck in the '90s. They believe that the Filmon government was the best government in Manitoba history. I would suggest—

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

* (14:10)

Provincial Sales Tax Increase Core Infrastructure Spending

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it is scandalous how today's NDP continue to break their promise to spend all of the money from the increase in the PST from 7 to 8 per cent on core infrastructure.

In the first year, the dollars spent on infrastructure were \$75 million less than were raised by the increase in the PST. In the second year, the total had risen to \$79 million. Furthermore, millions of dollars were spent elsewhere than on infrastructure because much of the money spent on infrastructure was borrowed money.

Why does the Premier continue to break one of the core province—promises with this shell game?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): When we introduced our five-year infrastructure program, we said if there was any money that was left over from one year it would be rolled over and invested in the next year.

I can report to the House that the infrastructure investments this year are off to a very strong start. We're ahead of schedule on what was proposed to be done this year in terms of infrastructure investments for roads, sewer and water, strategic infrastructure, other core pieces of infrastructure which will make the Manitoba economy strong now and ensure that it will be even more effective and efficient going forward.

So if there's any resources left over, we roll them over. And when we have a good season, we get up and we add even more to the budget to make sure that infrastructure investments continue to move Manitoba forward with good quality infrastructure, with good job opportunities for young people, Mr. Speaker, a vision that this side of the House supports.

Members opposite have voted against it. They said that they would slash that program. I'm only sorry the member from River Heights has voted against the budget.

Children in Care Safety Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): But the Premier didn't roll the money over. He spent it on other items the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, it is scandalous that there are more than 10,000 children in the care of Manitoba's Child and Family Services. Indeed, it is horrifying that some of these children in CFS care, for whom today's NDP government is the guardian, are to be found in very unsafe places, including in the sex trade and in crack houses.

I ask the Premier: Why has his government been such a rotten parent for 16 years?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the number of children in care is far larger than anybody in this House would wish to see. We want safe children home with their families in their communities. And we work closely with First Nations communities, Metis communities, Inuit communities, all the indigenous people of Manitoba and all Manitobans who have children in care—because there are others—to ensure that we find safe alternatives for them, and we will continue to do that.

We're investing in prevention. We're investing in higher standards for the qualifications and training of people. We've brought in human trafficking legislation in Manitoba. We put in place programs like Tracia's Trust to invest in programs that will reach out and find children that are disconnected from their homes and their communities and help them come back to a safe place, a safe haven. And that will be our continuing objective as we do that.

One of the things we continue to pursue is the path of reconciliation with communities, and the path of reconciliation, at the end of the day, means safe children with safe families in safe communities and a

sense of who they are and their own identity. And we will continue to pursue that in this House as we bring forward more initiatives in the future.

Tendering Practices Conflicts of Interest

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it is scandalous that today's NDP government has had not just one huge untendered contract like STARS but so many more, including, of course, not soliciting bids for the privatization of Manitoba's Property Registry.

Now, the Premier and one of his senior ministers have been exposed as promoting an untendered contract for Tiger Dams, and the Tiger Dam and Teranet affairs are associated with clear and very serious conflicts of interest.

Why is the Premier so unconcerned about cost and quality that he would abuse public processes and the trust of Manitobans in this way?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we're the government that brought forward strengthening the amendments to The Auditor General Act to give them more powers not only to do typical attest audits but to do value-for-the-money audits, to take a look at whether we're getting good value for the programs. And when they bring forward a report, we take those reports seriously. And we have, even in our BITSA legislation before the Legislature right now, improvements on reporting and transparency with respect to tendered contracts in Manitoba, and measures will be taken to strengthen those procedures.

There are circumstances when contracts are sole-sourced, such as when there's no other supplier, which is why we sole-sourced the STARS helicopter program. There was no other provider ready and able to provide that service in a timely fashion in a continuous practice and a continuous fashion to the people of Manitoba.

We put the public interest first, Mr. Speaker, and when we put the public interest first, we bring services into play when people need them where they need them for the crucial disaster situations that they are facing. We make no apologies for that.

Members opposite need to explain why they wouldn't provide those services when people are facing life-and-death situations.

Youth Jobs Strategy Youth Employment Initiative

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has one of the youngest and fastest growing demographics across the nation. Taking the first step towards training or skill development can be a challenge, especially when you don't have any experience.

Unlike members opposite, who are suggesting a half a billion dollars in reckless cuts where we would see over 70,000 jobs lost, our government believes in supporting young people as they search for that first critical job.

Can the Minister of Jobs and the Economy please tell us about an announcement that took place last week that'll help tap into the potential and assist young people in getting the experience they need to be successful in Manitoba?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): We do have one of the youngest and fastest 'dowing'—growing demographics in the country.

And we've talked to young people. Here's what they say. They tell you they are proud of who they are. They're proud of their hometowns. They're proud of their home province and they want to give back.

Our employers and businesses, non-profit organizations, our educators are working hard to make sure that young people can give back.

Our First Jobs Strategy will make sure that young people know that there is a job for them and that by working together with our partners, we'll make sure that not only are we going to get them prepared for those jobs, get them trained for those jobs, Mr. Speaker, every young person will have a job.

Thank you.

Children in Care Hotel Accommodations

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): The minister responsible for Child and Family Services promised to have all children under her care out of hotels by June 1st. Now it's only in the city of Winnipeg.

This was the same promise made by this government in 2006, and six months later the kids were back in hotels. No transparency exists in the system for outsiders to monitor what's being done.

How long will it be until we read about the life of another child in the care of CFS coming to a tragic end?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): What I can report is, today, that there are no children across this province in hotels.

That happened because of co-operation and collaboration with the hotel reduction team, the authorities and the agencies working together, by creating more resources, having more staff, better trained staff to work with the youth, by also creating more emergency placement beds.

We're making those investments. We're making a difference. We're going to continue to do that. We are not going to have reckless cuts. We are not going to slash rates to foster parents. We are not going to discontinue services for adult—or young adults over the age of 16. We're going to continue to work with Manitoba families, ensure that we provide protection when necessary and invest in prevention always.

Extension of Care

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister was accurate. Today they have no children in hotels.

We know that many children in the care of CFS are kicked out onto the street on their 18th birthday in high-risk environments with no support and no security, leaving them more at risk, the agency mandated to protect them leaving them vulnerable yet again.

When will this government stop breaking the most important promise it's ever made, the promise for a brighter future for those children in CFS?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: What I need to inform the House is that what this side of the government did is we increased the extension of care for Manitoba children that are in care. It's the age of majority is up to 21 where we provide them with the resources that are necessary. We have gone from 70 youth in—with the extension of care to almost 600 youth that are participating. But they are staying with their foster families. They are going to university. They are pursuing careers at Red River. They are making a difference.

What the members opposite did? They discontinued services for young adults at the age of 16 and then continued to reduce the rates for foster parents and then slashed \$4.5 million.

* (14:20)

I will take this side of the House more often with—making record investments in child welfare and working with our partners every day.

Lake St. Martin Emergency Outlet First Nations Fisheries Agreement

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, we've asked the member for Thompson if he's been able to get the emergency channel from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg fully open.

So 10 months after announcing \$5-million commitment to floodfighting equipment and a 3-plus-million-dollar compensation package to fishers, can the minister tell us if he has a commitment to have that outlet open 100 per cent?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to answer the question and remind the members opposite that it was this government that built the emergency outlet. It was this government opened it again, and we operated it beginning in July of last year all throughout last year and into this year.

And I point out on the record again that this is because we are committed not only to the emergency outlet but to the permanent outlet for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. I point out, Mr. Speaker, we've done significant technical work. We are working co-operatively with the First Nations in that area.

And we on this side are very proud of our commitment to flood mitigation. I point out we've invested \$1 billion the last decade, and over the next decade we're anticipating in the range of another further \$1-billion investment.

Of course, the key thing with members opposite, they talk about flooding, but they vote against the flood mitigation we put in place.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, members opposite may have built it, but they refuse to use it.

Can the minister tell all impacted parties around Lake Manitoba when he will actually open the emergency channel 100 per cent, as promised, to help with the high water on Lake Manitoba which currently sits at 813 feet, only one foot below flood stage?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the member opposite might want to actually take the time to go out to Lake St. Martin, because he'll find we used it not only in 2011 into 2012, but we started operating it last year and we've continued to operate it under

the environmental approvals we have with the federal government. I'll put on the record, we've had a very co-operative relationship.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, the big difference between this side and that side is they talk about flood mitigation, but it's this government that is building the flood mitigation.

And I did mention the '90s earlier. What did they build in the 1990s? It's a trick question: nothing.

Lake Manitoba Outlet Construction Timeline

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Well, we've heard the spin. We've heard the smoke and mirrors. We've heard the rhetoric.

But, Mr. Speaker, the question remains: When will construction of an additional outlet for Lake Manitoba begin?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I point out that this is a government that has a historic sense of investing in infrastructure. I put on the record that this is the biggest single year-over-year increase in investment in core infrastructure probably in Manitoba history. We're looking at an increase year over year of 45 per cent.

And you know what? In the 1960s there was a government with some foresight, the Roblin government. In the early part of our mandate, Mr. Speaker, the Doer government extended the floodway. It took approximately seven years, including a three-year construction period. We're well on track, this side.

And I point out again, Mr. Speaker, this is a government of vision, long-term investment. Members opposite, when they were in government, what did they build? Absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral question has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It is now time for members' statements.

Brigitte Lacquette

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): The people of the Swan River constituency and the Parkland are very proud of an amazing athlete in their community who has produced over the years. Soon there will be another one added to that list: Brigitte Lacquette of

Mallard, Manitoba, a dynamite young hockey player who is proud of her roots and proud to be from community of Mallard.

Brigette has been playing hockey since she was six. She grew up playing for the Winnipegosis Tigers and all-girls Parkland Panthers out of the Gilbert Plains until she was 15 and then she—it was time to graduate to the next level.

Since then, Brigette has played for Manitoba under-18 team, Canada's under-18 team as well as the Canada national under-22 team, the University of Minnesota Duluth Bulldogs and even team Canada's seniors women's hockey team.

She led teams as a captain, she's also helped her teams capture bronze, silver and gold medals, and she was named the top defenseman at tournaments. Recently, she nearly cracked the roster for Canada women's Olympic hockey team in Sochi's Olympics. And all of these accomplishments, she's just 22 years old.

Right now, when most Canadians are thinking about the women's soccer team and how well they're doing in the world cup, these athletes are the role models of all Canadians, just like the Canadians—just like Canadian women's Olympic hockey team who inspire generations of young athletes every time they compete. I know it's been a long time before Brigette Lacquette joins their ranks and becomes a hero from people and Canadians coast to coast.

Thank you.

Braden Calvert Junior Curling Rink

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, on March 8th, 2015, Carberry's Braden Calvert and his Winnipeg-based Manitoba junior curling team took the world stage to receive their gold medals as they were crowned the new World Junior Curling Champions in Tallinn, Estonia. With dedication and hard work, it is a dream come true for this young Manitoba team. Braden's Canadian junior team is made up of third Kyle Kurz, second Lucas Van Den Bosch and lead Brendan Wilson, fifth Colton Lott and coach Tom Clasper.

This young team's journey to the world stage started on New Year's Eve at the Assiniboine Memorial Curling Club. Team Calvert celebrated not only the New Year but also their 7-6 victory over team Dunstone. This win earned the provincial title and secured their spot at the Canadian juniors. The team beat their previous year's record of 5-2 in round

robin play by winning seven consecutive games. Having earned the Manitoba title for the second straight time, the young Calvert team went on to represent Manitoba at the Canadian juniors in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, January 24th.

At the Corner Brook Civic Centre, success was continued for the junior Canadians where the Calvert rink again saw victory over Saskatchewan in the final. Losing only one game to Quebec, the team then went on to win 10 straight. Having earned back-to-back Canadian Junior Curling Championship titles is a feat only four others have accomplished.

The young Canadians continued their hard work, dedication and teamwork at the World Junior Curling Championships in Tallinn, Estonia, February 28th, losing two games in the round robin play then taking nine straight wins.

In the gold medal game Calvert was up against the same Swiss skip who knocked them out of the world playoffs just last year. With a 6-3 final score it was Team Canada's winning gold and their first junior men's title. Team Calvert is the team—is the second Manitoba team to earn this title. In the final game this team actually shot an incredible 92 per cent.

This junior team has had their success and remarkable talent captured on the national television, the world stage and has made Manitoba and all Canadians proud as gold medal winners and World Junior Curling Championships. Team Calvert has achieved what so many of us dream of.

Mr. Speaker, they join us in the gallery here today, and I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating the Braden Calvert junior curling team and wishing them all continued success.

Deacon John MacKenzie

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to rise in the Manitoba Legislature to recognize John MacKenzie who for over a quarter century has been a valuable member of our Brandon community. John's commitment and dedication to many important Brandon non-profit organizations has been outstanding.

John has worked in many places over his life, and Brandon is lucky that he and his wife Carol chose to make their home in the city. Born in Cape Breton Island, John's teaching career initially took

him all around Nova Scotia and to a Blackfoot First Nation community in Alberta.

John's first introduction to Manitoba was in The Pas where he worked for the Manitoba civil service. In 1990 a position with New Careers, a successful educational program for disadvantaged adults, brought John and Carol to Brandon, and he has been with us ever since.

In 1996 John retired from what he calls his civilian career, and in 1997 he was ordained as a permanent deacon for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. Over the last 17 years he served the St. Augustine's parish in Brandon, along with others in Souris, Dunrea, Baldur, Carberry and Rivers. His work with the church did not prevent him from also working with local organizations like the counselling centre and the Marquis Project. He served on both organizations in the capacity of as a member of the board of directors.

While John retired from active ministry this past March, he continues to serve our community by sitting on Brandon City Council's Age-Friendly Brandon committee. He is also still active with the Western Manitoba non-profit seniors housing co-operative, and John was a key member of the dedicated team that brought to fruition the construction of a 34-suite seniors co-op apartment block on McDiarmid Drive. Today the group is working to secure land for another non-profit housing complex in the city of Brandon.

Brandon is lucky to have passionate, hard-working community members like John MacKenzie in its midst. Thank you, John, for your years of dedicated service in the city of Brandon.

*(14:30)

Oak Park Wins Triple Crown

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Oak Park Raiders boys' teams in winning a triple crown in high school sports: provincial champs in football, basketball and hockey. Oak Park has always been a powerhouse in athletics, but this accomplishment is quite rare.

Last November, the Oak Park Raiders upsets—upset St. Paul's Crusaders 17-16 to win the ANAVETS cup, the championship for the Potter Division Triple A Championship of the Winnipeg high school league. With the help of their star receiver, Brady Oliveira, who rushed for more than

100 yards against the best defence he's seen all season, the Raiders fought a hard battle. This was a bit of an upset as the St. Paul's team had won 39 consecutive games. Congratulations to all of these players and coaches Stu Nixon and Dave Black.

The Oak Park Raiders boys' basketball team beat defending champs, St. Paul's Crusaders, for the MHSAA provincial championship on March 16th. They were up 2-0 going into the third period, but then in the third period, St. Paul's came out and scored two quick ones. In the final minutes of the game, Oak Park was able to minimize momentum and headed into overtime where they were able to score the winning goal. The Oak Park team is made up mostly of grade 11 players so they should have an experienced roster next year. Congratulations to Coach Joel Nedecky and players.

Not to be outdone by the football and hockey teams, the Oak Park boys' high school basketball team won their provincial high school basketball championship on March 23rd in an overtime victory of 68-67 over the St. Paul's Crusaders. They fell behind the Crusaders 9-0 to start the game but were able to come back in a dramatic overtime win. Congratulations to players and Coach Jon Lundgren.

Mr. Speaker, Charleswood is very, very proud of these sports accomplishments and of the athletes and the coaches, and we just want to say thank you, Oak Park High School, for a great year. Well done, congratulations and best wishes.

What a Wonderful Province

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, honourable members, in sticking with tradition today I wish to pay homage to my old friend Louis Armstrong.

You see, Mr. Speaker, some of the young folks been saying to me: Hey, Pops, what do you mean, what a wonderful province? How about all those tax increases? You call those wonderful? And what about all those closed emergency rooms? That isn't so wonderful either.

Well, how about listening to Pops for a minute. Seems to me it isn't the province that's so bad but what the NDP are doing to it. All I'm saying is what a wonderful province it is and it would be if we'd only give the Progressive Conservatives a chance.

Love, baby, love. That's the secret. Yeah. And if more of the NDP loved each other, they'd solve more

problems. Then this province would be better. That's what Pops been saying.

So, I see ministers resigning, breaking secrecy too, / I wonder if they'd resign for me or for you? / And I think to myself, what a wonderful province.

I see the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) popularity dropping out of sight, / Annihilation territory polls, NDP fraught with fright. / And I think to myself, what a wonderful province.

The look of distrust is present in the Premier's eyes, / Are also on the faces of ministers going by. / I see the Cabinet colleagues asking, how do you do? / But they're saying to each other, I no longer trust you.

I hear whistle-blowers crying foul over tendering woes, / And the Minister of MIT thinks he knows more than you'll ever know.

And I think to myself, what a wonderful province. / Yes, I think to myself, what a wonderful province it will be on April 19th, 2016.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes members' statements. Are there any grievances?

Prior to moving to orders of the day, as has become our tradition, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the fact that this is the last day for our pages that are with us here this afternoon.

Our page Hannah Payumo recently graduated grade 12 from the St. Boniface Diocesan High School. Her grade average is 90 per cent, and Hannah will be attending the University of Manitoba next year and hopes to enter medicine, especially cardiovascular surgery. Hannah studies piano and achieved grade 7 with that instrument. And, in grade 9, Hannah and her friend created the Parliament in cake as their project. And we'd like to thank Hannah for her service to the members of the Assembly and wish her well in her future endeavours.

And as this is also the last shift for our page Josh Wiebe-Josh, who will be entering grade 12 at Springs Christian in the fall and this year had an average of 90 per cent. At school Josh was the treasurer this year and next year will be the school president. Josh's career goal is to work with computers especially in the field of programming. And outside of school, Josh is a grade 5 piano player and enjoys tae kwon do.

On behalf of all honourable members of the Assembly, Josh, we wish you well in your future endeavours and thank you very much for service to the Assembly.

And as the House will be adjourning today, I encourage all honourable members to remove the contents of their desks here in the Chamber. The blue bins, as most members will know, in the Chamber are designated for recycling of Hansard only. Any other material you would like to recycle may be placed in the larger 'resycling'—recycling containers in the message room located just outside the Chamber, and I thank you for your co-operation in this regard.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I'd like to, first of all, indicate for report stage and third readings that I'd like to call report stage on Bill 8, followed by concurrence and third reading on Bill 8; then report stage on Bill 5, followed by concurrence and third reading on Bill 5; then report stage on Bill 35 followed by concurrence and third reading on Bill 35. Following that, I'd like to call concurrence and third reading on the following bills: bills 3 and 14. Then I'd like to seek leave for the following three bills to go for concurrence and third reading: bills 11, 22 and 17. Following this, I would like to—and by calling concurrence and third reading for bills 12 and 26.

And I will indicate that we're also anticipating royal assent later on, Mr. Speaker, and a suitable announcement will be made at a later time.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that we will be calling bills in the following order: starting with report stage on Bill 8, followed by concurrence and third reading on Bill 8; and then we'll moving to our report stage on Bill 5, followed by concurrence and third reading of Bill 5; and then report stage on Bill 35 followed by concurrence and third reading on Bill 35. And then following that, we'll be calling concurrence and third reading of bills 3 and 14.

And is there leave of the House following those bills, so that we would have and go directly to concurrence and third reading of bills 11, 22 and 17?
[Agreed]

And following that we'll be ending with the concurrence and third reading of bills 12 and 26, and then, of course, royal assent after that.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Bill 8—The Conservation Officers Act

Mr. Speaker: We'd start first by calling Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for La Verendrye,

THAT Bill 8 be amended by adding the following after Clause 15:

Annual report

15.1(1) The chief conservation officer must submit an annual report to the minister regarding complaints investigated under section 15 during the year covered by the report. The report must include the following information:

- (a) the number of investigations started in the year;
- (b) the number of investigations concluded in the year;
- (c) the number of disciplinary or other actions taken in respect of conservation officers in the year as a result of investigations, and particulars of the actions.

Tabling report

15.1(1) The minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly within 15 days after receiving it if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Morris, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook),

THAT Bill 8 be amended by adding the following after Clause 15:

Annual report

15.1(1) The chief conservation officer must submit an annual report to the minister regarding complaints investigated under section 15 during—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense. The amendment is—is it agreed that we will consider the amendment as printed? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

THAT Bill 8 be amended by adding the following after Clause 15:

Annual report

15.1(1) The chief conservation officer must submit an annual report to the minister regarding complaints investigated under section 15 during the year covered by the report. The report must include the following information:

- (a) the number of investigations started in the year;
- (b) the number of investigations concluded in the year;
- (c) the number of disciplinary or other actions taken in respect of conservation officers in the year as the result of investigations, and particulars of the actions.

Tabling report

15.1(2) The minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly within 15 days after receiving it if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this amendment. I think the amendment is straight—fairly straightforward. The government's legislation creates a new position, chief conservation officer, as part of that position. They will, subsequent to the passage and royal assent of the legislation, create a code of conduct in consultation with the department as part of the new act.

I think in—it's incumbent upon the government to take a look at obviously enhancing the accountability of officers no different than many other piece of the legislation in that should action be warranted under the code of conduct that an annual report be generated—submitted to the minister so that minister's made aware of the actions and, as well, that members of the Assembly and the public are made aware of any action, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the goal here is not to obviously burden the chief conservation officer or his staff with additional work. It's obviously our hope, and I would imagine it would be minister's hope, that such a report would be very, very thin indeed, Mr. Speaker. But, without cataloguing and noting potential

concerns of citizens in relation to the code of conduct, we are in a position where we may not be able to make proper remediation to the code of conduct or take any other actions that may be required to address those concerns.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude.

Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I thank the member opposite for the work that he's put into his amendment and in the analysis of the bill at large. I do appreciate that.

I've read through the amendment here and I have some issue with it, in that, you know, we have empowered the chief conservation officer with the management of the code of conduct which is an improvement, an incredible improvement. In terms of policing, we've increased their powers to encompass Criminal Code issues and so forth in the course of doing their duties. So this bill at large is an improvement.

However, I would prefer that our conservation officers focus on their duties at hand. I don't want to burden the chief conservation officer with paperwork, red tape—something that members opposite, you know, have called upon us to limit.

So, you know, with the greatest of respect, I would prefer that our conservation officers and the individuals that manage them focus on things like actually going out, catching poachers, doing their utmost to prevent the spread of invasive species. To do important things like go into the Mars Hills, for example, something that the member opposite raised during question period over the course of our session here, and try and catch those foolish people that continue on spreading garbage amongst our pristine wildlife management areas, parks and so forth.

So, just in closing and with the greatest of respect for the member opposite for the work that he has done, I respectfully have to indicate that we will not be supporting this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment will please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Nays have it.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 8—The Conservation Officers Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Any debate?

Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I thank the acting House leader for bringing this forward for third reading. This is legislation that is important, first and foremost, to the Conservation Officers Service, as such now recognized for the good work that they do on behalf of all of us in the preservation of our wildlife populations, their contributions to the stewardship of our waters, 100,000 lakes we have in our province. These people are on the front line, so to speak, when it comes to the difficult duties that they have in performing the acts that I have just described.

I think it's probably difficult for us in general to grasp what they have to experience out in the woods. This is an uncontrolled environment for the large part. Quite often, their work is done at night, and

they're dealing with people who are carrying firearms and quite often breaking the law. Anybody that, frankly, is out there at night with loaded weapons—it's an inherently potentially dangerous situation. These individuals are putting their lives on the line, and I do not think that we can underemphasize that. We have to give them the tools necessary, and Bill 8 performs that duty.

We now recognize them as the Conservation Officers Service. This service represents the third largest armed enforcement agency in the province. Historically, they've been known as game wardens, forest rangers, natural resource officers and so forth, but this legislation takes them to a new level and formally recognizes the powers that they have to enforce all the statutes, including the Criminal Code, in the course of doing their duties.

Their duties have evolved over time, Mr. Speaker. They're not just game wardens anymore out there. They have a variety of tools at hand. There's been a special investigations unit, for example, that's created to go after those individuals out there in our society that are striving to their outmost to circumvent the law. These people need special tools in order to bring them to justice, and the special investigations unit is that tool, in addition to others. The canine unit, which serves a variety of purposes, whether it's search and rescue for lost individuals, whether it's looking for contraband such as fish or meat hidden somewhere on a load, whether it's searching for shell casings in the bush which can be used in evidence at court and, of course, zebra mussels, aquatic invasive species, something that we brought forward, legislation pending, and will be passed, I'm hoping, shortly, here.

You know, all of these things combined are handled by our canine friends that, indeed, also need to be recognized. If any there was a living beam-being that does its duty above and beyond, selflessly, I think we do have to acknowledge that our canine unit is a prime example of that.

* (14:50)

Again, I would stress that they have powers under this legislation to enforce other laws regarded to public safety, relating to public mischief, assault of peace officers, evading peace officers, failing to stop, other things such as impaired driving. They are empowered to hold people and work co-operatively with the RCMP to enable convictions in this regard. The RCMP have historically been partners, working hand in hand with our conservation officers over the

years, and they unequivocally endorse this legislation as well, so it adds to our force of peace officers across the board.

This legislation is what our conservation officers want. It's what the public expects from us as legislators. It is supported by the RCMP, and I look forward to a speedy passage of this bill.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak at third reading on Bill 8. Thank you.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and give some final comments on Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act.

It started with a bit of disappointment that the minister has failed to support what I thought was a—what—not thought, what is or was a very reasonable amendment and no different than legislation or components of legislation that's found throughout other pieces in this House. And I have no doubt that a regular report regarding the code of conduct that will be—chief conservation officer will be designing and then, obviously, implementing to the officers in the province will be provided to the minister. So the minister is not being entirely forthright when he suggests that it's an onerous burden because, really, it's taking that report which would be provided to the minister regardless of the acceptance of the amendments or not in making that report publicly available through this Legislature. Because, as the minister noted, this bill greatly enhances the powers of conservation officers or, actually, as they are currently known, natural resource officers and soon to be properly referred to their more common name as conservation officers.

But, as the minister must truly be aware, that as one famous individual noted that with great moral responsibility comes a great need for oversight, Mr. Speaker, and in this—in this case that oversight would have been through that annual report.

The minister did note, though, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation does clarify a number of areas, grey areas that conservation officers had to deal with. They are thrust upon—have situations thrust upon them that simply are outside their normal expectations of their powers and that, and situations that, frankly, could be dangerous to themselves and to the public.

The minister noted, obviously, the issue of impaired drivers and such, so we want to ensure that when conservation officers encounter those

situations that they have the full legal authority of this Legislature and of the courts to take action and, more importantly, or as importantly, not only to take action, but that any action that they take has the full force of the law behind it so that the consequences of such action can be fully placed upon that individual.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of a code of conduct, again, is something that I think will be of value to the public in dealing with conservation officers. As the minister noted, they are their—they are one of the largest—and with this act they will be one of the largest police forces in our province. So it is not, again, not unreasonable that they would have a code of conduct apply to them, and I think that would add, again, to their accountability to Manitobans and for Manitobans of whom they work.

The member touched on—or, the minister touched on a number of other, you know, obviously, files within his portfolio. He touched on zebra mussels, and it's an issue that I've been bringing forth since I was elected about 18 months with his predecessor and himself, when he was elevated after the coup. But we just read now, this past weekend, that zebra mussels—their spread and infestation grows beyond the original failed attempt by the government when they sealed off the harbours and proudly proclaimed, mission accomplished, after dumping several hundred thousand tons of liquid potash into those harbours in an attempt to deal with that situation. If only they'd taken that half a million dollars' resources and invested it into mobile 'decimation' units, Mr. Speaker, we'd be in a far better position to deal with mitigating the spread of this most invasive species. In fact, a single one of these units is approximately \$85,000, and so that half-million dollars would've easily bought close to seven new units to actually protect our waterways as opposed to the NDP's grade 8 science project.

The minister also talked about Mars Hill. He talked about the pristine nature of Mars Hill and many of our wildlife management areas, Mr. Speaker. And having been there first-hand and taken there by concerned Manitobans, I can tell you that it is far from pristine. I'm not aware that discarded mattresses and couches and old electronics and televisions and just garbage strewn about a wildlife management area in any way qualifies as pristine or, as the government's website labels them, near-natural state. I don't recall many wildlife, deer and otherwise, or the endangered wildlife that will be included under some of the legislation—I didn't find many of them resting on the discarded couches

or recliners found at this particular wildlife management area. So—and whether that has to do with this legislation or the—this bill—this legislation or not, I doubt. It probably has more to do to the 10 per cent funding reduction that this department has had since the last election.

It's a bit of a challenge for conservation officers to be vigilant, to look for those individuals that the minister duly or rightly has described as, you know, as scofflaws and such who would dump garbage into these wildlife management areas, Mr. Speaker. But, unfortunately, when you go and talk to them—talk to these officers, they simply just tell you, we don't have the resources to manage what we currently have; we don't even have the resources to put up \$15 signs and say this is a non-motorized trail.

So the actions and the funding consequences or defunding consequences that's occurring across the way is having real and fundamental consequences to Manitobans on a day-to-day basis.

I—it's—there are many, many more comments, Mr. Speaker, I put on the record, and if we had a—had private members' business this morning, I could've continued.

But, with those comments, I do appreciate though what the government is trying to do with Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act. I think conservation officers, as the minister noted, have been calling for this clarity in this legislation—clarity in terms of their duties, their responsibilities and their ability to administer certain components of the act, Mr. Speaker. And, obviously as—we, a—legislatures, want to make sure that they have the clarity, that they have the legislative authority to carry out what we require of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, this bill represents an important step forward in clarifying and enhancing the role of conservation officers in Manitoba, and I see this as a very positive step.

I would comment, as I did at the second reading, that one of the problems with the current government is that they have engaged in a lot of cutbacks in the area of conservation, and so expanding the role and improving the role of conservation officers, providing for a special investigation unit and so on, are likely to be more difficult with the lower level of funding that they have moved to and appear to continue to move towards.

* (15:00)

I note that Michelle Gawronsky, the president of the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union, spoke and although she spoke very positively about the bill in general, she said, and I quote: I would be remiss if I didn't also say tonight that the government needs to begin investing again in the Department of Conservation and in the facilities and our parks and wilderness area. I couldn't miss that one out. This is too important a resource to continue to see the kind of cuts we've seen in recent years to conservation.

An Honourable Member: Who said that, Jon?

Mr. Gerrard: That was Michelle Gawronsky, who's the president of MGEU.

And she pointed out, as I have and as others have, that the trend from a financial point of view has not been good for conservation and for wildlife stewardship and fishery stewardship under the current government. And, clearly, there is a significant problem and has been, and this is one that needs to be corrected. It is one that has, I think, arisen for a whole variety of reasons, but it's causing significant problems in being able to adequately monitor wildlife species like moose, and do the appropriate surveys and know exactly what populations are and to be able to look after wildlife properly.

So, with those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I certainly support this legislation. I will look forward to it become legislation.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on this matter?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 8, The Conservation Officers Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

(Continued)

Bill 5—The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to call Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton),

THAT Bill 5 be amended in Clause 2

(a) in the proposed subsection 77.12(1) by striking out ", the Government of Canada"; and

(b) by adding the following after the proposed section 77.12:

Requirement for agreement with Government of Canada

77.12.1 The minister must not enter into an agreement under section 77.12 unless there is an agreement in place between the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada respecting the operation of First Nation safety officer programs in Manitoba.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): It has been moved by the honourable minister—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Dispense? Dispense.

Recognizing the honourable Minister for Justice.

Mr. Mackintosh: This minor amendment will change the—

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Oh, sorry. One quick interruption. Just to make it clear, the amendment is in order.

Mr. Mackintosh: This is a minor amendment that changes the requirement for the Government of Canada to enter into individual agreements with the Province and all participating First Nations and instead allowing only having to enter into a single framework agreement with the government of Manitoba.

The amendment acknowledges Canada's role and responsibility with respect to First Nations and the need for the federal government to partner with the Province, but it makes a procedural change that is intended to streamline the agreement-making process.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Recognizing the honourable member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I think what the minister said in terms of the amendment is reasonable, but I just want to, you know, make a comment that I hope that this isn't going to be used as a way of excluding First Nations from being able to have police constables. And if—we'll be watching to make sure that the provincial government is actually working closely with First Nations and making sure that there are operating police constables in as many communities as can be. But, certainly, so long as this is not as—used as a way of excluding First Nations, we've no problems with this.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Question before the House is the report stage amendments on Bill 5.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— AMENDED BILLS

Bill 5—The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers)

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The next item in front of us is now concurrence and third reading on Bill 5, as amended.

Is there any debate on the matter? [*interjection*]
Oh, sorry, our motion first. Thank you.

Recognizing the honourable deputy government House leader.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 5, the public—or, pardon me—The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de police (agents de sécurité des Premières nations), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): It has been moved by the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation, seconded by the honourable Minister for Justice, that Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), be now approved for concurrence and third reading.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Agreed and so ordered.

It's been moved—just to be clear. Is there any debate on the issue?

Are you ready for the—okay, this is on the debate? Recognizing the honourable member for Agassiz.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I just want to put a couple of remarks on the record on Bill 5.

The—my concern with this bill will be costs as we move forward, and I just want to put that comment on the record. There'll be—we're being told there'll be a type of training done by the Province. There's already basically a matching fund being put in by the Province to match the federal money, if we actually get the federal money, and there are 31 bands, I believe, that have these constables now that would be expanded I would expect. There'll be other First Nations that want constables so there'll be increasing costs there.

We're not clear on what the duties of these constables will be either, and I look forward to seeing how that works out because I did ask the question about whether they'd be enforcing The Highway Traffic Act, for instance, and no one was sure whether they would give them that responsibility or not. So I just have a few concerns.

I think this is something that needs to be done. The RCMP, the First Nations are both solidly in favour of this program. I just want to make sure that in three years or five years from now we don't have costs running wild on this program. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): I recognize the honourable—just a brief moment, apparently just to be absolutely clear on the motion. I maybe cut off early what needed to be read, so just to be clear this is concurrence and third reading on Bill 5.

It's been moved by the Minister for Infrastructure, seconded by the Minister for Justice, it is Bill 5, and the motion is that The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), reported from the Standing Committee on Social Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

That is the motion in front of us.

I now recognize the honourable member for River Heights to offer his comments.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, well, supporting this legislation, I would just add that one of the problems under the NDP has been the slow passage of many bills.

This is a bill which should have been passed before the end of March when the transition occurred to make sure that there was proper legal framework for continuing on with the police services in First Nations communities. And this band constable program, you know, is certainly needed and has worked well in a number of communities.

*(15:10)

I'm hoping that, you know, with this effort that the provincial government will be able to work closely with First Nations communities to make sure that the program as it moves forward is effective at serving the functions that it should be, and that it's helping keep First Nations communities safer and healthier.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Question before the House is Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers), concurrence and third reading.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

(*Continued*)

Bill 35—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments)

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The next item before the House is report stage amendments on Bill 35, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments), standing in the name of the honourable member for Charleswood—or, introduce the motion.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook),

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 3 by adding the following after the proposed subsection 4(5.9):

Annual report on post-traumatic stress disorder claims

4(5.10) Within three months after the end of each year, the board must prepare and submit to the minister a report that sets out

(a) the number of cases in that year in which a worker has made a claim in respect of post-traumatic stress disorder; and

(b) the number of claims in that year in which the board has applied the presumption in subsection (5.8) and awarded compensation on the basis that post-traumatic stress disorder is an occupational disease.

Tabling report in Assembly

4(5.11) The minister must table a copy of the report under subsection (5.10) in the Assembly within 15 days after receiving it if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): There we go. Let's try that again.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Charleswood—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Dispense? Dispense. The amendment is in order.

Mrs. Driedger: Just a few comments on the amendment. We certainly know that post-traumatic stress disorder is a serious issue for many first responders. It has been an issue that has garnered more national attention over the last number of years with suicides amongst a number of paramedics, and it has alarmed many across the country.

The NDP, we know, had indicated that they would bring in legislation in the Throne Speech and that they were prepared to look at this legislation. In the meantime, I had introduced a private member's bill which the government did refuse to pass, and instead they brought forward this bill that is now before us, Bill 35, and they have included a very broad spectrum of workers.

We became aware at that point that there had been limited consultation in the community, and that did raise a number of concerns. So we hope that this

amendment will capture some of the information that the government was not able to answer for us during the bill briefing. It appeared that they hadn't done all of their homework. So we hope that this amendment will provide some of that information and allow better tracking of those that actually make a claim and are successful in making that claim, because we do know that this certainly is an issue of concern for many.

Thank you.

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I do want to thank the member for bringing this forward and for her work on PTSD and concern for the health and welfare of our workers.

However, I cannot support this amendment in that it singles out and highlights PTSD claims within the legislation on a different basis than any other type of injury. And this is particularly true; it doesn't—it highlights PTSD. Our other presumptive cancers and heart injuries are not—there is no requirement to report on them. So I think that in our efforts to destigmatize the whole issue of PTSD amongst our workers, I think that this would be contrary to that particular philosophy.

However, WCB remains transparent and is open to FIPAs on getting claim information. That is certainly something that they will respond to. So I think that there are avenues to get information through the FIPPA process, but to identify a report that highlights and picks out a particular presumption, I think, is contrary to what we're hoping to achieve with this legislation.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm happy to put some words on record for this amendment. This is a very simple amendment. It asks for an annual report to provide information to stakeholders as to how Bill 35 has affected workers who have suffered PTSD. It is another tool to see if any other changes need to be made.

The bill, the amendment to The Workers Compensation Act, strictly talks about PTSD. There are many unknowns with Bill 35 as it will be the first in the country to presume PTSD happened at the workplace for all forms of employment that is covered by WCB. We all know how important consultation is when one introduces new legislation. This amendment will give more information, allowing stakeholders to better understand and to keep transparent.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The question before the House is report stage amendment on Bill 35, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): I heard a no.

Voice Vote

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): All those in favour of the amendment, please indicate by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): All those opposed to the amendment, please indicate by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On division.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): On division, so noted.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 35—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments)

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Next item before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 35, the workers compensation amendment act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour, that Bill 35, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and

Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm pleased to rise for third reading on The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments).

Bill 35 delivers on our commitment to address mental health and psychological injuries in the workplace, part of Manitoba's Five-Year Plan for Workplace Injury and Illness Prevention, where we also committed to passing nation-leading safety and health legislation. Bill 35 is certainly that. Indeed, it's the first of its kind in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the consultations conducted by the WCB on this matter received input from employer and labour stakeholders, mental health experts and the general public. Further input was received at the committee discussions on the bill, and I would like to thank and acknowledge all those whose contributions were instrumental in shaping this bill.

The consultations confirmed for us that PTSD, trauma and psychological injuries in the workplace are a growing concern in Manitoba workplaces. Thankfully, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, our understanding of these issues and how to best address them is also increasing. Governments are being called on to act, and today all members of this House have the opportunity to answer that call by passing this bill.

As we have heard throughout the process, including at committee, this legislation will help address the stigma around PTSD and mental illness, which is a barrier for workers coming to seek the supports they need. The more stigma can be reduced, the better the outcome for workers, workplaces, and employers. I trust, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that all members of this House share this goal.

* (15:20)

Leadership plays an important role in reducing stigma. In passing this legislation today, I believe we are showing that leadership. Part of leadership is listening to what stakeholders are saying. One of the clear themes that came through in the consultations and again at committee was that PTSD is not limited to certain occupations or workplaces. PTSD can happen to anyone in any workplace at any time.

So that left a strong impression on us as we considered the model of legislation and its scope. In applying this legislation to all workers, we are truly breaking new ground.

In closing, I once again would like to thank the many stakeholders who helped shape this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this legislation. I think it is important to recognize the importance of post-traumatic stress syndrome and to be able to deal with it more effectively when it happens in the workplace.

We heard a number of excellent presentations at the committee stage, talking about the—not only the rationale but the importance of having all workers covered. I found the presentations which emphasized the need to cover all workers persuasive. The argument against this was that, you know, it might not be easy necessarily for physicians and psychologists to identify that this was workplace-related, but I think with something as severe as post-traumatic stress syndrome, that identifying either the acute event or the cumulative effects as related to the workplace should be possible. It may be advisable to monitor the legislation as it goes along and make sure that we have people who are on the labour side as well as the employee–employer side, having a look at an ongoing basis on how the legislation is working.

I think that my guesstimate would be that those who are concerned about runaway costs are not likely to find that that's going to happen. We heard that a significant proportion of people with PTSD are actually already being covered, and that so the numbers who are not covered is not as great as it would be as if we were starting completely from scratch.

And so I think, in looking at this, I'm certainly ready to support this legislation as it is, to move it forward and look forward to it being implemented. I think it's high time we paid more and better attention to mental health disorders. I see children affected by Child and Family Services issues, situations needing increasingly to be treated for PTSD, and this is an area which, of course, is not covered in this bill at all, but something which also needs attention when we're looking and considering PTSD.

So just with those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I spoke at considerable length at second reading, but that's all I wanted to add today. Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for this opportunity to put some final words on record regarding Bill 35 and PTSD in the workplace. We all know that mental health issues can be just as serious as physical injuries. No employer wants staff to be off work for any injury. The sooner a worker can return to work, the better it is for both worker and employer.

My only concern is that consultation and availability of information for all involved is very important. And I am kind of disappointed that this government would not look at the amendment that was proposed. But that is nothing unusual for this government. It seems when there's some good legislation or good private members, that they refuse to support it.

But, anyways, so much for those words. I'd like to thank you very much. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Question before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 35, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 3—The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): We are now going to move to concurrence and third reading on the following bills: I understand concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act.

Recognizing the honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Tourism, that Bill 3, The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The motion is in order.

Seeing no—*[interjection]* Oh, honourable member for Agassiz.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): This is a bill that we support. My only comment being that it probably doesn't go far enough and it probably should transfer the whole East Side Road Authority and the floodway authority all back to the Province where they belong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I think, in contrast to the last speaker, who argued for transferring everything back to the Province, the ability for the East Side Road Authority to work co-operatively with First Nations organizations and to make progress on this has actually been quite good to date. So I'm less negative on this aspect of it and would be—and am supportive of this legislation.

I think we clearly need some continuing oversight, both to make sure that the benefits that should be there for First Nations communities, and it's in the involvement in the road construction and maintenance, which should be there, are actually happening. But, certainly, let's move forward on this. This is something that Liberals were arguing was needed, a road up on the east side, many years before the NDP started actually moving in that direction.

So I'm in strong support of this, and let's move forward. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Question before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 3, The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 14—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts)

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Next item before the House is concurrence and third reading, Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts).

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Tourism, that Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats d'améliorations

domiciliaires), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The motion is in order.

Seeing no-honourable member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just, Mr. Speaker, a few words in support of this legislation.

I think it's widely recognized that the proportion of tradespeople who, you know, do excellent work is very, very high in Manitoba. But it is important to make sure that there are some safeguards to consumers for those very few contractors who don't do the good work that they should be doing.

So I'm fully in support of this legislation and look forward to it becoming law. Thank you.

* (15:30)

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, as well, we certainly know that the vast majority of those who are doing home renovation work in the province of Manitoba are reputable, and they are there to ensure that they stand by their work and that their work lasts the test of time.

I know in my own life we have had renovations done in our home, and we've had generally good experiences but not universally good experiences, and so any ability to protect consumers is something that is likely to be positive and we also look forward to this bill moving through.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Question before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 11—The Public Health Amendment Act
(Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning
Equipment and Other Amendments)**

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): I now ask to seek leave of the House—*[interjection]* Oh, leave has been given? My mistake, so I'm now calling Bill 11

for concurrence and third reading. This is tanning beds.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for Healthy Living, that Bill 11, The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments), be reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The motion is in order.

Recognizing the honourable Minister for Healthy Living and Seniors.

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): No parent wants their child put at risk for developing cancer, and it is estimated that one in seven Canadians will develop some form of skin cancer in their lifetime making it the most common type of cancer in the country. But the good news is, in most cases, skin cancer is preventable by reducing UV exposure. Studies have shown that use of artificial tanning equipment before the age of 35 is associated with a significant increase in the risk of melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, and that's why Bill 11 is so important.

Bill 11 will ensure that no tanning operator-operation in Manitoba will allow minors to put themselves at risk of skin cancer. The bill would also prohibit advertising and marketing aimed at children, and it requires tanning operations to provide protective eyewear for all customers. In addition, it also gives us the ability to restrict coin-operated and swipe-card-operated tanning equipment that can pose a risk to users, as they don't provide any oversight.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all those who have worked with us to bring this bill forward. I'm sure that the members opposite will agree that no child should be put at risk for the sake of a tan, and I look forward to them joining us and supporting this important bill.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Recognizing the honourable member for Emerson.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, it has taken this NDP government too long

to act on these matters, and the children of Manitoba are the ones that are losing. This type of legislation has already been enacted in almost all the other provincial legislator-legislations in the country.

Over a year ago, the resident doctors in Manitoba went to the media to voice their concerns about the use of indoor tanning equipment by minors. How many minors have been irreversibly damaged—their skin and increased their risk of cancer in the 13 months it's taken this government to get on board with this initiative, even after it was urged by physicians.

The one issue that indoor tanning devices give off ultraviolet radiation, which is known as a carcinogen, and it's not known at this point if that radiation builds up in the operators as they perform their duties. But otherwise, this here legislation is long-overdue.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I do support this legislation. I think it's important that we're doing what we can to reduce the incidence of cancer in Manitoba, in particular, to protect young people in our province from this case of tanning under conditions which can lead to an increased incidence of melanoma. I think that the—we had a number of helpful presenters at the committee stage, and the case was made for the importance of not only having, you know, banning tanning for children, but also to have properly trained people at the tanning facilities so that, you know, all adults could be protected as well as children.

Certainly, it's been known for a while that for a few individuals, there's some significant benefit from exposure to sunlight, or in this case for tanning; eczema, for example. I'm aware of a woman who was—spent a number of years near the equator and had no problems at all with eczema, came back to Manitoba where there wasn't as much sunlight, as much vitamin D, may be related, and developed some very significant problems for—with eczema.

So I think that there can be some health benefits for some as well as the significant problem of cancer for some with melanoma and that we should be aware of both sides of the equation here and do what we can, as we are today, to reduce the incidence of cancer and particularly from very early exposure which could be damaging to the skin and lead to more melanoma. So I'm in strong support of this

legislation as it stands and look forward to it moving forward. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The question before the House is third reading and—or concurrence and third reading on Bill 11, The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 22—The Red River College Act

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Now calling Bill 22, Red River College.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing, that Bill 22, The Red River College Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The motion is in order.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'm just—gives me an opportunity to stand up and put a few words on the record, third reading, before we go ahead and pass this bill on for royal assent.

It's interesting that this, The Red River College Act, Bill 22, is coming forward, and as I've put on the record a few times already, it's going to be interesting to see exactly what the real reason for bringing this act forward. We know that Red River College has wanted this act, but at the same time, it seems very timely considering that the government had let some of the financials sort of slide when it comes to Red River College and some of their reporting that they had to have gone through. And if it was the government's position to actually be an overseer of the college and some of their financial goings-on in regards to the president's expenses and that being able to, you know, report to the board.

I know that now the minister's putting in place into this bill a financial management. One of the considerations is expanding the board to—from 12 to possibly 17 with a consideration of the minister when he's doing his appointments or the minister's

appointments that they have to consider somebody to be appointed to the board with some financial management background. You would think that they wouldn't necessarily need to pass some legislation, Mr. Acting Speaker, to actually think that they might need some—somebody appointed to the board with some sort of financial management background.

*(15:40)

So we are, again, we're seeing the bill go forward—move forward, because we know that a lot of the pieces to it, which basically has been copied from The Colleges Act and then created in their own act. We think that a lot of the pieces makes some good sense. We do agree that there should be some oversight as to stop some of the, I think, the negative publicity that has hurt the college over the past couple of years. And it definitely was something that could have been prevented.

So, with that, I appreciate the opportunity of putting a few words on the record. I know that we're going to be getting some briefings from MIT to discuss how some of the buildings are being transferred over to Red River College.

So, with that, Mr. Acting Speaker, I thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Recognizing the honourable minister for municipal affairs.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Mr. Speaker, as a former minister of Education, it's a real delight and pleasure for me to be able to get up and put a few words on the record on behalf of my honourable colleague, the Minister of Education, who is doing an admirable job of continuing to build this province.

This legislation will strengthen Red River College and help ensure that it has a mandate and the oversight it needs to better serve students. Our government wants Red River College to succeed and we know that the college has a great reputation of students, graduates, industry and employers. It's a tremendous asset to the city of Winnipeg and a tremendous asset to the province of Manitoba.

As we move forward as a government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue working with and investing in Red River College so that it can offer in-demand programming and help our economy grow in the province. And I look forward, along with my colleagues in government, to this bill passing today

so that students and employers can continue to be well served by Red River College.

And, again, on a personal note, it's just a real pleasure to see the continued investment in our college and university system that our government's making. In Brandon, of course, the outstanding move of Assiniboine Community College to the architecturally unique and architecturally outstanding campus on Brandon's North Hill is a legacy initiative of our government, as is the Princess Street campus for Red River College.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, while welcoming the legislation, I note that the fundamental problem here is that the present government wasn't paying attention, wasn't watching what was going on at Red River College, wasn't preventing problems from occurring. It's really the old story of closing the door after the horse is gone. And this is a government which all too often has been closing doors too late after the problems have already happened. They should have been paying a lot more attention to start with and they should have been on top of this situation and made sure that the scandal didn't happen at the Red River College to start with.

Mr. Speaker, because this deals not only with education but part of the government's employment effort, I want to take just a moment to correct some very misleading and erroneous use of statistics by the current NDP government. They have talked in glowing terms about how the numbers of people employed in Manitoba have been going up and making tremendous progress, et cetera, et cetera. The problem is, it's all a poor use of statistics, a poor understanding of what has happened in the last few years.

The striking thing is that the employment numbers for Manitoba in May for—that were reported—those were the last ones reported, are still lower than the number of people who were employed in Manitoba in June of 2013, two years ago. That's a rather depressing statistic, in fact, that in two years the number of people employed has actually gone down instead of going up. And, indeed, the interesting thing about this is that from June 2013 to the present, every month the number of people employed has been lower than the number of people who were employed in June in 2013. It has never, since June of '13, recovered from the whammy that was the increase in the PST, which dropped

employment in this province and sent it going down. And although it has come up a little bit recently, we are still lower than employment was in June of 2013.

And I did a comparison with all the other provinces in Canada, and every other province but one has had at least a month, since June of 2013, where their employment numbers were higher than they were June of 2013, and there's some provinces where most months since the June of 2013 the employment numbers are considerably higher.

And so we have done, since June of 2013, when you look at this carefully, we have done actually very poorly in comparison with the other provinces across Canada. And it's something that should be noted and the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief) and the other members of the NDP should be very careful about the misleading use of statistics, which is trying to give people a false sense of what's happening.

Now, hopefully, the numbers—employment will grow. But to suggest that that's been the pattern since June of 2013 would be wrong. There's been a down and a little bit of an up but we still aren't where we were in June of 2013.

So this government has quite a bit to account for. They have caused this province a lot of problems. We have seen a lot of scandals. And some of the things which they have done to try and produce employment have not produced it in the way that it should have done and we've seen a net migration of people to other provinces instead of a net migration of people from other provinces to here.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

So there are a lot of things that really need to be improved, and that's one more reason why we need to change the government and have a Liberal government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further comment or debate on this bill?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: On—House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 17—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 17, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour, that Bill 17, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I put on the record at both second reading and in committee the reasons for our support of this bill, and those still stand.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation. I believe it's a step forward.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 12—The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call concurrence and third reading for Bill 12, The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species).

* (15:50)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Nevakshonoff), that Bill 12, The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des eaux (espèces aquatiques envahissantes), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Any debate on this matter?

Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Very briefly, because I wouldn't want to inhibit the quick process of the House, I just want to say that this legislation is fundamental to our efforts to curb the spread of aquatic invasive species. Without this tool, which is an enforcement tool, it's largely voluntary on the part of our citizenry whether they participate in this process. This gives us and our conservation officers the powers to compel people to submit to inspections. It gives us the ability to designate control zones with restrictions and prohibitions that can be put in place in law.

So, you know, I could speak at length about some of the good works of my predecessor, now our Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), who, you know, went above and beyond the call of duty, I think, last year in trying to curb the spread in the four harbours and, you know, members opposite are critical of that. But this was an unprecedented effort and, you know, we will continue to endeavour to curb these—this problem to the best of our abilities.

So, you know, just in short, this is the tool that we need, and I look forward to a speedy passage and royal assent and hope that all members will cooperate in that regard.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, aquatic invasive species has been an issue that should've been on this government's radar going back to 2009 when zebra mussels were first discovered in the Red River basin. And here we are in the summer of 2015 and we are still debating legislation that this government only just put forward and still won't take effect until proclamation and royal assent later on today.

When we take a look at the history of the infestation of zebra mussels, Mr. Speaker, when they first entered the Great Lakes system the government should've been well aware of what was happening, the danger that was facing our water systems, and the situation that should've been undertaken at that time.

Talking to anyone within the scientific community, Mr. Speaker, it's not hard to understand or come to the realization that, unfortunately, when it comes to zebra mussels—at this time anyway—eradication is simply not a realistic or viable solution when it comes to this aquatic invasive species.

And, in fact, the best that we can hope for at this time is to slow their growth, and that would be

achieved through education. And I'll give the government credit, I see a lot of their billboards and other materials throughout this province encouraging people to be aware of this species, to drain their watercraft. And it's—it is through a very aggressive and widespread and long-term education component that we will begin to educate boaters and Manitobans of the importance of draining their vehicles and of spraying their vehicles.

And so—and, again, it goes back to my earlier comments that when this species were first in 2009, the government could've been in a position in the last six years of educating boaters and stakeholders of the importance of their role in, again, minimizing and mitigating the spread of this invasive species.

Now, of course, most of my comments, and a lot of our comments, and a lot of the minister's comments were focused on zebra mussels, and, obviously, they are the primary aquatic invasive species, but we need to recognize that they are not the only invasive species that our current waterways are currently being affected or infected with, but they are the—again, they are the ones that are most prevalent in terms of media coverage and immediate consequences, especially when you look at the consequences and the potential havoc they could cause to, say, something like Manitoba Hydro.

And I remember late last year there was a symposium put on to deal and talk about some of the measures being taken to deal with zebra mussels. Of course, they had with them some—a propeller that had been covered with zebra mussels and covered with a—like a liquor or lacquer, because they can be incredibly sharp, and it's quite a sight to behold, but when you realize that a single female can lay over a million eggs each time, the rapidity of which the population grows isn't surprising at all.

There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that with this legislation there are some significant shortcomings. The most obvious shortcomings that this minister and his government has failed to address is that of float planes. Here we have a situation where you will have a float plane entering our water system which may become infected and attached by zebra mussels or any other aquatic invasive species, and yet there's no requirements under the current legislation or no process under current legislation of which remedial action they need to undertake to address that situation. And so this float plane may simply find itself in another lake, a significant distance from any potential infection and they unwittingly may become

the source of the spread of zebra mussels, which is truly an unfortunate failing of this legislation.

The other failing of this is more of a failing of the government, Mr. Speaker, and I spoke to this earlier on one of the other bills, and we go back to last year's closure of the four harbours and the half-million dollars the government spent in their grade 8 science project of dumping several hundred thousand tons of liquid pot ash into the water system, and put the silk curtains to say that it could be done, but then the minister stood aboard the SS Minnow and dropped his George Bushesque mission accomplished sign, and yet we found out, under the new minister, and I said at the time that there was a serious danger that this would not succeed, and it failed to succeed. If they'd taken those resources, the half-million dollars and actually had invested them, again, into that long-term strategy that we'd been calling for since they had purchased some of those portable decontamination units that cost \$85,000 each, again, we could have had another six, seven more of these units in circulation to help, again, slow the spread of this invasive species.

It's also worth noting, Mr. Speaker, and I brought to this the minister's attention, a situation that was reported by fishers in the Winnipeg Free Press about how they were out on the waterway, they looked forward, they had engaged with Conservation officers who were out there with a portable unit, and they had said, you know, oh, we're looking forward to seeing how this unit works when we take our boat off the water, and when they proceeded to get off the water at about 7 o'clock at night, nor surprisingly, the unit had long left and actually left at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. You talk to most fishers and exiting the water at 4 p.m. just is not a realistic component in terms of time frame of actually engaging these units.

So, with this comment, Mr. Speaker, I'll allow my colleague, the member for River Heights, to make some additional comments on this legislation, again, legislation that today we should only be fine-tuning as opposed to passage for the first time.

Thank you.

*(16:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I find the government's performance on this legislation very, very disappointing. In fact, it may be tragic that the delays in bringing forward this legislation were such as they are. The NDP, once again, are trying to close the barn door after the horse has gone. We

have—should have had a government which was much more on the ball, ready much earlier.

Certainly, let's look at the situation last year. It was clearly known by the end of July last year that the zebra mussels were out of control in Lake Winnipeg and could never be controlled and eradicated. At that juncture, there should have been a very speedy response because stopping the spread of zebra mussels from Lake Winnipeg to other lakes—and we have probably 100,000 lakes in this province—it's a large number of lakes at risk. And so, Mr. Speaker, we should have had, as Liberals called for last summer, an emergency session to bring this bill in to get it passed no later than September last year so that the measures could have been in place to stop the spread last fall, to stop the spread this spring, to stop the spread in, now, the summer months. This has been a tragedy of enormous proportions that the government moved so slowly.

And, in fact, if you look carefully at this situation, it was known for quite some time that the Red River system had zebra mussels, that we had—were at major risk of having zebra mussels. The government, to be frank, should have brought this legislation in in 2009 or 2010 or 2011 or 2012 or 2013. There was a lot of years where there was a big opportunity to be ready, you know, before the tragedy, disaster struck and prevent the problems. But this government was not there. It was not there for the people of Manitoba; it's not—was not there for the people who care about the lakes in our province and about the quality of our waters in our province. And so we will have to, now from here on forward, have to deal with zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg, and we may have to deal with zebra mussels in many other areas as well.

I want to talk for a moment about float planes, because I got up and I talked at second reading about the importance of paying attention to float planes. This is clearly a major, major issue because float planes are going from bases at Selkirk or different parts of Lake Winnipeg and flying out to many, many smaller lakes all over Manitoba. And, clearly, this should have been one of the first things that the government thought about and addressed and made sure that at every major sea—float plane base there was an approach which would make sure that float planes were not carrying zebra mussels and taking them all over the province to lakes which were pristine and which now may have zebra mussels in them as a result of the carelessness of this government.

Even the NDP MLA for Flin Flon, to his credit, recognized the importance of float planes, and I recall him railing away in this Legislature about the critical need to pay attention to float planes. And yet this government has paid no attention to float planes. There wasn't an amendment brought in. It's a disgrace. This government should have done something about it. At the very least, there should have been an amendment to make sure that float planes are covered. And beyond that, there should have been the effort and the resources to address float planes, which clearly this government is not doing. I've already talked earlier on about the problems in Conservation with cutbacks, and here we have major problems with invasive species, in this case, zebra mussels, that the department doesn't have the adequate resources to address. I think it's a disgrace, Mr. Speaker, to be in this province with the NDP doing so poorly on such an important file that is so important to so many wonderful lakes we have in this province.

Obviously, I will support this legislation now, but it's really late in the day to be coming forward with this legislation and passing it, and that is what is a disgrace. We should have passed this at least last year; we probably should have had it as early as 2010 or 2011, and this government needs to be much more on the ball than they've been with this legislation and, sadly, with a number of other pieces of legislation.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on this matter?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House in concurrence and third reading of Bill 12, The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 26—The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to Bill 26, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services, that Bill 26, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le registre des mauvais traitements infligés aux adultes,

reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): In 2013, when we introduced the Adult Abuse Registry, it was the first of its kind in Canada. We were proud to take this action to help protect adults with intellectual disabilities and patients receiving care in health facilities throughout the province. Today we are proud once more to strengthen this legislation.

This bill requires the Adult Abuse Registry Committee to proactively report the names of individuals placed on the registry to employers and regulatory bodies. This will further protect vulnerable Manitobans and enable employers to make more informed and defensible decisions regarding who works in facilities and agencies.

I look forward to the royal assent of this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on this matter?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak up about the importance of preventing adult abuse, in particular, senior abuse.

The government talks a lot, but there is a real problem, and there is a good illustration of this real problem. There is right now a very real concern which is happening at a personal-care home in Pine Falls. And this was raised recently by the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, and the concern here is that the mother of a woman who came forward and came to the Legislature is being badly abused at this personal-care home, and the concern is so severe that the mother is terrified of the situation, and it is so severe that the daughter is terrified of what may happen because of this situation of her mother being abused and the potential for further abuse in this personal-care home.

And the individual who was actually in the Legislature a week ago had contacted the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady), and what did the Minister of Health do? Absolutely nothing. There was no change. And the mother—the daughter who was concerned about her mother came here, and the daughter met with the Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors (Ms. Crothers), and what has happened? Absolutely no change. No action in spite of a

terrifying circumstance existing under this government in a personal-care home in this province.

It's disgraceful that there has been no action and that we have—I talked to the daughter today. She was practically crying because of the terrifying nature of what is happening. She is very upset and very alarmed that no action has been taken in spite of this issue being brought forward directly to both the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady) and the Minister of Healthy Living.

* (16:10)

And I think that this is one more example of where the NDP has, you know, talked a good line in terms of trying to prevent adult abuse, but, when it comes at actually doing the job and preventing it, this government has been asleep on the switch, slow and ineffective, and it's, sadly, a disgrace.

So I'm certainly in support of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to put on the record that all is not right here when it comes to abuse and senior abuse in this province, and this government needs to pay a lot more attention.

Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I, too, would like to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 26, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

This act would correct some oversights from the previous act, in particular when it came to people that are in the employ, that work in personal-care homes or work with seniors and vulnerable persons moving from job to job and no one being able to be in a position to track those that have a history that would lead you to concern. And we don't want anything to happen to those people, either seniors or vulnerable persons, that are in there—either in their homes or they're in personal-care homes across the province. So we're certainly in support of protecting them.

And I appreciate the comments made by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), in particular. We've also had situations in the personal-care homes in Portage where the only solution that we could come up with—and it wasn't, in fact, employees, but it was other patients—the only solution that we could come up with was to put security in on a 24-7 basis to make sure that the patients were kept safe. Is that where we're headed in personal-care homes in this province? We certainly got to find some other solutions far better than that.

That was an interim measure, but it—interim for two months is quite a long period of time. And there doesn't seem to be much thought being given to other options that might be out there and provide the opportunity and places of safety for seniors that are in homes and also deal with those that would have an impact on those seniors' safety.

So certainly support the move on this bill. I think they need to get serious about seniors' safety in personal-care homes and other facilities and vulnerable persons, as well, because there's been some incidents in regards to that as well. So it's a start. I would certainly encourage them to look at doing more, and we will be looking forward the opportunity to hear some input in—during the committee stage.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to put just a couple of words on the record in regards to this bill, another example of a bill being brought forward which is more reactive as opposed to preventative or proactive.

We do have to start taking a look at exactly what is happening, and as the member from River Heights had mentioned already, I know that there's a few people in my constituency who has, unfortunately, had to endure some things that have been happening with their parents, other elders within the communities in regards to personal-care homes.

And I know that in one incident that the member from River Heights had brought up again, which I had brought up earlier this session, the fact is is that the ministers are being alerted, they're being cc'd to a lot of the concerns. I know that they are now starting to look at it, but, again, Mr. Speaker, it seems that there's a lot of reaction happening as opposed to prevention.

I know that one person is getting somebody who's actually hired to look and to stay—sort of one-on-one supervision with one of the personal-care home residents, and yet the other two that are being victims in the personal-care home are now being told to hire somebody on their—from their own bank accounts—hire somebody to sit with their parents in a personal-care home. To me, Mr. Speaker, that just does not quite seem right.

I do see that this bill is going to help and it should be helping, but the fact is is there's so many other factors, as well, that this government seems to be failing us, and Manitobans are just tired of paying

more and getting far less essential front-line services due to the waste and mismanagement of the funds in this province. It's time for a change, Mr. Speaker, and I think Manitobans definitely need to see that.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on this matter? House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 26, The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Seeking leave of the House to ring the division bells for five minutes in anticipation of Her Honour's arrival, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit the bells to ring for five minutes to summon members back to the Chamber? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted. We'll now ring the bells for five minutes in preparation for the arrival of Her Honour for the royal assent.

* (16:20)

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason): Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Her Honour Janice Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Mr. Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly asks Your Honour to accept the following bill:

Clerk Assistant (Mr. Claude Michaud):

Bill 44—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2015; Loi de 2015 portant affectation anticipée de crédits

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, the Lieutenant Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

At this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain bills that I ask Your Honour to give assent to.

Clerk Assistant:

Bill 3—The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission manitobaine d'aménagement du canal de dérivation et de la route située du côté est

Bill 5—The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de police (agents de sécurité des Premières nations)

Bill 6—The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act; Loi sur le Centre national pour la vérité et la réconciliation

Bill 8—The Conservation Officers Act; Loi sur les agents de conservation

Bill 9—The Chartered Professional Accountants Act; Loi sur les comptables professionnels agréés

Bill 11—The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique (utilisation interdite des appareils de bronzage par les enfants et autres modifications)

Bill 12—The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des eaux (espèces aquatiques envahissantes)

Bill 14—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats d'améliorations domiciliaires)

Bill 16—The Terry Fox Legacy Act; Loi commémorative de Terry Fox

Bill 17—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba

Bill 22—The Red River College Act; Loi sur le Collège Red River

Bill 26—The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le registre des mauvais traitements infligés aux adultes

Bill 35—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les

accidents du travail (présomption relative au trouble de stress post-traumatique et autres modifications)

Bill 42—The Independent Officers of the Assembly Appointment Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur la nomination des hauts fonctionnaires de l'Assemblée (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)

Bill 43—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative

Bill 69—The Technical Safety Act; Loi sur la sécurité technique

Bill 71—The Animal Diseases Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les maladies des animaux

Bill 200—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba

Bill 201—The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act; Loi sur le centenaire de l'obtention du droit de vote par les Manitobaines

Bill 203—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (sécurité des piétons)

Bill 212—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Gift Card Inactivity Fees); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (frais d'inactivité applicables aux cartes-cadeaux)

Bill 214—The School Bus Driver Day Act; Loi sur la Journée des conducteurs d'autobus scolaires

Clerk: In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour assents to these bills.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

God Save the Queen was sung.

O Canada was sung.

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: What's the will of the House?

An Honourable Member: Five o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Five o'clock.

Before we adjourn the House, I'd like to thank honourable members for their work during this portion of our session, and I know there was a tremendous amount of work by a group of members that we have recognized in this House and also for our table officers who also played a significant role in that, and I'd like to thank them and our pages for all of their work on behalf of members of the Assembly.

Thank you very much for your efforts.

So is there leave of the House to call it 5 p.m.?
[Agreed]

Then I would like to wish each and every one of you a very pleasant summer in your constituencies and with your families, and please come back safe to us.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until October 20th.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		Tendering Practices	
Government Record–Apology Request		Gerrard; Selinger	2274
Cullen	2265	Youth Jobs Strategy	
Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar		Gaudreau; Chief	2275
Avenue in Oakbank–Pedestrian Safety		Lake St. Martin Emergency Outlet	
Schuler	2265	Martin; Ashton	2276
Beausejour District Hospital–Weekend		Lake Manitoba Outlet	
and Holiday Physician Availability		Briese; Ashton	2276
Ewasko	2266	Members' Statements	
Community-Based Brain Injury Services		Brigette Lacquette	
and Supports		Kostyshyn	2276
Helwer	2266	Braden Calvert Junior Curling Rink	
Amendment to The Mount Carmel Clinic		Briese	2277
Act–Board Membership Reduction		Deacon John MacKenzie	
Swan	2267	Caldwell	2277
Oral Questions		Oak Park Wins Triple Crown	
Fiscal Management		Driedger	2278
Pallister; Selinger	2267	What a Wonderful Province	
NDP Severance Packages		Graydon	2278
Pallister; Selinger	2268		
Emergency Services		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Pallister; Selinger	2268	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Non-Profit Organizations		Report Stage Amendments	
Pallister; Selinger	2269	Bill 8–The Conservation Officers Act	
Floodfighting Equipment		Martin	2280
Pallister; Selinger	2269	Nevakshonoff	2281
Helwer; Ashton	2270	Bill 5–The Police Services Amendment Act	
NDP Performance Record		(First Nation Safety Officers)	
Pallister; Selinger	2270	Mackintosh	2284
Children in Care		Gerrard	2285
Ewasko; Irvin-Ross	2271	Bill 35–The Workers Compensation	
Gerrard; Selinger	2274	Amendment Act (Presumption re	
Wishart; Irvin-Ross	2275	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other	
MRI Wait-List		Amendments)	
Driedger; Blady	2272	Driedger	2286
Premier of Manitoba		Braun	2287
Goertzen; Ashton	2272	Smook	2287
Former Cabinet Ministers		Concurrence and Third Readings	
Goertzen; Ashton	2273	Bill 8–The Conservation Officers Act	
Provincial Sales Tax Increase		Nevakshonoff	2281
Gerrard; Selinger	2273	Martin	2282
		Gerrard	2283

Bill 35–The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments)

Braun 2288
Gerrard 2288
Smook 2289

Bill 3–The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act

Briese 2289
Gerrard 2289

Bill 14–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts)

Gerrard 2290
Goertzen 2290

Bill 11–The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments)

Crothers 2290
Graydon 2290
Gerrard 2291

Bill 22–The Red River College Act

Ewasko 2291
Caldwell 2292
Gerrard 2292

Bill 17–The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Goertzen 2293
Gerrard 2293

Bill 12–The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species)

Nevakshonoff 2294
Martin 2294
Gerrard 2295

Bill 26–The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act

Irvin-Ross 2296
Gerrard 2296
Wishart 2297
Ewasko 2297

Concurrence and Third Readings– Amended Bills

Bill 5–The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers)

Briese 2285
Gerrard 2286

Royal Assent

Bill 44–The Interim Appropriation Act, 2015 2298

Bill 3–The Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority Amendment Act 2298

Bill 5–The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers) 2298

Bill 6–The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act 2298

Bill 8–The Conservation Officers Act 2298

Bill 9–The Chartered Professional Accountants Act 2298

Bill 11–The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments) 2298

Bill 12–The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species) 2298

Bill 14–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts) 2298

Bill 16–The Terry Fox Legacy Act 2298

Bill 17–The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act 2298

Bill 22–The Red River College Act 2298

Bill 26–The Adult Abuse Registry Amendment Act 2298

Bill 35–The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments) 2298

Bill 42–The Independent Officers of the Assembly Appointment Act (Various Acts Amended) 2299

Bill 43–The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act 2299

Bill 69–The Technical Safety Act 2299

Bill 71–The Animal Diseases Amendment Act 2299

Bill 200–The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act 2299

Bill 201–The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act 2299

Bill 203–The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety) 2299

Bill 212–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Gift Card Inactivity Fees) 2299

Bill 214–The School Bus Driver Day Act 2299

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<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>