

Fourth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLAN, Nancy, Hon. | St. Vital | N.D.P. |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob | Wolseley | N.D.P. |
| ASHTON, Steve, Hon. | Thompson | N.D.P. |
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| CALDWELL, Drew | Brandon East | N.D.P. |
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| DEWAR, Gregory | Selkirk | N.D.P. |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna | Charleswood | P.C. |
| DYCK, Peter | Pembina | P.C. |
| EICHLER, Ralph | Lakeside | P.C. |
| FAURSCHOU, David | Portage la Prairie | P.C. |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Lib. |
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| GRAYDON, Cliff | Emerson | P.C. |
| HAWRANIK, Gerald | Lac du Bonnet | P.C. |
| HICKES, George, Hon. | Point Douglas | N.D.P. |
| HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon. | Fort Rouge | N.D.P. |
| IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon. | Fort Garry | N.D.P. |
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| JHA, Bidhu | Radisson | N.D.P. |
| KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie | St. James | N.D.P. |
| LAMOUREUX, Kevin | Inkster | Lib. |
| LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon. | La Verendrye | N.D.P. |
| MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon. | St. Johns | N.D.P. |
| MAGUIRE, Larry | Arthur-Virden | P.C. |
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| McFADYEN, Hugh | Fort Whyte | P.C. |
| McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon. | Lord Roberts | N.D.P. |
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| MITCHELSON, Bonnie | River East | P.C. |
| NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom | Interlake | N.D.P. |
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| ROBINSON, Eric, Hon. | Rupertsland | N.D.P. |
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| SCHULER, Ron | Springfield | P.C. |
| SELBY, Erin | Southdale | N.D.P. |
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| SWAN, Andrew, Hon. | Minto | N.D.P. |
| TAILLIEU, Mavis | Morris | P.C. |
| WHITEHEAD, Frank | The Pas | N.D.P. |
| WIEBE, Matt | Concordia | N.D.P. |
| WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon. | Swan River | N.D.P. |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 6, 2010

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): It is my duty to inform the House that Mr. Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the honourable Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 227—The Employment Standards Code
Amendment Act
(Unpaid Leave Related to Donating an Organ)**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable member from River Heights, that Bill 227, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave Related to Donating an Organ), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, given the importance of organ donations, this bill will in fact allow an unpaid leave of absence for an employee who undergoes surgery to donate an organ to another as a way of providing comfort. I would suggest that this bill in fact be accepted. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Marilyn Brick): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 226—The Education
Administration Amendment Act
(Education About Donating Organs)**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member from River Heights, that Bill 226, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Education about Donating Organs), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a bill, again, dealing with the important issue of organ transplants. It establishes a policy framework in regards to education that would be incorporated into the education curriculum and in particular for our high schools. Thank you.

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

PETITIONS

Bipole III

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been forced by the NDP government to construct its next high-voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba, a decision for which the NDP government has not been able to provide any logical justification.

Since this will cost Manitoba ratepayers at least \$640 million more than an east-side route, and given that the Province of Manitoba is facing its largest deficit on record, the burden of this extra cost could not come at a worse time.

Between 2002 and 2009 electricity rates increased by 16 percent, and Manitoba Hydro has filed a request for further rate increases totalling 6 percent over the next two years.

A western Bipole III route will invariably lead to more rate increases.

In addition to being cheaper, an east-side route would be hundreds of kilometres shorter and would be more reliable than a west-side route.

West-side residents have not been adequately consulted and have identified serious concerns with the proposed line.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the cheaper, shorter and more logical east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, to save ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars during these challenging economic times.

And this petition is signed by C. Kunau, C. Stocker, P. Sfordan and many, many other Manitobans.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Ophthalmology Services—Swan River

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Swan Valley region has a high population of seniors and a very high incidence of diabetes. Every year, hundreds of patients from the Swan Valley region must travel to distant communities for cataract surgery and additional pre-operative and post-operative appointments.

These patients, many of whom are sent as far away as Saskatchewan, need to travel with an escort who must take time off work to drive the patient to his or her appointments without any compensation. Patients who cannot endure this expense and hardship are unable to have the necessary treatment.

The community has located an ophthalmologist who would like to practise in Swan River. The local Lions Club has provided funds for the necessary equipment, and the Swan River Valley hospital has space to accommodate this service.

The Minister of Health has told the Town of Swan River that it has insufficient infrastructure and patient volumes to support a cataract surgery program; however, residents of the region strongly disagree.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider rethinking her refusal to allow an ophthalmologist to practise in Swan River and to consider working with the community to provide this service without further delay.

And this is signed by S. Jersak, R. Lucan, F. Lucan and many, many others, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mount Agassiz Ski Area

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and the Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operations of Mount Agassiz ski area were very important to the local economy, not only creating jobs, but also generating sales of goods and services at the area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for core provincial government services and infrastructure which benefits all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened and Parks Canada is committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

And to request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by R. Cripps, D. Cripps, B. Porter and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Multiple Myeloma Treatments

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

* (13:40)

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

And Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by H. Panchuk, T. McDonald, E. Schwarz and many, many others.

Pet Ownership—Tenancy Agreement

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background and the reasons for this petition are as follows:

Tenants and landlords can benefit from a province-wide policy that treats all Manitobans the same regardless if they own pets.

Research shows that tenants, including seniors, who have pets are more socially connected, have better health, less depression and higher levels of fitness.

Allowing tenants to keep their pets leads to less strain on organizations like the Winnipeg Humane Society.

The Province of Ontario has legislation which ended discrimination against pet owners, and this has been in place successfully since June of 1998.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government ensures that landlords cannot discriminate against pet owners purely based on the fact that they have pets.

That the provincial government ensures that any provision in a tenancy agreement prohibiting the presence of animals in or about a residential complex should be void.

Signed by A. Downey, T. Dmytruk, R. Lefleur and many, many others.

Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Community-based medical clinics provide a valuable health-care service.

The closure of the Westbrook Medical Clinic has left both Weston and Brooklands without a community-based medical clinic.

And we petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider how important it is to have a medical clinic located in the Brooklands-Weston area.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is signed by T. Kloschinsky, R. Kowal, D. Brassard and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Public Accounts Fourth Report

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Vice-Chairperson): I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Fourth Report.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- September 9, 2009
- May 5, 2010

Matters under Consideration

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Workplace Safety and Health dated February 2007

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the September 9, 2009 meeting:

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRAUN
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- Mr. DEWAR
- Ms. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. MAGUIRE
- Ms. SELBY
- Mrs. STEFANSON

Committee Membership for the May 5, 2010 meeting:

- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRAUN
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. DERKACH (Chairperson)
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Mr. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Ms. WIEBE
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on the record at the September 9, 2009 meeting:

- Ms. Carol Bellringer, Auditor General
- Hon. Ms. ALLAN
- Mr. Jeff Parr, Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration

Officials speaking on the record at the May 5, 2010 meeting:

- Ms. Carol Bellringer, Auditor General
- Mr. Jeff Parr, Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Auditor General's Report – Audit of the Workplace Safety and Health dated February 2007

Mr. Dewar: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister responsible for Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to table the 2009 Annual Report for the Crown Corporations Council of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I am pleased to table the—

Introduction of Guests

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today His Excellency Bogdan Borusewicz, Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Poland; His Excellency Zenon Kosiniak-Kamysz, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Canada; and parliamentarians from the Republic of Poland.

Also, in the public gallery we have with us today other members of the official delegation from the Republic of Poland.

Also in the public gallery today we have, from Rising Sun School, 10 grade 9 to 12 students under the direction of Ms. Dolores Bestvader, and she—they are—this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

We welcome you all here today. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Personal Care Homes Sprinkler System Upgrades

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Madam Deputy Speaker, in 2001, as the result of a tragic death of a 76-year-old woman in a fire at a Manitoba personal care home, an inquest recommended that every personal care home in the province should have a fire sprinkler system for the protection of its residents.

Nine years after that recommendation, we learn that more than a half of the personal care homes in this province have either no sprinkler system or a partial one. The safety of our seniors in our personal care homes should be a top priority of this government instead of it being mothballed for a decade.

Why has this Premier ignored the recommendation and put at risk the very lives of the people who built our province, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for the question.

Since '98, we have put 21 personal care homes into the marketplace for additional support for people. All of them have sprinkler systems, and an additional nine have had sprinkler system upgrades. There are two in this year's budget, for a total of \$3.8 million.

And I note, for the record, that safety and security funds have been increased from 20 to 30 million dollars in this budget. And I have to underline again that the members opposite voted against that increase in resources for safety and security.

Mr. Goertzen: We know that the new personal care homes have to have a sprinkler system, but the recommendation was that the older ones have full sprinkler systems put in place.

The minister responsible for this file, yesterday, said that her government has been focussed on, and I quote: other areas. Well, we know they've been focussed on other areas. They're spending \$1.75 billion putting a bipole line on the wrong side of the province. We know they've been focussed on getting an untendered stadium quickly into the ground.

But why is it that the Premier has decided—and his minister—decided to put aside the safety of the very people who built this province so that they could rush a stadium into the ground and so they could put a bipole line on the wrong side of the province? Shouldn't the safety of seniors come first, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: This is exactly why, in 2007, the Province has required that all personal care homes receive annual fire safety inspections and they are all

required to have a fire safety plan that is signed off by their local municipality. We are the government that brought these measures in. The member opposite knows that. And as well, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are fire drill activities, staff education and fire prevention, all done since 2005.

There's no question that personal safety and safety of individuals in personal care homes is important, which is why we put an extra \$10 million in this budget for it. And the members opposite know full well—they know full well—they have voted against those additional resources for safety and security in the health-care system.

Mr. Goertzen: The Premier knows full well that the inquest recommended that there should be full sprinkler systems in every personal care home in Manitoba to prevent another death like we saw.

The fact that there hasn't been a horrendous tragedy has little to do with good government; it has everything to do with good fortune. Every day that this government refuses to adhere to this recommendation is a day that they put our seniors at risk. This Premier has dithered for a decade on this recommendation.

Why would he put the very lives of those who have built our province at risk by not acting on this recommendation?

Mr. Selinger: I thank the member for the question because, again, all life safety systems, which include fire alarms, sprinkler systems and the associated electrical systems in personal care homes, are inspected, tested and certified annually by a licensed life-safety installation company. We have put standards in place to ensure annual inspections, to ensure that these facilities are properly safeguarded for the benefit of the people who live there.

* (13:50)

Members opposite have consistently voted against measures we have brought forward to add increased resources for safety and security. They wax eloquent about it today, but when it counts or when they're supposed to put their money where their mouth is, they have voted against it every single year. They have voted against all of these safety improvements, all of these additional resources. The public knows that; now the Legislature knows that.

Personal Care Homes Sprinkler System Upgrades

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): My 14-year-old daughter knows that you can't check a sprinkler system that's not even in the building.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a terrible day when a government refuses to stand up for its senior citizens. The CBC I-Team reported today that there have been over 135 fires in Manitoba personal care homes in the last 13 years. Last year alone, there were 17 facilities that experienced fires. When this investigation went further, the story became even more shocking. Less than 50 percent of Manitoba personal care homes have incomplete systems or no sprinklers at all. Many residents of personal care homes have limited mobility or others are bedridden.

I ask the Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors (Mr. Rondeau): Why is he unnecessarily putting Manitoba seniors at risk?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Of course, the health and safety of seniors are incredibly important to all of us in this House, and I would say to the members that's why in June of 2007 we took the step of making it mandatory that every year all of those facilities have a fire inspection, that we take a look at all of the fire safety—all of the—*[interjection]* well, they complain across the way, but it's not something they did, Madam Deputy Speaker. All of those facilities require annual inspections. They require fire alarm inspections. They require safety plans to be in place. They require the staff to be trained to get people in and for other people to get out. In 1998, the building code was changed to make sprinklers mandatory—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs. Rowat: Madam Deputy Speaker, you can't inspect something that's not there. The only thing more shameful than finding out that more than half of Manitoba's personal care homes do not have adequate sprinkler systems is the fact that this NDP government is already aware of the tragic effect of their inaction. In 2001, a senior died in a fire in her personal care home which was not equipped with a sprinkler system. During the inquest the judge stated that if the home had been equipped with a sprinkler system, there probably would not have been a fire.

I ask the Minister of Healthy Living: Can he explain why he is waiting for another senior to lose

its life before he takes necessary steps to ensure the safety of Manitoba seniors?

Ms. Howard: Of course, no one in this House, no one in this Chamber wants to see any loss of life. I think many of us get into public service to make our communities safer and to avoid exactly that. I would say that—just for the information of members in this House—so in 1998 the building code was changed to make sprinklers mandatory in facilities like personal care homes. At that time in 1998, there was not a decision taken to make that retroactive. Since 1998, we have, of course, built 21 additional personal care homes. They all have sprinklers, and we've upgraded many more to include sprinkler systems.

In addition, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have asked the Building Standards Board, which is composed of experts like firefighters, people who have building expertise, to take another look, add sprinkler systems and to provide us with their best advice.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mrs. Rowat: Let's talk about this government's priorities. When speaking to the CBC, the Minister of Labour stated that the government has focussed on other areas. I'm guessing that the minister was referring to her government's focus on football stadiums.

Can the minister tell me what does she expect seniors to—how they—she expect seniors to feel safe when this NDP government is focussing on football stadiums instead of providing proper fire safety infrastructure in personal care homes in Manitoba?

Ms. Howard: My comments were that we have been focussing on all areas of fire safety, including annual inspections, which we're one of only three jurisdictions in the country that require those annual inspections. But we've also focussed on making funding available to do that retrofit. We have increased by 50 percent in this year, from 20 million to 30 million dollars, the funds available for safety and security projects in personal care homes at a time in which there is a recession.

Let's reflect for a moment—*[interjection]* Well, I know that members opposite believe the recession was a dream, but it is real.

In 1995—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Order. I'm sorry, I'm not—I need to be able to hear the questions and the answers, so I ask for the assistance of all members here.

Ms. Howard: In 1995, when they had the opportunity to fund health capital, what did they do? They put out a press release saying, sorry, we're freezing all health capital. We have no choice.

We have decided to go forward and make funding available to retrofit those homes, and they have voted against it, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Personal Care Homes Sprinkler System Upgrades

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): An inquest following the death of a 76-year-old woman in a PCH fire nine years ago recommended that older PCH facilities should be forced to install sprinkler systems, and I quote: Which would serve to reduce the likelihood of death. End quote. Today, of the 124 personal care homes, 38 have no sprinkler systems at all and 36 have only partial systems. So 60 percent are poorly prepared to fight fires.

Can the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) tell us why this very, very important inquest recommendation has been ignored for nine years?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I would take issue with the comment by the member that they're poorly prepared. I don't think that the staff in personal care homes, who dedicate their life to taking care of vulnerable people, who get training to help evacuate people in the case of fire, who make sure that those fire hazards are removed, who do that work, I don't think they would appreciate being told that they're poorly prepared to protect the health and safety of their residents, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We require annual inspections and brought that into place in 2007. We're one of only three jurisdictions to do that. In addition, Manitoba Health requires biannual inspections, twice a year, and what that also does is that lets the local fire department come in, create a relationship with that personal care home and give them advice on what they can be doing to improve the safety in those personal care homes.

Mrs. Driedger: I would remind the minister that Alex Forrest of the firefighters said sprinklers should be in every single personal care home.

Madam Deputy Speaker, since 1997, there have been more than 135 fires in Manitoba's personal care homes, 17 last year alone. Despite this horrific number of fires, 60 percent of the homes are not set up with sprinklers to protect our most vulnerable patients in the system. And, despite this horrific number of fires, a life-saving recommendation from an inquest has been ignored.

Does this Minister of Health not take inquest recommendations seriously?

Ms. Howard: It is firefighters within the Office of the Fire Commissioner who are working very hard on discussions about sprinkler systems. They're right now looking at this issue. We've asked them to take a good look at personal care homes, in particular. And they'll provide us with those recommendations, and we'll take those very seriously.

I would say to the member opposite that there has been progress on sprinkler systems in personal care homes. There have been 30 either built or newly installed sprinkler systems in personal care homes. We've put money aside for that every year, and there's money in this budget—more money than ever before in this budget for retrofitting personal care homes—money that they voted against and, money, that if they had their way on the budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, wouldn't be provided at all.

Mrs. Driedger: Madam Deputy Speaker, the inquest into the death of Brian Sinclair, who died after waiting 34 hours in an ER waiting room is going to start soon. This Minister of Health has already covered up the truth about that death.

Now, I have to ask her: Why should any of us have any faith in her, as the Minister of Health, or in this NDP government, when those recommendations come out from that inquest, if they cannot follow a major recommendation from this inquest where somebody died in a PCH from a fire? Why should we believe that they're going to follow the important recommendations that are going to come out of the Brian Sinclair inquest?

* (14:00)

Ms. Howard: Again, I'll just give some facts in the House—a refreshing change—that in 2007, we made inspections mandatory. We're one of three jurisdictions to do that. We follow up on those inspections; we work with personal care homes on those inspections in making sure that they have the

life safety equipment that they need to protect their residents.

When I speak to firefighters in the Office of the Fire Commissioner they stress to me that sprinklers are important but they can't be the only thing you rely on in the situation of a fire. You have to make sure that alarm systems are up and running, and you have to make sure that the staff know what to do in the case of the fire. Those are the things that we've been doing. But in addition to that, we have asked the Building Standards Board to take another look at sprinklers, which they're doing right now, and to provide us with additional advice about what we could be doing to ensure that that life safety is taken in—

Madam Chairperson: Order.

Gage Guimond Death Report Recommendations Implementation

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Madam Deputy Speaker, feeble responses from a government that pays lip-service only to review after review that's done by their government. And a prime example is the review into the deaths of children in the Child and Family Services system.

And we see three years after the death of Gage Guimond and much lip-service paid to implementation of recommendations into the death of Gage Guimond, that we have a minister and a government that have completely neglected their responsibility.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's important that the recommendations from the review of Gage Guimond be implemented so that no other child dies as a result. Can the minister indicate to me why those recommendations haven't been implemented?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, when recommendations are made for immediate action into child welfare—oh, like the ones in 1991 from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. I know the member opposite had absolutely no interest in so much as even turning the page of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. In fact, when we came into office, Madam Deputy Speaker, we discovered that that review and those recommendations still in their shrink wrap.

We're taking action on the recommendations in a systematic way, and almost all the recommendations

are completed, or well in progress. And the member well knows that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, the last time I looked, Madam Deputy Speaker, in 2007, it was under this minister's watch that Gage Guimond died as a result—a direct result, of NDP policies that were implemented. And just a couple of weeks ago, the minister indicated, and I quote: Consultation is under way on practicalities and benefits of an added layer of review into recommendations on Gage Guimond, a recommendation that made common sense, that would protect children in Child and Family Services and protect children that may end up in the same circumstances as Gage Guimond.

My question to the minister is: He promised to implement every recommendation. Why is he stalling and paying lip-service to the recommendations from the Gage Guimond report?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member's just making that up, Madam Deputy Speaker. The—[*interjection*] Whoa, a little too close to the bone.

There is a plan of action into the implementation of the recommendations into the tragedy of Gage Guimond. There was a report about action at six months and an action at one year, and action is continuing. The recommendations are well under way, they're being implemented, the progress is moving along consistently, not like when members opposite were given recommendations for immediate action in child welfare. They ignored those entirely.

And I will remind the House, of course, that as a result of this terrible tragedy, the loss of Gage Guimond, this House passed what I would call Gage's law to make sure that safety is paramount, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are—

Madam Chairperson: Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, what an unbelievable answer from this minister who had Gage Guimond die under his watch as a direct result of policies that were implemented by this NDP government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Gage Guimond tragedy should never happen to another child within the Child and Family Services system. The recommendations that the minister talks about have not been implemented. He promised two years ago, when the review came out, that he would implement every recommendation.

I want to ask this minister today: How can we possibly trust anything that this government says when review after review, right across government—and recommendations have not been implemented; they've been ignored?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, she's ignoring the—what she knows is the truth, and that is the published report into the action—the actions are continuing.

In fact, this morning in the House she talked about one recommendation, No. 47. The southern authority has put that into action. In fact, work is continuing on an ongoing basis in a systematic way. She may be interested in one recommendation; we are interested in them all, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But I will remind the member opposite that when it comes to foster care in this province, she should look in the mirror before she walks in here and thinks that she is standing up for foster parents. She cut foster rates. She cut the association. She made cut after cut in the time of recession.

That's not what we're doing. We're investing, and we're investing in the recommendations, not just for Gage Guimond but with regard to the tragedy of Phoenix Sinclair as well. These are tragedies. We must take strong efforts to make sure—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Education System Late Assignment Guidelines

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): It would appear the Minister of Education is flip-flopping on the issue of grading for late school assignments. Now, we have a letter from the previous minister from last June which indicates that the current guidelines say that late assignments would not be reflected in students' marks. It appears the new minister may be taking a different approach to the issue.

When can we expect a clear policy statement from the minister?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): A year ago, Madam Deputy Speaker, the previous minister talked about a guideline that was in place. And as a minister, I believe that Education is a dynamic file, and I believe that we are open to having a dialogue about any guideline, any policy that's in place. I think that it's important that we have that dialogue with our stakeholders so that we can provide the best possible education for our students. So we are having a look

at that guideline that was the previous minister's guideline.

Mr. Cullen: And parents wants assurances there will be a clear policy coming from this government.

Now, the minister's talked about consulting with teachers and superintendents. Will she also be consulting with parents? And if so, how will she be engaging parents in this important discussion?

Ms. Allan: I need no lectures from members opposite about how to consult with stakeholders, thank you very much.

I can remember full well what went on when they were in charge of the Education file. Let's talk about what went on. Let's talk about what went on in the 1990s. You know what happened in the 1990s? There was no consultation or dialogue then with any stakeholder. They fired 700 teachers and they cut funding to our public education system, which was the first funding cut in the history of the Education Department in this province.

So I need no lectures from members opposite about who to consult with.

Mr. Cullen: Obviously, the minister's pretty sensitive on this issue, and they've had 11 years to try to have addressed this issue.

Now, this government is eager to micromanage school division budgets, but they've not shown any leadership on this file.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we're simply asking: When will the minister take responsibility? When can we expect some clear, concise policies on this issue?

Ms. Allan: Well, what's really important to us, Madam Deputy Speaker, about this guideline is not about when we get it right, but how we get it right. That's what's important to us.

* (14:10)

It's about the consultation with our stakeholders in regards to how to revise this guideline so that it is in the best interest of students and parents and the public education system so that we can provide a better system so our students succeed in the real world. And that's what we want to do. We want to work with our stakeholders and we want to make sure that we have a dialogue with them in regards to how to move forward, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Steinbach, I just want to remind all honourable members that we're in front of the viewing public. We have students who are here with us today and I think that we need to show some decorum in the House.

The honourable member for Steinbach has the floor.

Justice System Offenders Released in Error Statistics

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would encourage the Minister of Education to visit the real world once in a while. She may learn something from it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that according to the Minister of Justice in Estimates last week he indicated that there'd been at least a few individuals who were convicted of crimes who were released accidentally from Manitoba correctional facilities. He indicated that there'd been several over the last few years, but he didn't have the exact number.

I want to ask the Minister of Justice how many convicted criminals have been released from our jails, from our correctional facilities, from our courts or the Remand Centre, accidentally, in the last several years.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Deputy Speaker, it's good to hear from my friend from Steinbach.

As the member's aware, there have been errors which have occurred in the judicial system in Manitoba going back to the first days of this province. The question was asked in Estimates. I take it very seriously. I've asked my department to compile that information, and when we have it, I will, indeed, be providing it to the member for Steinbach.

And at the same time, we always have our system working to make sure there aren't errors that are made. No system is perfect, but we are certainly working to make it the best it can be, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's been over a week. I would hope that the number isn't so high of convicted criminals who are being released from our jails, from our courts and from the Remand Centre that the minister wouldn't know. I

mean, I would've thought he actually would've had that number on the tip of his fingers when it was asked in Estimates. But one would think, a week after it was asked, he would have some idea how many convicted criminals are simply strolling out of our jails into the bright sunlight of freedom.

Can he not tell us how many people were convicted of crimes? We know that the criminals have carte blanche on the street, but how many of them are just walking out of jail in Manitoba, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, despite my friend's eloquent prose—he should perhaps go into poetry writing. In truth, what happens is when there is an unfortunate incident of this type the primary job is actually to make sure the person is taken back into custody.

So corrections officials notify police and action is taken right away. I believe the answer that I gave in Estimates was that my officials couldn't recall this having happened, at least in the past many months. But I will get the member for Steinbach that information, as I've undertaken to do, and I can assure him that my officials take every step possible to make sure this doesn't happen. When it does, as it has since Manitoba became a province, there's appropriate action taken to get the person back into custody, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Goertzen: I'll remind the minister what he said in Estimates, it hadn't happened in the last few months, but he believed it had happened in the last year. And he's had, now, over a week to determine how many people have been accidentally released from jail or the Remand Centre or court. I can't believe that it's a difficult number to find, unless he isn't making it a priority, or that maybe it's so bad that he doesn't want to have it released.

I know this is the minister who believed getting rid of gangs means advertising on the price of right. I know that he believes that how you help young offenders, high-risk offenders, is to give them Slurpees. All we really want to know today, and we have many other questions, is how many convicted criminals have walked out of jail, have walked out of the Remand Centre, have walked out of court accidentally? Why can't they keep them locked up?

Mr. Swan: Well I'm very pleased that, once again, the member from Steinbach has put his true colours out there. He is opposed to crime prevention. He is

opposed to working in our communities to prevent young people from getting involved in gangs and that's why the architect of their crime campaign in 2007 was humiliated by newspapers. Even the *Winnipeg Sun* called his crime proposals ridiculous, outrageous. Even the *Brandon Sun* said they couldn't imagine implementing the kind of things the member from Steinbach suggested. I don't need any lectures.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Once again, I want to remind all honourable members that this is question period. If you have conversations you'd like to have, please make use of the loge.

Post-Graduate Studies Tuition Fee Increases

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Deputy Speaker, Master's and Ph.D. graduate students at the University of Manitoba contribute to the well-being of Manitobans through the research that they do, through teaching other students, and yet they've been threatened under the watch of this government with a 216 percent increase in the size of their continuing fees. This increase is only 154 times the rate of inflation. It is outrageous. At two recent town hall meetings, graduate students came out en masse opposed to this outrageous increase.

I ask the Premier: Will he immediately act to end the possibility of such an outrageous increase?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Madam Deputy Speaker, as the member knows, the Council on Post-Secondary Education receives applications from the universities if they wish to increase fees above the guidelines that have been agreed to by everybody. They review it according to several criteria, which I have read into the Legislature.

Will it have an impact on enrolment? Will it—will increased fees be in a job market where people will earn salaries above the norm? Will it be a fair and equitable? Will there be bursary offsets? All of these questions will be reviewed when these proposals are brought forward to the Council on Post-Secondary Education, and they will, of course, keep in mind the requirement and the necessity in Manitoba with the university, like the University of Manitoba that there should be accessibility and an opportunity for all people to be able to go to university.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Deputy Speaker, this year, the Premier has allowed a big increase in general tuition. He's decreased the amount of student aid, and yet this government is not satisfied it has sufficiently picked the pockets of the students. It wants to do more.

I ask the Premier to acknowledge that 154 times the rate of inflation is far too big an increase. And it's not just graduate students, of course. The government is standing silently by while there are very large increases being proposed for law, dentistry, medical, medical rehabilitation students.

I ask the Premier: Will he get his head out of the stand and put a stop to this huge increase in costs for students?

Mr. Selinger: I was trying to listen to the member's question, but the noise coming from the member from Steinbach made it very difficult.

I think he was suggesting that he was concerned about a potential high increase in student fees for graduate students, the continuing fee, which is the fee people pay after they've paid their tuition and wish to continue in the program.

And I can say to him, that all of these fees have criteria that will be looked at by the Council on Post-Secondary Education. One of them, one of the criterias is whether there's student support for this, and the member has indicated that there is—seems to be student discontent and not support for this. That will be taken into account.

Will it have an impact on the labour market? Will it have an impact on accessibility to these programs? These kinds of criteria will be looked at by the Council on Post-Secondary Education, and I'm sure they will make a recommendation which is fair and reasonable to allow people to continue to pursue graduate education in Manitoba.

The member should know the Millennium Scholarship Fund, of which he was a part of, has been ended in the budget this year. It was never intended to be a permanent program.

We have increased bursaries for graduate students. We have increased bursaries significantly for graduate students because we want more people going to graduate educations in Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, with these huge proposals for increases in tuition, the Premier is setting himself and his party up for an adversarial role with post-secondary students in Manitoba.

Our university students are telling us that they simply can't afford such large increases. Our students are tapped out. They are only so many hours a day, and when they're studying it's difficult to work and work on other jobs at the same time, and many of the students are looking at debt levels which they may not be able to pay off for many years. This isn't how post-secondary education students should be treated in this province.

* (14:20)

I ask the Premier to come to his senses. Will he commit today to revisit these free increases and stop the massive increases that are being proposed for students at the University of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Yes. I thank the member for the question. I've indicated very clearly there's a set of criteria that will be reviewed by the Council on Post-Secondary Education. The member says we're setting ourselves up for a confrontation with post-secondary institutions. We're the one—we're the ones that brought in a graduate tuition tax rebate program, which will give a student living and working in Manitoba after they finish university 60 percent of their tuition back. In this budget there's an additional \$7.5 million to move that tuition rebate forward to be available to students, including grad students, during the time that they're in the program or continuing in the program. These resources have been made available in order to increase and continue to have accessibility to post-secondary education, and I have to remind the member he voted against it.

Child-Care Centres Safety Standards

Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale): Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs recently announced that Manitoba is the first province in Canada to introduce comprehensive safety plans and codes of conduct for its more than 1,000 licensed child-care facilities. The Child Care Safety Charter is part of Manitoba's five-year action plan for child care, called Family Choices.

Can the minister please inform the House how the safety charter introduces safety standards, so that

all parents can rest assured that reasonable steps have been taken to protect their children?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): Well, I thank the member for the question.

As part of our five-year plan for child care, called Family Choices, we include in there a commitment to develop a Child Care Safety Charter, and I'm pleased to confirm with the House that the one-over 1,100 child-care facilities in Manitoba have now put in place both safety plans and codes of conduct, and that is just a tremendous effort on behalf of the well-being and safety of children in Manitoba.

I want to take this moment just to thank all of the hard work from the child-care facilities. We have heard, as well, from parents who are most appreciative. In fact, in the *Brandon Sun*, just this week, it said that this new plan is comforting to the parents. But, as well, I want to thank the staff of the child-care office for their support, over 40 workshops, but, most importantly, this is on behalf of children, this is for the kids.

Flood-Damaged Farmland Financial Compensation Eligibility

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Madam Deputy Speaker, the northwest lake region experienced the same weather conditions as the north Interlake over the last two years. In some areas, there were 11 inches of rain in one event. The R.M. of Alonsa, and Ste. Rose, in my constituency, the R.M. of Lawrence in the Minister of Agriculture's constituency, the R.M.s of Ethelbert and Mossey River in the Minister of Finance's (Ms. Wowchuk) constituency, were all affected seriously enough to be eligible for disaster financial assistance.

I ask the minister: Why are those R.M.s not eligible under the program announced last Friday?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Madam Deputy Speaker, we were approached by farmers in the northern Interlake and were convinced by the arguments that they made that they had suffered two years in a row with the inability of harvesting crops. That hits a community very hard. That hits a farmer's income very hard. We were convinced that they were correct, that we needed to move forward.

We approached the federal government, and I must say, we had very good co-operation from federal minister Gerry Ritz. He understood right away what kind of a bind these farmers were in, in that part of our province, and we moved as quickly as we could, together with the federal government, to provide \$15 per acre of unseeded acreage so that we could help in getting farmers to put their crops in the field, rather than go through a third year without a crop.

Mr. Briese: Madam Deputy Speaker, I have had conversations with the federal representation and I was told that the feds committed the funds to this program, but the program was designed by the Province. Now, that same area of the province that I'm referring to, the northwest lake, had the same weather patterns as the Interlake. Farmers had fields—bales sitting out in water. They had fields of hay for the last two years that they couldn't harvest, and they had the same difficulties on the cropland.

Madam Deputy Speaker, are the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Struthers) and the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) not willing to stand up for producers in their own constituencies, or do they just not care?

Mr. Struthers: Madam Deputy Speaker, if the member for Ste. Rose did care, he'd get past the little political games he's trying to play, and actually go to bat for farmers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, AgriRecovery—I know that the member for Ste. Rose knows this, so why he's ignoring it, I don't know, but AgriRecovery is a program that the federal government and the Province works together on. It's a program that's designed for us to come together in special cases where Mother Nature doesn't co-operate with the farmer, or other issues come forward, and we have the ability to move together and try to address some of these issues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if the member wants to take his—as information the questions and advice he gets out of coffee shops and rumour mills, he can do that, but he should really stick to the fact.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The time for question period has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Grant Park High School Day of Service

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Madam Deputy Speaker,

the energy and generosity of our students are both to be celebrated, particularly when young people give back to their communities through volunteer work. I'd like to recognize the students of Grant Park School, who recently participated in a Day of Service in their community.

This year's Day of Service was arranged with the advice and support of the school's teachers advisory groups. These advisory groups help students connect with the outside community, and learn more within and beyond the classroom. In partnership with the teachers, students compiled a list of organizations, schools, natural sites, care facilities and businesses which could use the students' skills.

On April 21st, the students set out. Throughout the morning, they helped spruce up Omand's Creek, the River Heights Resource Centre and the surrounding neighbourhood; assisted with duties at Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army and Siloam Mission; visited seniors at Deer Lodge, Poseidon Care Home and the Reh-Fit Centre; assembled care packages for Winnipeg Harvest, Riverview Health Centre and Osborne House; and enthusiastically lent a hand at Ten Thousand Villages, Petland, Art City and the Needs Centre.

They also give back to other youth, here in the community and a world away. Several students spent time tutoring at Lord Roberts, Montrose and Champlain elementary schools, and others participated in classroom presentations for the War Child campaign, educating other young people about child soldiers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Day of Service was an overwhelming success. The students enjoyed themselves immensely, and the school's desire to strengthen the relationship between its students and the community was indeed met. Thank you to Grant Park for encouraging its students to give of themselves, and thanks also to the students for doing so with such eagerness.

Tammy Wood

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to congratulate Tammy Wood, who I nominated for the Woman of Distinction Award in the community volunteerism category.

Tammy is an accomplished volunteer, mother, homemaker, businesswoman and public servant in the Headingley community. Tammy was first elected to the municipal council in Headingley in 1998, and was re-elected in 2002 and 2006. She's the second

woman councillor to be elected, and the first deputy reeve or mayor.

One of Tammy's pet projects has been to build three children's playgrounds in Headingley, a project that came to fruition this past year. Two of these playgrounds are fully accessible areas.

Tammy is a breast cancer survivor. She's never shied away from this reality, and mentors other young women who are suffering a similar diagnosis. Although Tammy has a very busy schedule, when another woman in the community was diagnosed with cancer, Tammy made the time to accompany to her every appointment and to interpret the treatments and prognosis, offering encouragement and support to her and her family.

Her volunteer activities include, she was an administrator of the Phoenix Tiny Tot school program. In the mid-'90s, when young children had no programs, Tammy revived the Tiny Tot program at the Phoenix Community Club. She joined the board, raised money through user fees, managed the operations and finance, hired staff, managed the renovations, even hand-painted murals by herself. The program saw 30 children, aged three to five, use the facility. Today, it's now a licensed, full-time day care with a very long waiting list.

She was vice-president and president of the parent council at Phoenix School, co-ordinator of the Winnipeg Harvest garden. In 1998, Tammy initiated the garden, which saw students in each grade be responsible for one bed in the garden. She raised \$18,000 for local businesses for material. The garden is fenced, has an underground sprinkler system and a composting shed. Every year the students harvest the garden and donate it to Winnipeg Harvest. The broader community was inspired to also donate a portion of their own gardens to Winnipeg Harvest because of this project.

* (14:30)

She organized the Santa breakfast for the last six years, which is a major event in Headingley. She's co-ordinated the winter carnival which, by itself, generates about \$5,000 for the community every year. She and her daughter started free night—a movie night for children at the rec centre. She revived the community telephone directory by selling the advertising and getting the legwork done, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Tammy Wood is a truly remarkable woman, definitely a woman of distinction. On behalf of all my colleagues, I want to congratulate my friend Tammy for her volunteer activities in our Headingley community and wish her continued success in future endeavours. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

VE Day

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Sixty-five years ago, on May 7th, after six years of bitter fighting, Canadian troops attained the goal they had helped the Allied Forces fight for—victory over Germany and the Axis powers.

On May the 7th, 1945, a newsflash reached Canada at 9:36 p.m., eastern daylight saving time, stating "Germany has surrendered unconditionally." Parades and massive celebrations were held all across Canada, North America and Europe, with thousands of joyous citizens pouring in to congratulate our soldiers.

Over one million Canadian men and women performed full-time duty during the course of the Second World War, and 42,042 Canadians died in service.

This was a great victory for the young Canadian Forces and an even greater triumph for human rights and freedoms throughout the world.

VE Day marks a great victory, but it came at a tremendous cost. Almost 60 million people died during the course of the war: 17 million soldiers died; over 100,000 Canadians were either killed or wounded; millions of others were killed during the bombings, death camps and battles of the Second World War.

In this war, Canadians did not fight for their country's gain; it was not fought to increase our power in the world or to benefit our citizens. No, this army of Canadians fought, then, for the only thing their country fights for to this day, that which is right.

The atrocities of this war must never be forgotten. As the living witnesses to World War II dwindle in number, we must be vigilant in remembering the dark times they endured and ensure that we continue to strive for peace in the world. All Manitobans are grateful to the surviving veterans of World War II for their zeal, courage and faith in humanity. Thank you.

Sandra Herbst

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to honour Sandra Herbst, who has dedicated herself to the improvement of the education of our children here in Manitoba.

Sandra is a former teacher, current assistant superintendent for the River East Transcona School Division and president of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.

Madam Deputy Speaker, her accomplishments have not gone unnoticed, as she was one of this year's nominees for the YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards in the education category. Recognizing her hard work and her important contribution, Sandra was nominated by the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents and the River East Transcona School Division. She described the nomination by her peers as, and I quote, extremely humbling.

She began teaching in 1992 and was hired in the River East Transcona School Division as an assistant superintendent seven years ago. Over her career, Sandra has contributed to many initiatives, including promoting public education, refining professional development, encouraging student involvement in assessment and implementing programs to help disadvantaged Aboriginal and immigrant students.

Sandra has also volunteered with the Organization for Cooperation in Overseas Development, helping development countries improve the quality of their education programs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I've personally known Sandra Herbst for several years and have had the opportunity to watch her in action. She has a special gift for connecting and communicating with students at their level. It is evident that many of her peers agree that Sandra truly is a woman of distinction and continues to positively impact the lives of students in the River East Transcona School Division.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I invite all members of this House to join me in thanking Sandra Herbst for her dedication and commitment to educating students, both here in Manitoba and abroad. Thank you.

Citizen Patrol Groups

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Safe and healthy communities are the result of individuals who are active, involved and committed to their

neighbourhoods. This week marks the annual celebration of citizen patrol organizations giving us the opportunity to raise the profile of these important and dedicated groups.

Citizen patrol groups play a unique role in many communities. Acting as the eyes and ears of the local police, these individuals in the neighbourhood make safe—communities safer and more engaged. Citizen patrol groups build positive relationships between citizens and law enforcement aiding in the prevention of crime. Equipped with cellphones, flashlights and reflective clothing and trained on how to react when encountering suspicious persons or behaviour, they report to the police any activity they deem potentially criminal.

In recognition of this week, I would like to celebrate the work of the Dauphin Citizens on Patrol program. This group frequently patrols our neighbourhoods and communicates with the RCMP. For its part, the RCMP plays a support role by providing training, security clearances and assistance with co-ordination and planning.

While the group has faced some difficulties, there is a dedicated contingent persistent in their approach and commitment to this invaluable program.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Constable James Bjorklund, the RCMP liaison; and board members Dean Lounsbury, Bev Lounsbury, Jason Lounsbury, Glenda Thiele, Iona Tarrant, Metro Dupley, Winnie Baumung, Caroline Kereliuk and Bill Pertson for the steadfast devotion to creating a more secure community for all of us who live in Dauphin.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business?

Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader): The House will resolve itself into Estimates, but I'd also like to announce that at the time when the House resumes after the expected expiry of Estimates, that we will then be into consideration of bills for second reading. And the bills that are—will be put up for

second reading are: Bills 31, 5, 12, 27, 7, 13, 14, 19, 25, 28, 30 and 16 initially, and if there's time we can proceed to other bills, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Thank you. At this time, the House will resolve into the Committee of Supply.

But prior to that, I would like to say which bills are going to be debated when we resume after Committee of Supply. They will be Bills 31, 5, 12, 27, 7, 13, 14, 19, 25, 28, 30 and 16.

At this time, can all committee Chairs please go the appropriate rooms for their committee.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTHY LIVING, YOUTH AND SENIORS

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for the department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors): My staff has been very diligent, working while we were not in session. I have some of the information that I'll provide to the member quickly.

One is the org chart for Manitoba Healthy Living, and I'll slide that over. Thank you.

We also have some other information on the Magnus Centre board members. The original members were Arlene Wilgosh, Mr. Brennan [*phonetic*], Kirby Thompson [*phonetic*], Enns, Postal [*phonetic*], and the current members right now are Wilgosh, Brennan [*phonetic*], Thompson [*phonetic*], Enns [*phonetic*] and Postal [*phonetic*]. And I'll provide that to the member, as I slide it over.

As far as advertising, I'm just going to go through, very quickly, a general thing. We're going to make sure that we have it all absolutely accurate. The breakdown by branch: Healthy Child Manitoba—the majority of the costs of advertising in two major programs, which is the Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit and the Triple P program. And we believe it's between 50 and 60 thousand dollars about the access

to the prenatal benefit, generally. But we're just checking to see that we have all the list of where all the information went and all that, and we'll get that to the member.

The Triple P program has a budget of 250,000, but it was not used as a—it's been—we're waiting for the—a little bit to launch the Triple P program.

The Healthy Child Manitoba had some one-time ads to talk about the movement to the new office. And as far as Healthy Living, we've got some things for In Motion. We had ads for cycling safety with CTV. We had some Blue Cross ads. We have, in their *True Azure* magazine, which is now talking about Healthy Living, support for the launch of the diabetes action plan, reduce your risk.

We have an ad for the Provincial Parks Guide, a rate and review ad, which I think you've seen on the TV, exhaust ads to talk about the new non-smoking in cars. And as far as the Manitoba 4 Youth, we have a whole bunch of things that we've done on job centres, the youth job fairs and things like that. And we also have a little bit of things on youth programs in Aboriginal means business. And we do have stuff on The Green Team; you might have just seen there's a province-wide paper ad on the start of The Green Team and get your kids registered and employment.

So, so far those are the major areas. We're working to get the exact details and we'll get them to you shortly. We just don't want to miss one paper or one ad campaign. Okay. It's not completed yet. I'll get that to you shortly.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I looked at the org chart. It's exactly the same one that's in the Estimates books. I was hoping to get—in the Estimates book—I'm sorry—hoping to get more detail as to who was in charge of each of the different sectors of the org chart. So I'll be in discussion with you to get more detail on that.

I guess we'll go right into questions again. We have, I think, less than an hour so we'll continue on where we left off yesterday.

I'd like to go into the Triple P, the Positive Parenting Program, and I have some specific questions with regard to that area.

Can the minister indicate to me how many people in Manitoba are trained to offer the Triple P programs?

Mr. Rondeau: I'll tell you a few things on it. Mr. Chair, the annual budget is \$1.581 million. There's so far—and these are not up-to-date figures; they'll be a little bit behind because we're always conducting training courses—but there's 985 practitioners trained. We think that that number's a little bit out-of-date so that might put it a little bit higher, and what's new is we've competed—completed some training in French for some Francophone practitioners. And we continue to move it forward. That's—yes, that's good.

Mrs. Rowat: How many Triple P program sites are there in Manitoba and where are they? If we can get a listing of those.

Mr. Rondeau: I—Mr. Chair, I can provide the member with the number of agencies or groups that have the programs. As I had been chatting with my deputy, sometimes—like, St. James School Board is an agency that has it, but they'll move from school to school depending on when they deliver it. The same with day cares, they may have more than one site.

So we have a number of agencies. It's on the Web site, but if you want it, I'll get you the list. But the actual sites that they deliver it, we actually don't have a list of that.

Mrs. Rowat: The minister indicated there's 985 practitioners. Can the minister indicate to me—that number comes from up to what date? Is there a—when that number would have been factual?

Mr. Rondeau: That number, I understand, is from the end of the fiscal year, but there's always ongoing training going on. And so we assume that is very close to the right number, but there's always ongoing training.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister indicate to me how many Manitoba parents have participated in the Triple P program? Do you keep stats, is what I'm looking for?

Mr. Rondeau: I understand from the executive director of Healthy Child that we get information from the different agencies, but the training is often done in a collective or a large group where there's different people from different organizations; some are parents, some are professionals or day-care workers and all this. So we don't have absolute accurate stats. We will get the member the numbers of people that we can from the agencies, and it's constantly improving, and so—as far as getting more people trained. But I will endeavour to get you those numbers, the best we have, very shortly.

* (14:50)

Mrs. Rowat: I'm trying to get a sense of how this program is working and the number of people that are participating in it. If the minister's indicating he'll give me a breakdown, I'd really appreciate a detailed breakdown. There must be a way of determining how many parents have actually participated in the program, how many agencies and professionals have participated in the program. So if I can—can I get a commitment from the minister that that may be a possibility?

Mr. Rondeau: I will definitely commit to getting you that information, realizing, of course, sometimes the information comes a little bit later. So it's hard to have a specific cutoff when you're working with multiple agencies and train the trainer model, et cetera.

So we are going to work like that and I will endeavour to get that to you very soon.

Mrs. Rowat: The minister just mentioned train the trainer. Triple P program does have train the trainer capacity in Manitoba?

Mr. Rondeau: What we do is we have a specific trainer who trains certain people, and those people then train the parents.

Mrs. Rowat: The individual that trains is the trainer. Is that individual from Australia or is that individual from Manitoba?

Mr. Rondeau: From Australia, I believe.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister indicate to me how many people have travelled to Australia in association with the Triple P? And what I'm looking for is a list of all people who have travelled there, the date they went, and the cost to the department.

Mr. Rondeau: I understand that no one has gone to Australia this year on that. When there was discussions about originally bringing the Triple P program and other programs to Manitoba from outside, there had been previously some trips. I can get that to the honourable member, but I can assure you that there hadn't been any trips regarding the Triple P for my staff to Australia this year, nor is it in the budget.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister provide me with the breakdown since the conception of the Positive Parenting Program, breakdown of staff that have travelled to Australia, who they are, the dates they

went and the cost to the department from the conception of the program?

Mr. Rondeau: We'll get you information on that. The only question I would have to the honourable member, is that often when a person goes to another country, they're not just doing one program. They'd be looking at a number of things. They'd be looking at trying to get the best practice at the time. I understand that when the staff did go, the Triple P program was founded out of Australia and it grew out of Australia. They had really good practice, and so they were not just doing the Triple P, which was the center of expertise in the world, they were also trying to get other ideas on how we could move the children's agenda forward.

But I'll get you the (a) who went, the amount they spent, and I'll actually provide you with the information of what they did, basically, on the trip.

Mrs. Rowat: That was my next question was to get a detailed briefing of what exactly, then, they were doing while they were down in Australia.

How many people have come to Manitoba from Australia or other jurisdictions at the department's expense in association with the Triple P? If the minister can provide a list of travel expenses paid by the department for the trainers.

Mr. Rondeau: Yes, we can get the information from the member, and I would also like to say part of the reason why we've got the expertise of Australia is they did have best practice. And so we thought that it would be much better to, rather than reinvent the wheel, to use the expertise, to use the staffing who have done it as recognized as the best in the world. And so we brought them here.

It is our intention to not rely on Australia over the long term. What we're trying to do is get our own capacity and build our own capacity, and we will be heading that way in the future.

Mrs. Rowat: Yeah, that is a concern for me as well, is that we don't seem to have a trainer in the province, and if you're building that capacity, I'll be, obviously, following that and tracking that and encouraging that to happen, especially, you know, with the number of trips that likely have gone back and forth.

Last summer, one of my colleagues requested a list of all program evaluations that have been done by the department. We were notified at the time that

the Triple P was in its early stages of evaluation and interview data has been collected from, I believe, 644 practitioners, at that point, and managers. The data was being analyzed and the report was pending. That was due in—or in the winter, I'm going to say, of 2009-2010.

Is the report complete, and can the minister provide a copy of it?

Mr. Rondeau: I'm informed that we haven't finished yet, and as we're getting more practitioners and more information, we're gathering the information. We're still preparing the report and the evaluation, and it will be done.

One of the things I've learned in government is it's better to do things well than just quickly get a response, and so we want to make sure that we get a good evaluation on this so that we can plan the long term.

Mrs. Rowat: And I'm a believer in having, you know, tangibles or outcomes. So I'm, you know, just a little curious to see how this program is unfolding. There has, you know, obviously been a huge financial investment and, I believe, you know, a educational investment in potential for families. So I'm very curious to see how this program is working and seeing some positive outcomes from this.

So, I guess—you know, I have some concerns. I'm looking forward to receiving information with regard to this program. I would really like to see, you know, this program being evolved into where we would have our own trainer in our own country. And I would really like to see, you know, a really good analysis of how the program is working, who's receiving this program, who's administering this program through agencies, and actually hearing feedback and some type of a success rate from this program, how it is actually having an impact on families.

The next area that I'd have some questions with regard to is how many parent-child coalitions there are in the province and where they are located, if the minister could provide a list of them.

And just back to the report, can the minister indicate to me when he can expect to receive a copy of that report that was supposed to be done in 2009-2010?

Mr. Rondeau: I don't know exactly. I'll find out very quickly from the people who are doing the evaluation on the report and I can get that back

approximately. But, again, we're trying to get all the data and we're trying to put it together, so I'm a little bit nervous giving you a specific date, because it's working with multiple agencies and trying to collect data from multiple sources and it takes a while.

One of the things that I do know is that, as a former educator and administrator and a literacy coordinator, I know that it is really, really important to invest in early years. We have faith that—you know, James Heckman and Fraser Mustard and all that are talking 7 to 1, 10 to 1 ratios on investments for the results. Triple P in Australia had got a really good base in the past. So we are—we believe the investments are good.

And I agree fully with the member opposite that we have to make sure we're getting bang for the buck or we re-evaluate what we're doing. So I believe in the evaluation. I believe in the investment, but we want to see that we're getting bang for the buck.

As far as the evaluation, we in the Healthy Child try to keep all of the data as public as possible so people can use it. So, it's like the EDI, the Early Development Instrument; we make it public so people can use it as a tool. So I know it's good public policy to have that type of information out there, and so when we get the evaluation, it is my intention to make it public, and I will send it to the member.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Rowat: One more question with regard to that. Who is actually doing the program evaluations? Who is heading that up?

Mr. Rondeau: Okay. I'll give you the names of the principals because we won't get the others. It's Dr. Steve Feldgaier, F-e-l-d-g-a-i-e-r, and Rob Santos. And U of M's involved and there's some other people who are involved, but I don't have their names. Those are the two principals. *[interjection]* All of them? *[interjection]*

I'll get you the names of all the principals.

Mrs. Rowat: The minister has indicated he will get me a list of the people that are involved in the evaluation—or program evaluation process, and I appreciate that.

Back to the parent-child coalitions, can the minister indicate to me how many there are in the province, and if I can request a copy of a list of where they're located?

Mr. Rondeau: I can tell the honourable member that there's 25. There's a number in the city that are regional; there's some other ones. There's 25 throughout the province, and I can get them to the member opposite. So they're spread out throughout the entire province. Is that okay to get you the list? Okay.

Mrs. Rowat: I appreciate that. I look forward to getting the list.

Can the minister indicate to me how much funding is provided to each coalition, and does the amount of funding vary year to year? And if it does, if I could get a breakdown of—I don't know how long the parent-child coalitions have been in place, but a breakdown of the funding.

Mr. Rondeau: I can tell the honourable member in 2007-2008, it was \$2.55 million. In '08-09 it was \$2.727 million, which is the same amount as this year. I can also tell the member there's a base rate and then there's a per capita, sort of, top-up on top of the base rate. So some of the parent-child coalitions that are over a bigger region or a bigger—do get more money.

Mrs. Rowat: And when the minister provides me with the list of 25, can the minister also, then, provide a breakdown of a funding that each of these coalitions receive and, sort of, maybe, include the formula that you use so that I have an understanding of that? And, I guess, I would like to go back two or three years, if that's possible, maybe.

Are the parent—*[interjection]* He's looking at me. Are the parent-child coalitions required to sign service agreements when they accept funding, stating how the funding will be used, and that type of thing?

I used to be the critic for Family Services, and—where I was involved in the Hydra House issue, and I know that there were a number of recommendations with regard to agencies that service agreements were a big issue, and there was a commitment to ensure that those agreements were in place.

So I'm just wanting to know if there are those types of agreements in place, and if there is—if they are, would I be able to get a copy of agreement—an example of what the agreement looks like—*[interjection]* A template. Thank you.

Mr. Rondeau: The way that the—these coalitions work is it's—they create an annual planning process, and they sort of say what their objectives are,

et cetera. They work with staff to do that, so that's the way it works. Then what happens is there's a midterm update on it and then there's a final report.

What we try to do is try to work with the groups rather than do a service purchase agreement. We do more of a—they have a plan; they work the plan; it's community-driven model, and then we work with them on the updates and how they proceed through the plan.

Mrs. Rowat: There's one coalition that I know that gets, I'm assuming, around \$70,000. That's a significant amount of money where you would be working without any type of formal agreement, I would think.

Is there not a framework that they would have to work within? And if I could get a copy of that framework.

Mr. Rondeau: Yes, we'd be happy to provide you with a framework from which they work, and so we do have a framework which they work and the staff works from. And I'd like to reiterate not only do they have an annual plan, they actually have to give us an update to how they're achieving that plan, and there is a final report, and staff is working with them hand in hand.

Often we're working with community organizations and community groups, so you don't want a formal process as final as a service purchase agreement. You want a plan that you hold them accountable for, you know, work with it, but you want to have a little bit of flexibility because you are working with a community group.

Mrs. Rowat: So there's really no signed agreement. There's nobody that signs off on an agreement that those funds will be allocated in an appropriate way. There's really nobody that's held accountable to the dollar. If they decide to spend it the way they want to spend it, how would you, as a government, go back to that organization and say, no, you're not within the mandate.

What holds people to really be accountable to those dollars?

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Chair, before we submit—give them money, they do submit a plan, and it's a plan that's working with the community and different organizations.

And I've been involved with the St. James Neighbourhood Resource Network and others. There's lots of discussion. They do have a mission. We have a co-ordinator that meets with the groups. They work with the groups very, very closely.

And so these are groups that are working on community development. They're working in child care, literacy or things like this. And so they have a very specific mandate. It's not like they can go on something that's totally offside. They have a template on how they're spending it in local, to develop the local community and children, et cetera, and so they have to stay very, very much focussed in general and specific terms.

Now, whether they spend 10 percent on literacy or 30 percent on literacy or some more on family resources versus less, we do allow some flexibility. There is a template. You do have to do the report. There's specific monitoring from a co-ordinator and there's actual reports, semi-annually and then annually.

Mrs. Rowat: Are the parent-child coalitions required to report on how those funds—like, you do have a detail? So then you also, then, would ask for receipts and details of all those expenses, just as we do with member allowances? We have to be accountable. *[interjection]* You putting that on the record? But, yeah, receipts and then the details of how the expenses were itemized.

*(15:10)

Mr. Rondeau: I understand that each of the coalitions have, generally, a major banker or someone who looks after the books and through the auditing. I know, in St. James, it's the school division. In others, it's other community organizations. So there's a—we call it the banker. There is one of those. They're expected to keep receipts, they're expected to submit expenses and they're also able to be audited. And so we do have a process to make sure (a) the money is accounted for; it's spent according to the plan, and there is accountability to how they spend it and record it and the whole auditing function.

Mrs. Rowat: So have any of these parent-child coalitions ever been audited?

Mr. Rondeau: We sit down, time to time, the co-ordinator sits down and goes through the financial situations, et cetera, through most organizations, but which we call the banker would have a normal audit

process. Like St. James School Division, they would have the money come in, it would go through the normal auditing process and then have accountability that way. And, yes, we do actually have financials given to us.

So there is good, strong financial accountability that (a) the money is being spent where it's supposed to be. There's accountability that it is in the right direction and we do have an auditing function.

Mrs. Rowat: The auditing function. Does that individual come through from your department of—or your—who does the audits, I guess is what I'm—?

Mr. Rondeau: These are not generally incorporated bodies, et cetera. The amount of money is basically around 75,000-76,000, \$69,000, numbers like this. So, generally, it depends on the amount of scrutiny. It depends on who the banker is. So—and we do have a person there to watch to see that the spending is appropriate.

So, therefore, if it was St. James School Division, they actually have a normal auditing that goes through and looks at every expenditure and makes sure it's appropriate—and category. So the checking on that type of organization may be less rigorous than others. So you work with the smaller organizations, you work with ones that don't have the banker as an already audited facility.

You also work with ones that are smaller or might not have the support—the human resources support and that's who we're working with. But the financial accountability is because the staff person works with the coalition in delivering the program.

Mrs. Rowat: That's—he's saying, well, it's only \$75,000 per coalition, but you have indicated earlier, it's \$2.5 million that are allocated through this program. So it is a significant amount of money.

Are there—are these coalitions required to submit an audited financial statement? You talked about, you know, different agencies that are responsible for the money, but is there a requirement by your department to have submitted audited financial statements?

Mr. Rondeau: The simple answer is no. The more complex answer is—but the banking organization knows that they are expected to produce the financial statements. They could—we could ask for an audit. In some of these cases, there might be only seven to 10 transactions throughout a year, so you wouldn't go

through and say, a \$4,000 auditor to go audit that type of program.

If you have seven to 10 expenditures and you have seven to 10 receipts, you might have to hand in the financial statement. You may have the banker become audited. So let's say if you're handing X amount of money to St. James School Division, they will account for it in their normal auditing process, but we don't have a duplicate auditing process that we would request from St. James School Division.

Mrs. Rowat: I have some issues with that. There has—I'm really a strong believer in financial accountability. I'm not saying people are going to necessarily take advantage of, but there has to be an accountability piece. And we've seen, you know, different situations where, you know, if there isn't the need or there isn't the ask for, you know, an audit, which is required, then people may just become less cognizant of the fact that the dollars have to be allocated within the framework.

So we'll agree to disagree. I believe in, you know, audited financial statements. It doesn't matter what type of an organization. When it comes to \$75,000 and a full program of \$202.5 million—but we'll go there another time.

With regard to chronic disease prevention, I know that there are a number of reports that have come forward that show Manitoba has quite a bit of work to do in the area of chronic disease prevention and awareness. My understanding is the Chronic Disease Prevention branch of the Department of Healthy Living and Health was dissolved when the departments were separated. It's also my understanding that funding for the chronic disease prevention is now sent directly to the RHAs. Could the minister indicate if this is correct—a correct assumption based on the way things have been separated within the departments?

Mr. Rondeau: As far as—to address your first point, we do actually make sure that each of the coalitions have annual plans. They actually work with staff to develop those plans, update the plans. They submit the plans to us, with staff. We have the co-ordinator that keeps working with the agency. We have a banker. They have to submit financials. And under the normal auditing process, they do—most of them have an auditing process within the banking organizations. The Auditor General can check on it. And then we also get a financial report at the end of

the year and an interim report. And with the staff there, it's—we do have a staff member who is part of the coalition, who gets the reports and works with each organization.

So we do have lots of financial control, or make sure that the organization does report what they spend. And the Auditor General does have access. We've changed the law to make sure that that happens. So we do get lots of information. And, in most cases, the organization that is the banker are things like school divisions. So we will have to— you know, we have taken good proactive action to work— ensure that the money is being spent where it's intended to be spent.

As far as the chronic disease prevention, there's two parts of it. We've retained some in the department for the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. And we also have given some money to the RHAs for the Healthy Living. And so it's duly funded. There's some money in some programs that are being run through the RHAs, and we actually have some money in funding at the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative in the department.

Mrs. Rowat: Who was the Chronic Disease Prevention director, and where has that individual been reassigned to?

* (15:20)

Mr. Rondeau: I turned the note over, Mr. Chair, and I got her name: Charlotte—I'll spell it, L-w-a-n-g-a. I don't have a clue on how to say it. *[interjection]* No, she's in that branch.

Mrs. Rowat: So that I'm clear, then, she is still the director of the chronic disease prevention branch?

Mr. Rondeau: She is the person, Mr. Chair, that we've retained in the department for the chronic disease, for our part of it, which is the prevention part on Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative.

Mrs. Rowat: Is there a process in place to ensure that the dollars that have been allocated for chronic disease prevention are being distributed and being utilized in chronic disease prevention? When you're fragmenting, you know, a strategy, I'm just wondering how you're going to be able to determine that it's actually going where you say it's to go. For example, the RHAs are receiving dollars. Is there a centralized evaluation process to ensure that the monies are actually impacting, you know, chronic disease?

It just seems that they're going to have a competitiveness within the department—both departments—three areas, I guess, Health, RHAs, Healthy Living—for the same dollars, and there's going to be, you know, a battle to determine how best those dollars are going to be spent. It just seems fragmented, I guess, is what I'm trying to get at.

Mr. Rondeau: One of the things that's important to note about our department is that we're not going to control all the prevention and health functions. So what happens is, whether it's in Housing or Education or Health, they all—or RHAs or whatever—they all have purposes where they have to focus on prevention and healthy living. So it's not where it's fragmented; I think that every department, every organization in government and outside government has ownership of the health. And so we want to look to make sure that, although we're co-ordinating and working with others, we're not going to be doing all the prevention in the whole system.

The chronic disease prevention money is—it's held centrally. It's distributed to RHAs on a project basis. There's deliverables, there's funding letters, and it's sent there.

And the other thing is is that we actually work very closely with Health or Family Services or other groups to look at prevention and health. And the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative is a very much target. I think if you look at diabetes, which deals with activity and food and things—although you can have—be predisposed to have diabetes, you can delay it or you can avoid it through certain behaviours. So we want to work with other organizations to deal with chronic diseases.

Mrs. Rowat: So what I'm hearing from the minister is this is—these are going to be community-led or agency-led projects? Like, you're saying that they're going to be—the RHAs are going to put forward project proposals and then the department is going to be allocating those dollars. Is there—and it's the individual that you had mentioned earlier that is going to be in charge of working with the RHAs and the agencies that are going to be applying for this funding for initiatives.

I'm wondering how are you going to be able to evaluate this program for effectiveness, like, if you have about 12 different organizations.

Mr. Rondeau: I understand it's a five-year demonstration project. I'll give you an example of some of the projects that our RHAs are doing.

They're talking about looking at physical activity on healthy eating, smoking, or non-smoking campaigns. Some include the Blue Lake campaign, initiating Cross Lake to show smoke-free homes; the gardening projects in Waywayseecappo. What it's doing is getting young people to actually look at gardens as an option. We have In Motion programs in Brandon. We're working a lot with the Heart and Stroke Foundation. And so what we're trying to do is work with multiple partners to actually look at disease prevention. And so they've been developed. We're looking at the changes over time, and one of the things, as you remember, we were chatting yesterday, when you're talking prevention, it's not what did you do in six months, although we might have some positive numbers on non-smoking and things like that. These are long-term changes and sometimes they're population changes. So, if you remember, during the smoking ban, I think there was about 35 or 36 percent smoking rate in Manitoba and now there's about a 19 percent. So it didn't all happen in one year, but over a period of six or seven years there's been huge population change which will help in cancer rates.

Mrs. Rowat: According to the Web site, and I think this is probably the program you're talking about, The Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative, the program was funded both by the feds and by the Province. But it's done, ending on the end of March. So has funding be allocated for this project into this new fiscal year, and, if so, what are those dollars, and are those dollars under the auspices of Healthy Living?

Mr. Rondeau: The federal contribution agreement is done, so there won't be any money flowing from the feds this year. I understand that there's money in the Health budget for this year as a transition year, and I can—although it's not my budget, I'll be nice and say it's \$765,000 and it's in the Health budget.

Mrs. Rowat: So now I'm a little confused. There's \$765,000 in the Health budget, but there's a staff person within Healthy Living who's going to be co-ordinating this initiative. Can the minister indicate to me what her salary is and what her job description is?

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Chair, as we talked about previously, some of the role of the Healthy Living staff is to co-ordinate and work with other groups and other organizations, so this person—staff is supposed to be working to co-ordinate with RHAs

and Health Department. It's working on the transition into the proud provincial ownership of a hundred percent of the program. It's going to monitor the different organizations that are delivering Healthy Living programs and the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative, and it's—the person's also going to co-ordinate the program. We believe that we can work and play with others. We can actually communicate with others to deliver it. And some of the programs, like in healthy eating, may have multiple partners to work with, same with activity. And so we're going to work with multiple groups, organizations, and often departments, to deliver programs.

* (15:30)

Mrs. Rowat: Is the program being evaluated for its effectiveness, and who's going to be doing that?

Mr. Rondeau: I understand that there's an evaluation committee that's comprised of multiple partners to evaluate the program. Manitoba Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors is leading the evaluation. That's part of the role of the person. And they're gathering all the materials up to look at the best programs, the ones that have had the most impact and the ones that have had the most change.

Mrs. Rowat: Would the evaluator be the branch—*[interjection]* Okay.

I guess I'm just concerned because the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy report that came out recently on chronic disease in Manitoba shows that six out of every 10 Manitobans have a chronic disease. An individual living with a chronic disease costs the health-care system between 2.6 and 8.2 times as much as someone without a chronic disease.

Can the minister indicate to me whether he'll be establishing a chronic disease prevention strategy to address the problems outlined in this report and if so, what is the status of this initiative? Who would be leading it, and if there's a strategy document, would he be willing to share it?

Mr. Rondeau: I understand that the strategy is going to come partially out of the evaluation that's ongoing right now. We—the feds and us started out with this program. We ran the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. Actually, it came in right after I left, the first time, in Healthy Living ministry.

What we're going to do is look at the evaluation of the program, see what works, see the best

practices and then develop the strategy from there. And that's what this Charlotte is leading at this point.

Mrs. Rowat: So when can we expect to see this evaluation from Charlotte?

Mr. Rondeau: I understand it's going to take a little bit a while because we want to make sure that not only do they have behavioural change, it actually makes a difference and can be implemented. So what we're looking at is best practice from different partners and RHAs, et cetera, that we're going to work with. We're going to come up with what actually had good, positive change. We're going to see what can be implemented at a cost-effective matter.

And I agree with the member. I looked at the report on chronic disease. It scared me, and I know that we have to do something on chronic disease. So I'm pleased that we're actually moving forward on the Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative and In Motion and other programs like that, and the gardening programs, the northern food programs; all those are important.

Mrs. Rowat: In October 2008, the previous minister for this department announced \$2.8 million in funding for chronic disease prevention teams; 44 new health professionals were supposed to be hired across the province. Would the minister be able to provide me with a list of the 44 health professionals hired with this funding and whether they're—indicate to me whether they're nurses, physiotherapists, or—and where they're located?

Mr. Rondeau: I understand that those people would be in the RHAs in the Health budget. So it's not in this budget; that's part of the Health budget.

Mrs. Rowat: So the minister of Healthy Living was announcing an initiative that was not within her scope? She was announcing the two eight-point eight million dollars were actually dollars that were from the Department of Health at that point? Or is that meaning the new—the continuation of this program will be under the Department of Health?

Mr. Rondeau: The member might not be aware of the fact that Health and Health Living was basically one ministry back about a year ago, so, basically, it worked in unison. That was from when it was started, about seven years ago. Now what's happened is that there's been a breakage, and the other thing that's important to remember is that it's—we're still talking. We still work together, there's still

partnerships, and we will continue to work with not just the Health Department but all departments on prevention. So that chronic disease—there will be a part of Health to doing that. But we also want to lead in multiple partners and different departments, inside government and outside government.

Mrs. Rowat: Okay. On March 3rd, there was a news release that states the government will be hosting a summit this summer on underage drinking. I'm curious to see what the minister has to say with regard to this announcement. I—wanting to know what the budget is for this summit, and how much money will this department be spending on this summit, and what budget lines does this money come out from.

Mr. Rondeau: That—when the honourable minister, Mr. Mackintosh, was at the youth alcohol summit announcement, that's another example of a collaboration between our two departments, where you might have Family Services take the lead on part things, sometimes it's collaboration and sometimes we work with us being the lead. And so it's a very, very flexible approach. So Stepping Out on Saturdays was mine, with an FAS program support with Gord—or the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh)—assisting us with that one.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister indicate to me what the budget is for this summit, and how much money will be coming out of his budget for the summit?

Mr. Rondeau: It's the Minister of Family Services took the lead on that one.

Mrs. Rowat: So the minister—I'm going to just leave that then, because I'm really wanting to know what type of evaluation tools there will be to measure the progress in that, but obviously it's not something that's going to be in your area.

On page 37, under the seniors and healthy living—healthy aging—under seniors and healthy aging, there's a decrease in funding for Seniors and Healthy Aging. Then on page 41, there's a noticeable decrease in funding to External Agencies.

Can the minister provide a list of all the agencies who will receive a decrease in funding this year and the amount of the decrease they're facing.

Mr. Rondeau: Yes.

An Honourable Member: Okay. On page 11 of the Estimates book, I notice the most significant increase to your department's budget is in the area of

administration and finance, an increase of 12.1 percent. Can you explain what that would be?

Mr. Rondeau: What we did was we actually got a financial officer for the ministry to do a lot of the administration and financial comptrolling functions.

An Honourable Member: Can you take—or indicate his name for the record—just for the record.

Mr. Rondeau: Well, it's someone that we've worked with, Dave. It's Dave.

An Honourable Member: How many staff?

Mr. Rondeau: What we're doing is, we're working with Culture as a financial services program, and so the person—we are adding one person to Culture, Heritage and working with Dave in his department to do the financial accountability and all that sort of stuff.

Mrs. Rowat: One new position?

Mr. Rondeau: There—to—yes, there's one new person to work with the Culture and Heritage financial accountability and so that was the increase, in general.

Mrs. Rowat: On page 32, the Province's Tobacco Control and Cessation strategy is discussed. Is this strategy publicly available?

* (15:40)

Mr. Rondeau: We've made information on the Web site on the tobacco cessation. On the Web site, it's a public document and it's—the different components of the strategy are on the Web site.

Mrs. Rowat: So that is the strategy? I know yesterday we talked about the addictions strategy and there isn't one yet. It's—there's a Web site and then an individual is being hired through AFM's dollars to develop the strategy. So I'm wondering, is this the same type of process that they're indicating there is a strategy, there's a Web site, but there's really no substance to that other than having a Web site with no strategy.

Mr. Rondeau: The strategy has four goals. It's to prevent youth from starting smoking. It's protecting non-smokers from exposure to second-hand smoke. It's helping smokers to quit and it's trying to denormalize tobacco use.

And so that's the major strokes of the strategy. And under that there's certain actions on each major stroke.

Mrs. Rowat: How are we tracking this data? So how does the data indicate whether we're having any success with that type of a strategy?

Mr. Rondeau: The strategy—I'm pleased that I had the privilege of bring in the Non-Smokers Protection Act—Health Protection Act—in. It was passed unanimously. At that time, we had about 36 percent smokers. Now we have about 19 percent smokers. It's working.

And what's happening is, often the evidence in the 15 to 19 percent shows some declining—overall use is declining and so we're—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Order, please. I'm interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates consideration has now expired.

Our rule 76(3) provides, in part, that not more than 100 hours shall be allowed for the consideration of the business of Supply. Further, our rule 76(5) provides that, when the time has expired, the Chairperson shall put forward—put all remaining questions without debate, amendment or adjournment. I am therefore going to call in sequence the resolutions on the following matters: Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors.

I would remind members that these questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned according to the rules of the House.

Resolution 34.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$19,690,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Healthy Living, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,733,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Seniors and Healthy Aging, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,750,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Youth, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$28,100,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Healthy Child Manitoba Office, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,648,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not—*[interjection]*

Resolution 34.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$649,000 for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors. This also concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in room 254.

I would like to thank the minister, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication dealing with this process.

Committee rise.

ENABLING APPROPRIATIONS

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of Enabling Appropriations. Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Chairperson, just a brief one.

Mr. Chairperson, it's my pleasure to present for your consideration and approval, the Estimates of Expenditure for the Enabling Appropriations and Other Appropriations for the 2010-11 year.

Enabling Appropriations is a collection of service headings that provide expenditure authority for departments that are delivered by a number of different government departments. Funds voted in these appropriations are spent in one of two ways: Funds can be allocated to the delivery unit, in which case the expenditure is recorded in the department, or a department can be granted authority to charge approved expenditures directly to the enabling appropriation.

The estimated—Estimates allocate \$81.8 million in part A, operating expenditure for the Enabling Appropriation, in 2009-10. I want to point out that there is a separate report for the Sustainable Development Innovation Fund prepared by the Department of Conservation, and Justice initiatives are included in the supplements of the Department of Justice.

There is also 8.2 million allocated in part B, Capital investments for enabling appropriations, 2009-10. Other appropriations has expenditure authority of \$30.1 million in 2009-10–'10-11, I'm sorry. Unlike Enabling Appropriations, no funds or other appropriations is allocated to departments. Departments either directly charge expenditures or we cover approved expenditures from the various appropriations. As a result, all expenditures are reflected against the service heading.

Two program areas under the other appropriations that have a separate report are emergency expenditures and the Manitoba floodway and east-side authority. Supplementary information for these programs are included in the supplements of the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation.

With those few comments, Mr. Chairperson, I would welcome questions from the opposition.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement?

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): No, we don't have an opening statement at this time.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much.

For the purposes of clarity, is it the committee's wish to proceed globally or chronologically for the Estimates in this department?

Mr. Pedersen: I—globally.

Ms. Wowchuk: That's fine by me.

Mr. Chairperson: It's duly noted the Estimates will proceed in a chronological fashion for this department. And the floor is—oh, yes, thank you.

Minister, you can certainly invite your staff to come join us at this time and perhaps introduce them to the committee when they're settled.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chairman, I'm joined by Ms. Tannis Mindell, who is the secretary to Treasury Board, and Barb Dryden, who is the assistant deputy minister to the Treasury Board.

Mr. Chairperson: Very good. Thank you for that.

The floor is now open for questions.

Seeing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department, and I'll start with:

Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$62,426,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,400,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,250,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Justice Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,720,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,165,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Capital Assets-Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

This, to the surprise of no one, I'm sure, completes the Estimates for Enabling Appropriations.

And this—this section of the Committee of Supply will now continue with consideration of the Estimates for Other Appropriations.

OTHER APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): We basically start—just to clarify, the process is such that we go through the usual procedure. Now we can go through that more quickly if the committee wishes. But I am obliged to ask that, under this department or section, rather, does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): No, I do not.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

Does the honourable critic have an opening statement?

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): No, I do not.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, committee members.

Are we proceeding chronologically or globally, perhaps, in this in-depth conversation?

An Honourable Member: Globally.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): I have to ask, a 70 percent increase in the—

Mr. Chairperson: Oh, wait, we haven't even—we've got to do globally/chronologically first. We never quite finished that. Are we global?

An Honourable Member: We are global.

Mr. Chairperson: Excellent. Thank you.

It's understood this section of the Committee of Supply will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Faurschou: I'm getting ahead of myself in regards to the questions on page 11, item 3, other

appropriations, Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority, a substantive increase in level of funding.

Could the minister, perhaps, explain how many trees are being cut down, or is that the nature of the expenditure?

* (14:50)

Ms. Wowchuk: This will show up in MIT, but, yes, this is—the amount of money needed for the floodway has gone down because the work is just about complete and additional money has been allocated so that we can continue the work that we committed to on the east-side road.

We all know that our climate is changing. There have been serious problems with the road conditions, particularly this year when winter roads had to be closed down. So we are making investments on the east side and most of those roads follow the winter-road path that is there. But what is very important in this is that the East Side Road Authority is working very closely with First Nations communities, and the economic development and the partnerships that will—that have been arranged will result in much more of the work being done locally and much more of the money staying in those communities, and many more people having their—increase their skills through this project.

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing no further questions—

Ms. Wowchuk: I wonder if the member for Portage la Prairie will clarify the comment that he—I just—I didn't quite hear what he was saying. I heard him say something about toll gates, but I wonder if he would clarify that and put it into a question.

Mr. Faurchou: In the interest of time, perhaps we can discuss this after the committee concludes.

Mr. Chairperson: Diplomatically put.

Right. Seeing no further questions, we will now proceed with the reading of the resolutions.

Resolution 27.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$28,000,000 for Other Appropriations, Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 27.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,651,000 for Other Appropriations, Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

This now concludes the Estimates process for this section of the Committee of Supply.

The hour being 2:53, committee rise.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

* (14:50)

Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Local Government.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

For the information of committee members, we are on page 143 of the Estimates book. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Global, please.

Madam Chairperson: And the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Briese: I'd like to go to page 36 in the book on the Community Planning Services. Where it states, at the bottom of the activity identification, provide advice related to alternative dispute resolutions, what's involved in that?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Before I answer the question, I'd just like point out that we do have two new people from the department here today: Laurie Davidson is assistant deputy minister of Provincial-Municipal Support Services, and also Mike Sosiak—he's a senior policy analyst. And I have—Madam Toupin is here, the assistant deputy minister of Community Planning

and Development. And also Madam McFadyen, Deputy Minister, as well, is here.

Just to answer the question, we do have people who are trained staff that do mediation when requested, or called upon to do so. And I hope that answers the question the member was asking. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: When you're doing mediation, is that in the cases where—and I know there's been a number of cases where municipalities have had problems where councils weren't necessarily listening very well to their ratepayers, or various things where there's been some major project that has caused a lot of difficulty in the community and, in a lot of cases, splits right down the middle of the community. And I'm wondering if your mediation services involve dealing with the public, as well as with the councils.

Mr. Lemieux: Just to clarify: When there's conflicts relating between municipalities to planning issues, the department provide mediation either within a council, if there's issues, or between councils, but not between the ratepayers and a council. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: I know there's quite an uproar going on in the R.M. of Springfield right now over some debenturing and for a major project. Would the department be taking any actions in a situation like that?

Mr. Lemieux: The quick answer is not between citizens and a council. It's—as I mentioned previously, it's when there are conflicts or issues between municipalities relating to planning issues or even within councils, but not between the ratepayers or the citizens and a council.

Mr. Briese: What actions are taken then when there's a council itself that has a major split on the council that causes them to become almost non-functional?

Mr. Lemieux: Sometimes—and we know Manitobans are reasonable and when they sit down and work with each other, that we're able to resolve many issues, and this is no different with regard to either municipality to municipality or within councils. Generally, I would say people are able to work through their issues. But when that doesn't happen, sometimes there's an external sources need to be brought in to assist with regard to training councillors or sometimes it's because the councillors are new or various reasons.

And also the CAOs, as well, on a number of occasions may need information themselves in order to help their council, because I know I attended the CAOs association approximately a week ago. And some of my comments that I made, that they some of the most difficult jobs in the province of Manitoba, working with councils, ensuring that they're following all the rules that are necessary. So if I just might summarize by saying that sometimes, on occasion, councils need not only education, but they need external sources to help them along. Thanks.

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Briese: Mr. Acting Chairperson, in the Auditor General's report on the rural municipality of La Broquerie, there were a number of recommendations made to the department. I'm somewhat interested in what stage those recommendations are at, how many have been implemented, what still needs to be done.

I don't know whether you need—I wouldn't mind an overview, just, and I might go to some specifics on those recommendations.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, there were three recommendations—essentially looked at conflict of interest, looking at the kind of guidelines that would be better for the auditors and also early warning systems that should be put in place to address issues that come up earlier.

So, one, we've taken care of the conflict of interest guidelines. We feel that that was important, requested by the City of Winnipeg and others who wanted to make sure that that was in place.

* (15:00)

I know that the mayor of Brandon has commented that that is necessary and also a Brandon councillor, as well as the City of Selkirk councillor commented on the same. But on—also there's better guidelines for supplemental reports for auditors that are doing the books, and the early warning checklist system, or early warning system, that, if anything is untoward or something looks like it could be a problem, that there is something in place to address that.

So, essentially, that's my understanding of the three recommendations that came from the Auditor's report related to La Broquerie. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: One of the—and I was leading to it with my other questions about supports for the municipalities. One of the recommendations was that the department implement appropriate processes to monitor serious citizen complaints and to follow up compliance with The Municipal Act by municipalities.

Now, has that been done? Because that's what I'm getting at with my other questions is the serious citizen complaints. Probably there should have been some red flags going up in La Broquerie before it ever got to the provincial Auditor.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you for the question. It's an important one because all concerns are all—they're all important, and they're real, certainly, to those individuals. And sometimes we've heard in politics about how people raise frivolous concerns but, as politicians, we know there's no such thing. Every serious concern is an important one to that individual or organization, and we take it seriously.

And so we try to monitor the—not try, we do now monitor the calls, for example, the letters, concerns, complaints registered with the department about an issue in a municipality. We try to ensure that we keep track of those. We monitor those, and we try to, certainly, double-check those to see exactly what's going on in a particular municipality or even, indeed, a region of the province.

Mr. Briese: There are at least two more municipalities that I'm aware of, and probably three, where there—and your department may be aware of more than that, but there's at least two that I'm aware of where there are fairly significant citizen complaints. And, what—looking at that recommendation and hearing those citizen complaints coming from those municipalities, monitoring it isn't necessarily the only thing to do there.

I want to know what kind of actions are taken when those kind of situations arise, because in the case of La Broquerie, the red flags went up. They were raised by citizens of that municipality, and the actions—I don't think—were taken that needed to be taken.

Mr. Lemieux: I guess, maybe, let me—well, not, I guess. Let me start off my answer by saying that municipal governments—and my critic will know this better than most, being the former president of AMM—excuse me, that municipal governments are a mature level of government. They want to be

independent as much as possible. They certainly don't want Big Brother Province of Manitoba blowing in on every occasion to take care of every issue that they have. There's an expectation, and they tell us on a regular basis, that they can handle their own business and, yes, they call upon us for financial support—they call upon us for a lot of the expertise we have, but, essentially, as a mature level of government—I don't think the member is asking or suggesting that we should be interfering in all the business of municipalities.

But there are occasions where our staff and the Province does make—do make recommendations to municipalities. They are recommendations; they're suggestions. Sometimes CAOs take it; sometimes they don't. Sometimes they take part of it; sometimes they take none of it. And these have happened in the past.

There are—well, I stand to be corrected, but I believe the department has even made suggestions to Springfield and tried to work with Springfield, as an example, to try to resolve some of the issues they have. Whether they take those suggestions or not, that's another story, but, indeed, I would even say that—and I wasn't the minister then, but I—to the best of my understanding is that suggestions were made to the CAO and to La Broquerie on some of the issues that they were dealing with and some of the challenges they had. Whether or not they were taken, that's—and accepted, that's another point, but the department does everything that's humanly possible to try to work with another level of government that's a mature level of government, and there's an expectation that they handle and deal with their issues.

As we know, as elected officials in politics, we all go through a 30-day or 35-day job interview every four years, and those politicians better be listening to their citizens or they won't be around very long. And that's—we're held up to a standard, that standard that all of us understand. And our department works really hard with all municipalities to try to resolve their issues and give suggestions where need be. It doesn't mean that they're always accepted. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: I just mention to the minister if the—with four-year terms, if the breakdown takes place in the first year, it's an awful long time till that next election.

One of the other recommendations in that Auditor's report, and I'll move on from it shortly,

but—was a clear statement on conflict of interest, and I know this has always been a problem in municipalities. Some of the—I always use the rule: When in doubt, get out. But some municipal councillors don't feel they're in conflict at times that I'm sure they are in conflict and should be out of the room when certain decisions are made. And I know there's courses that are provided and different things, but I think that has to be made extremely clear. A lot of people go on to municipal council without very much experience at anything involving governance, and I don't think conflict of interest can be overemphasized. It's—I'd just like to know if there's been some actions taken to strengthen the message that's going out to councillors and their employees on that issue.

*(15:10)

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you for the question. It's an important one with a municipal election on the horizon in five months or so. But before I answer the question related to conflict of interest, I just want to note that when the act was changed, we extended the reach of the Ombudsman so citizens can now take their complaints to the Ombudsman. That wasn't there before. That's just another tool or another avenue that citizens can go to, and we, indeed, might even refer some issues to the Ombudsman ourselves.

With regard to the conflict of interest, we introduced the legislation. When we introduced the legislation, we thought it was—well, we know it was very, very important to have this done and put in place. The member is correct. There are courses that are provided with regard to conflict of interest for new members, and also, current members that they may need a refresher on some of the issues that you're going to have to deal with.

Also, there's a procedures manual that's important that lays out potential conflicts and the issues of what you do with it. Also, there's access to conflict of interest statements. Now, people there—the public has access, as I understand it, to the statements, which makes the system more transparent; I believe that's truly important.

And also, there's a post-election—well, post-election process that's in place. I'm not sure what the proper terminology is, but there's a post-election process that takes place after new members are elected and others coming in that we go through with them—all the potential conflict-of-interest issues or trying to provide knowledge to them about conflict of interest.

An Honourable Member: Orientation.

Mr. Lemieux: Yeah. Yes, actually, there is a—it's, really, training for new councillors and new elected officials. I mean, of course, we're always hoping that every election, municipal elections, that you have new people elected, new people coming forward and wanting to be on municipal councils and ensuring that the democratic process is working well. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: One more on this area, but before I go to the—that orientation that you're—that the minister is referring to, I believe is the first morning of the AMM convention of that election year, and it's about three hours long for—and it's voluntary. So it doesn't necessarily reach every councillor, I don't think. And I don't think there's any other orientation offered.

There is—the AMM usually offers that session on the first morning after an election at their convention—the first morning of their convention and I don't know—and it's voluntary, and I don't know that there's any other orientation offered to new councillors. If there is, I'm not aware of it and I'd like to hear about it.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, just to comment with regard to the education or orientation, maybe the words can be used together which is important. There is a process where our department goes around to the different regions or areas of the province providing education and information. There's also written material that's provided, as well.

I'm not sure if the member has any other suggestions that he would like to put forward of something we can do more to improve it. And I know that we have talked about this, and I'm certainly pleased to entertain any suggestions. And I know he has a couple of things we might do.

I know, in this day of technology, people are saying, well, why—can you put this material on-line or is there a CD? I believe we're—I believe either we're doing it or we're looking at doing that and people are saying, well, you know, I'm busy, busy. Not only am I an elected official, but I'm a business person. And if you could give me a CD, I can just plug it in at home, watch it on TV in my leisure time, as opposed to—because I can't attend a training session or educational sessions being put on at the time.

But I'd certainly be willing to entertain any suggestions that my critic has with regard to

education and training on the conflict of interest issues. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: That certainly would have been one of my recommendations, is that there be a CD or something along that line that electronically can—and I think it's something that probably should be done in the department. And maybe I live in the dark old days, but when I started on council, they had, at that time, basically a two- or a two-and-a-half-day orientation session for new councillors and the municipal service officers and a whole bunch of the people from the department—I don't know whether some of the present ones may have taken part in that—and it was very, very useful. They ran a mock council meeting with their people as the council. They ran a mock board of revision, a whole number of things. Not only was it entertaining, it was very enlightening to a brand-new councillor to see how—they did run them properly but it was—they had the crusty, old farmer coming in and complaining about his assessment and how they made the rulings on the assessment and all that kind of stuff. It was really quite—it was a really, really good course for new councillors and, then, of course, there were the social activities at night, which we won't go into.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

Just one more on the La Broquerie one, and one of the comments that was made, or conclusions, was that there was no formal, comprehensive process in place to monitor compliance with all the provisions of The Municipal Act. And I'd like to—you to touch on that because essentially municipalities are the child of the Province, whether we like to be or not. We exist at the Province's will—and I shouldn't say we, but municipalities exist at the Province's will. And there is the act; there's The Municipal Act, and there's also the Winnipeg Charter that can be changed at any time by government or change the governance of municipalities. And those are the so-called bibles of those organizations. And I think the Province needs to be monitoring compliance, and I think that would save some of the messes that have reared their head once in a while out there.

Mr. Lemieux: I was very interested to hear about the two-and-a-half-day course and education and training that took place, but the councillors nowadays are much wiser so we can do it in one day, so I'm told, but—and they repeatedly tell me this. But let me just—*[interjection]* And the milk. They still drink a lot of milk in the evening, too, I understand.

But, having said that, let me just go to the question, or question-suggestion, that was made by the member opposite, and in an—let me call it active democracy, in citizens being active in a democratic system. I believe there's an onus on all of us, on all elected—not elected, sorry, but all citizenry—to ensure that their elected bodies are acting accordingly and acting in a manner that is legal and in their best interest.

We could probably debate this issue for a long time about how much say a government or how much a department, in this case, formerly Intergovernmental Affairs, now Local Government, should be involved in overseeing and coming down on municipalities with regard to registered complaints or issues that people are bringing forward. So—and I know we've had these discussions informally about the role of councils and what about the citizens taking an active role.

* (15:20)

And I think that there's a huge movement—I know there's a huge movement now—not that I think; there is a huge movement happening all over. People are becoming more active in the sense that they're—not only with technology, but with the media that's there—having more of an interest in what goes on with their governments. And the citizens do play an important role in this. So I wouldn't want to leave the impression that somehow—and I don't think that my critic is leaving that impression either—that somehow big government—big provincial government should be looking after this poor child that doesn't know what they're doing. But I do—I really think that the citizens have a big role to play in a lot of this as well, and I think we all do. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: Yes, I'm not saying you have to be heavy-handed on municipalities. What I'm getting at here is when the citizens are bringing forward concerns with a municipal council and I hear from them, and you've heard from them, where they almost get to the point where they feel they have nowhere to go. Like they're told, as you said earlier, they can change the councillors in three years or in four years or the next election. But in the meantime—and some of them are legitimate; some are probably frivolous. But some of them are legitimate, and their frustration really comes out. And I think it is—there is a shortcoming there. I'm not sure how it needs to be addressed.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I really think that we heard from the population, from our citizens about this, and that's the reason why we extended the reach of the Ombudsman. So the citizens, when they feel that they're up against it, it doesn't have to be the last place of call; you know, it could be the first place, I guess, from citizens. But at least the Ombudsman is an arm's-length quasi-judicial, I believe, office that is an independent body that will take a look at the issues on its merit, and that's really important. I mean—and yet, I don't want to leave the impression, either, that the people within my department, the staff, the hard-working staff that we have in the department, that they don't take these criticisms or issues seriously. They absolutely do. We document them and we ensure that we double-check them. We try to cross-reference them with staff in the regions and we want to make sure that whatever we're doing today is better than what we did two days ago or what we did two months ago or two years or 20 years ago.

So we're always trying to improve what we do, and maybe that's just the nature, also, of the business we're in. But I have to believe—and I do believe—that what we have today and what we have in place today is far better than what we had just a short while ago, and it will continue to improve and evolve. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: Okay, moving on. On page 38 of the Estimates book—this is a question similar to what we ended on yesterday, but—and I'm not sure I've got my head around that yet—what is—when you use a figure and say it is recoverable from rural economic, well, from REDI initiatives, what—what's that mean?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, it—this is—REDI funds are very similar to UDI funds. But this is rural, and when you have, for example, the—when you have the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, for example, that—those funds that are expended are from—there are rural issues, that's a rural initiative. So those funds, then, come back—that were expended, come back to my department, and that's what it's showing on page 38. It's just showing those funds are recovered. They were put into a rural initiative, but then they come back to the department.

Mr. Briese: So you're, in essence, taking a REDI grant to do the Livestock Stewardship Initiative?

Mr. Lemieux: Because this is a Rural Economic Development Initiative, our staff worked on that, on the Livestock Stewardship Initiative, so those dollars that were put towards this initiative then come back

to the department to pay for the staff that were involved in it. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: Could you expand—once again it's on page 44, I believe—on the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy. I know there's a lot of rhetoric in here, but what is involved in the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy? I don't see any estimate of expenditures or anything along that line. So what is the department putting into this?

Mr. Lemieux: Because the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement is over now and has lapsed and it's over, that the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy is to take its place, and is it a new tripartite urban development agreement? No. The federal government indicated that, at least verbally, that it's not interested in a renewed urban development agreement.

But this initiative is really to be able to—it allows us to access and to work in partnership with the federal government and the City and—well, will the federal government and City of Winnipeg be involved? Yes, the answer is yes in that, and we'll continue to enhance all those issues related to it, economic, social, physical development of Winnipeg's inner city and—as these are the priorities for all three levels of government and have been.

So—but not a lot of funding yet. There is not a lot of funding yet, as this is just beginning, and I think that's important to note. But we're certainly wanting to partner and work with the other levels of government, and we think that this is a good step forward. Thank you.

Mr. Briese: I expect this ties in with the urban development pages, the two pages before that, but what, specifically, are you working on with the other two levels of government in this area?

* (15:30)

Mr. Lemieux: So the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy is really looking at three areas of focus, and one is the Aboriginal capacity building. The goal is to close the economic and social gap between urban Aboriginal residents and other Winnipeggers. Also, downtown renewal, the goal is to encourage downtown living, identify and support key capital infrastructure and heritage preservation initiatives and also to stimulate the strategic, economic and cultural initiatives of downtown Winnipeg. And also to developing the inner-city resiliency, the goal is to improve the physical, social, economic and environmental conditions and outcome to residents

of Winnipeg's inner city through comprehensive community economic development approaches.

And this is a continuation—actually, it supports a continuation of what—and several projects that took place originally funded by the WPA and it certainly identifies more opportunities and partnerships with other provincial departments to support the objectives of the Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy.

So there are a lot of things in place. There's a lot of things happening. Not a lot of funding has yet—but we're certainly working on a lot of the strategies and we certainly want to make sure that those key priority areas—Aboriginal capacity building, downtown renewal, developing inner-city resiliency are the three, really, the main focus of this program.

Mr. Briese: Just another thing, and I may well have been told this in briefing, but the derelict properties act—I think it's Bill 3. The City already has a by-law, and I'm sure the deputy will inform us very quickly on this one, the City already has a by-law, and the Province is making amendments to the City of Winnipeg Charter, I believe, on the derelict property on the bill that's been brought forward.

Is that—the provincial amendments and the City by-law, do you see them working in sync or does that—does one knock out the other? Does the provincial legislation knock out the Winnipeg by-law, the City by-law?

Mr. Lemieux: The by-law is required under the legislation but, having said that, the co-operation that's happening between the City and the Province is something that both of us can be very proud of. We're trying to work closely to see how we can improve the process, to enhance the process, either to speed it up in some situations and others to ensure that derelict buildings are not just left standing for years and years and years.

I think that—in my humble opinion, there is nothing worse than driving through a neighbourhood and seeing homes boarded up. It gives, visually, just gives you the total wrong impression of what is going on in a neighbourhood. And yet you have a lot of citizens that have great pride—let's use the inner city as an example, of Winnipeg. There are many citizens that have great pride in their neighbourhoods. They are taking care of their properties; they're building fences to beautify their yards; they are having their stucco repainted; they're doing siding on their houses. They're taking advantage of every program, whether it be the

federal program or provincial programs, to enhance and to make their homes better. And yet, two doors down, you have a building that's boarded up and has been boarded up for four years. So you don't want to be having that in your city, or any other community, I would argue. And so we're working very closely with the City of Winnipeg to ensure that we can improve the process overall.

Mr. Briese: Under the urban development initiatives, and there are a number of them that are listed there, would the department give me a breakdown on the funding on each of those? And I don't necessarily need it here, but I would like to have it provided if I could get it.

Mr. Lemieux: I'll certainly undertake to try to do that, but I—if I could, I don't want to read through all the numbers and do that now. If I could just provide you with those numbers, I would be pleased to try to do that.

Mr. Briese: I want to go back to pretty well the start of our Estimates, and where the minister indicated that there had been an increase of funding to municipalities and, I think, indicated that it was six or six-and-a-half percent. Where are those increases? What specific areas are those increases in?

Mr. Lemieux: So the increase is in the Building Manitoba Fund and for rural municipalities, and even though there has been a decrease in VLTs, for the most part, their increases—the approach I guess our government has taken is to assist municipalities through grant-based support that goes farther to meet their needs than a sales tax sharing, for example. And provincial income and fuel tax and VLT and fine revenue sharing provides municipalities, I believe, anyway, with a stable and predicted—predictable funding each year. And that's something they need, as opposed to be attached to a 1 percent on provincial sales tax, where you have a decrease, for example, in a recessionary period and the kind of percentage you would get from provincial sales tax might drop, arguably, could drop, and that would be—I don't think that enhances what municipalities want. They want to have reliable and predictable funding each year.

Mr. Briese: You know, there's—I guess that's something else we could debate over a long period of time. There's a—quite a number of things, I think, that could improve funding, and we've heard the same presentations from municipalities that you've heard, and some of the rationale is fairly good that they put forward. There is a continued, to me, and I guess,

because of my municipal background, but there is what appears to be a continued assault on property tax base, which is the main source of revenue for a municipality, not the only source. You didn't mention the provincial-municipal tax sharing, and I've always been a strong proponent of that. I think it's a—it does follow the economy of the province somewhat, and will—is a good source of revenue to the municipalities.

But I am—beyond that, and I know our time's running short here, I certainly am somewhat concerned about the way this department, Local Government, has shrunk or been disseminated into other areas. It indicates to me that there may be not as much emphasis being placed on—and I liked the former names a lot better: Municipal Affairs or intergovernmental—the department of intergovernmental—you know, it—I don't very much care for the name, Local Government, but that's—I guess that's one of my hang-ups.

*(15:40)

I do think that we need to place more emphasis on municipal government and the ability they have to produce returns for fairly limited dollars. They—they're very innovative and able to make the best use of the dollars that are raised in those jurisdictions. And I think it's—I think the Province would be well advised to use the municipalities more so to deliver certain services and put the money through the municipalities, and probably get a better bang for their buck.

Madam Chairperson: Honourable Minister, you have 10 seconds.

Mr. Lemieux: Just to lay out an issue that was raised before about gas tax, and the Province does give gas tax to municipalities, the amount provided—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates consideration has now expired.

Our rule 76(3) provides, in part, that no more than 100 hours shall be allowed for the consideration of the business of Supply. Our rule 76(5) provides that when the time limit has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions, and that such questions shall not be subject to debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am, therefore, going to call in sequence, the questions on the following matters: Local Government, Employee Pensions and Other Costs, Legislative Assembly.

I would remind all members that these questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned according to our rules.

Resolution 13.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,824,000 for Local Government, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$33,102,000 for Local Government, Community Planning and Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,481,000 for Local Government, Provincial-Municipal Support Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$208,330,000 for Local Government, Financial Assistance to Municipalities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$53,000 for Local Government, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

EMPLOYEE PENSIONS AND OTHER COSTS

Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,060,000 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs, Employee Pensions and Other Costs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,316,000 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,447,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,934,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,466,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,468,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Children's Advocate, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$60,000 for Legislative Assembly, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2011.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply. I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and their staff, and the dedication during this process.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker: Orders of the day. The House is now back in session and we are now moving on to debate of bills. The first bill on the Order Paper is Bill 31.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 31—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 31, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the bill—has been advised of the bill, and I table his message.

* (15:50)

Madam Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance and seconded by the honourable Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines, that Bill 31, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table this message.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 31 reflects the government's five-year plan that was laid out in Budget 2010, which I was pleased to deliver in the Legislature on March 23rd.

The changes are being made to respond to the current economic—to current economic uncertainty and to allow the government to bolster the Province's economic stimulus plan, allowing needed resources to be redirected towards the cost of infrastructure renewal, which will create jobs and stimulate the Manitoba economy.

Part 1 of the bill is the budget implementation act and statutes act. And in—so for—in order to proceed to invest in vital front-line services, to stimulate economic growth and to show management in—of government programs, balanced budget legislation requirements under this act are being suspended for up to four years, until April 2014.

The annual debt repayment requirement is suspended during this period of economic recovery,

but it is being replaced with a requirement for the government to apply at least \$600 million from the fiscal stabilization account during this period against general purpose debt and related interest costs.

Finally, in order to show Manitobans that our government is not immune from the current fiscal environment, my Cabinet colleagues and I will be required to take a 20 percent reduction in our ministerial pay during the period of economic recovery, and all MLAs' base salary will be frozen this year and next.

This year, 2010, is the last year when the capital tax will be applied to general corporations. The act is amended to prorate the tax where the corporation's fiscal year straddles the December 31st, 2010, the last day of the tax. A similar rule, applicable to manufacturers, which stops paying the tax on July 1st, 2008, is clarified.

The bill also amends the act to clarify that corporations reporting preferred share liabilities are treated equally, regardless of how the liability is reported on their books. As announced in Budget 2010, larger credit unions and caisses populaires will pay a 1 percent tax on taxable income in excess of \$400,000, beginning in 2011.

Part 4 combines two existing statutes, The Gas Tax Act and The Motive Fuel Tax Act, into one statute. The fuel—it is The Fuel Tax Act, as set out in schedule B of the bill, which also includes a number of consequential amendments. The bill also clarifies administrative policies requesting—respecting the international cargo freight fuel tax exemption ensuring the exemptions apply to all short stopovers in Manitoba that are bound for international destination.

The fitness tax credit is introduced to replace the children's fitness tax credit, and extends it to include young adults of 17—from 17 to 14.

The dividend tax credit on eligible dividends is amended to refer to the federal Income Tax Act, where eligible dividends are calculated.

The statute of limitation periods for refundable individual personal tax credits is extended from three years to 10 years, where an amendment resulting in a refund of income tax is also being made in accordance with the long-standing administrative policies.

The new advance tuition fee income tax rebate is introduced, providing Manitoba's—providing

Manitobans studying in post-secondary institutes anywhere in the world with a 5 percent refundable tax credit based on the tuition fees, while studying.

The new fertility tax credit is also being introduced, providing Manitobans with 40 percent rebate tax based on treatment costs and related medications for infertility with a certified clinic in Manitoba.

The 20 percent Manitoba research and development tax credit will be fully refundable to corporations which undertake research under contract with a post-secondary institute, or a prescribed research institute in Manitoba, starting in 2009. Also, in 2011, one-quarter of the tax credit will be refunded to corporations and R&D performed in Manitoba, and, in 2012, the refundable portion increases to one-half.

The Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit is extended for three years and producers can now elect either, to maximum, 65 percent cost of labour credit, the highest in Canada, or a new, 30 percent cost of production credit, also the highest in Canada. Additionally, the regulations are consolidated in the act and the legislation is amended to more accurately reflect the current application process which is jointly administered by the Manitoba Film and Music and the Canadian–Canada Revenue Agency. And, finally, the application deadline is extended from 30 to 48 months.

The new Cooperative Development Tax Credit is introduced and that is outlined in this bill.

A technical amendment on the corporate Foreign Tax Credit on foreign investment is made to align Manitoba's treatment with other provinces.

The Cooperative Education and Apprenticeship Tax Credit is amended with two new components, to encourage employers to hire first and second level apprentices in their facilities.

The Green Energy Equipment Tax Credit is amended to consolidate the regulations in the act and to clarify the application of the tax credit to geothermal heating pumps, in accordance with the administrative eligibility, since 2007.

The Book Publishing Tax Credit is amended to remove some—a discretionary clause respecting ineligible books, in order to provide publishers with added certainty as to their eligibility.

There is—the Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit is extended for three years and amended to be

calculated on a tax-year base, instead of corporations having to wait until the end of the project in order to make their claims.

There is the Community Enterprise Investment Tax Credit that is being renamed. That is renamed the Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit.

There are several other tax credits. There is, in part 6, there is an amendment to The Mining Tax Act to adopt gender-neutral terminology. In part 7, The Property Tax and Insulation Assistance Act, the riparian tax credit is amended to consolidate the regulations into the act and to provide that an intake of agriculture operators applications under the program will now be permitted automatically on an annual basis.

There are, in The Retail Sales Tax Act section, there are a few amendments that are basically housekeeping amendments that deal with gender neutral—to bring—make the act gender neutral in its language, and technical amendments are introduced to clarify the application of sales tax to taxpayers.

Under The Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Act, this part of the act, which sets out a common set of administration rules respecting provincial administrative taxes, is amended to enhance various enforcement provisions and introduce housekeeping measures.

And, finally, under the tobacco tax section, the tobacco tax rate is increased by 2 cents per cigarette and per gram. Also, the bill clarifies that a sale of cigarettes is, in quantities less than 20, is prohibited. Tax officials will be able to issue a common offence notice when such sales are uncovered.

And, finally, a number of gender-neutral amendments are introduced to improve the existing language of the act. In part 11, it establishes the coming-into-force dates of various measures that are amended into the act.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, these amendments are normal amendments that come from changes that have to be—come about because of introductions that were made in the budget. And then, each year, the tax department looks at bills as to how—if they are not gender neutral, or if there is a technical issue that we're not in line with the federal government and it makes it difficult to address taxation issues, those are the things that are recommended.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, with those few comments, I invite members opposite to read the bill,

to make their comments on the bill, and I look forward to hearing from Manitobans as this bill moves forward. Thank you very much.

* (16:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to comment briefly on this bill, which has been affectionately called the BITSA bill—and the Minister of Finance has just talked about how this bill is full of what could be considered normal amendments—and to address the issues in the budget. And on our side in the Liberal Party, we see that part of this bill is anything but normal amendments, that the part of this bill that we are particularly concerned about deals with the part that deals with The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act amendments.

Now, I think I need to go back a little bit in history because the Conservatives brought in the balanced budget legislation, the NDP didn't like it and they tinkered with it. But then, a couple of years ago, they decided that, you know, it really didn't suit them. There might be an economic recession coming up and so, instead of, you know, playing by the rules that have been set when there was an economic recession, which, under the balanced budget act which we're talking about, there was provision in the act if there was a recession for the government to run a deficit for a fiscal year.

And that would not be—I mean, that would be acceptable in a sense, that people expect it that when there's an economic recession that the government might have to go into debt because of decrease in revenues and because the government has a requirement, when there's a major recession, to prop up aspects of the economy and make sure that people are supported through social assistance and EI, as well, that the economy doesn't fall to pieces completely and that the economy is supported.

Well, that—a couple of years ago, the NDP didn't like this approach. They thought, well, we may be in more trouble in this. We need to have our own rules. And so the NDP brought in legislation which said, oh well, we can balance the budget over five years—or four years. We'll just average it out. And then we can pretend that we've got a balanced budget even when we've got a huge deficit.

And, indeed, that's exactly what happened this year, is that the Minister of Finance and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) have repeatedly got up and even though this last year we had a deficit of more than

\$500 million, and this coming year, 2010-2011, the Minister of Finance and the Premier and the government are planning for a deficit of more than \$500 million, that the Premier and the Finance Minister have got up repeatedly and said, well, last year, we actually had a balanced budget.

And most of us in Manitoba looked at that and they said, \$500 million more than that in deficit?

And the Minister of Finance is calling this a balanced budget.

No—what—how could this be, that we've got a deficit of more than \$500 million and the Minister of Finance says this is a balanced budget? And, you know, this was puzzling to lots of people, confusing to lots of people, partly because the Minister of Finance, indeed, talked about, you know, how most people operate their own lives and their own homes. And they liked to think that at the end of the year, it's a good year if your revenue is a little bit more than your expenses.

Indeed, I think that there was, you know, a famous story of Charles Dickens, I think it was maybe Mr. Micawber who said something to the effect that if you add up at the end of the year, that's a great year if you're in plus and it's a miserable year, that's what it is, a miserable year if you're in negative.

But instead of the Minister of Finance admitting that it was a miserable year, because she ran a deficit of more than \$500 million, what the Minister of Finance got up and said, oh, don't worry everybody, we have a balanced budget. Folks, we have a balanced budget. The numbers show more than \$500-million deficit, but you don't have to worry. You know, this is Manitoba; we have an NDP government and it's a balanced budget. Don't worry about what the books say.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, the interesting thing is that even though the NDP have decided that they wanted to play by their rules, not by what most of us would accept in terms of how we run our lives and businesses and, you know, how we would expect the government to run what would be a balanced budget. So the NDP already set up their own rules, and those rules permitted them to go to the extent of saying that when there was a deficit of more than \$500 million, this was actually a balanced budget.

Well, I mean, that's okay, the NDP can say that. They don't have much credibility when it comes to

fiscal matters. But, then, this year, and this bill—what happened? We opened up this bill and the bill says that the NDP's own rules weren't good enough. They were in much more trouble than anyone could ever imagine. The rules that they had—NDP had put in place and we had voted against, those rules, you know, were not even going to work for the NDP. It was no longer enough to have a situation where a \$500-million-plus deficit would be a balanced budget. Now they were in so much trouble that they brought forward this bill which suspends—suspends—the requirements for a balanced budget for the current fiscal year, and the next three years, or until a positive result is achieved.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's almost beyond belief that the NDP, having already set their own rules to their own advantages that we didn't agree with and they—those rules would allow them to have a deficit of more than \$500 million and count that a balanced budget, that those weren't even good enough that, now, the NDP have to suspend the rules completely.

You know, any—any—semblance of fiscal responsibility, Madam Deputy Speaker, has gone out the window. I mean, can you imagine if, you know—it's as if the NDP were playing a game of tennis, and they didn't like the way the ball was hit, and halfway in the middle of the point, they said, well, you know, we don't like the rules of tennis as they've been played for a long time. We're going to change the rules. We're going to play with our own rules. And so, you know, for a serve or two, for a point or two, the NDP managed to, you know, play tennis, but under their new rules. But then, all of a sudden, even under the new rules, they were still losing, and so now the NDP came back again and said, well, you know, we're going to suspend all the rules, and we're just going to win, folks. We're going to suspend all the rules. We don't care what you do.

That is an interesting way to play tennis. Not very many people would agree with it, and certainly it would change the complexion of the game rather dramatically, and yet the NDP will say, oh, this is just politics. You know, we—we want to play in our sandbox. The NDP will say, we want to play in our sandbox, and we're going to make the rules, and we don't really care what you think. We don't care about the fiscal need for fiscal responsibility. We don't care that other people might have a different perspective on this. The NDP are going to play in their sandbox and, you know, they will make the rules.

* (16:10)

You know, talking about another game. Let's think about golf. You know, it's as if Tiger Woods was playing along and—[interjection] Well, maybe I'll use—well, no, no, no. It was better with Tiger Woods. If he hit the ball and it went in the water by mistake, and he said, you know, that's not a good rule that you have a two-point penalty when you hit the ball in the water; we'll change the rules. Right? That's what the NDP are doing. And, oh, if they hit the ball in the water—[interjection]—then, anyway—they—the problem is that the NDP hit the ball in the water and they managed to get around the first ball hit in the water, but, then, along they come, they've hit the second ball in the water and the third ball in the water. And now they want to be able to suspend the rules so that they're—all the balls they're hitting in the water don't count.

This is the NDP game of golf, and people in Manitoba need to understand that when the NDP, whether they play tennis or in their sandbox and play a game of golf, this is what they're doing. They're setting their own rules. And it is to the detriment—it is to the detriment of legitimate legislation. It is to the detriment of legitimate social responsibility and fiscal responsibility.

Now, one of the big problems—you know, we have a projection that we've received in the budget from the NDP, and that projection is that this huge deficit will keep on going for a while, and that they, now, want five years to get out of the hole or out of the water, or wherever, in trouble. And the problem of not—of being fiscally responsible this year is that, you know, Manitoba, quite frankly, didn't have nearly as severe an economic downturn. In fact, I would say that the numbers are almost such that there was hardly a recession in this province. So when we've got, you know, not a particularly severe economic situation in Manitoba, that we should be quite careful of the way that we manage our finances and we should not be running huge deficits at this time.

Indeed, it is our view, looking at the size of the fiscal situation in Manitoba, the size of the deficit this year, that because—as, you know, when I raised this with the Premier (Mr. Selinger)—in fact, it was a question period before the budget. I asked the Premier: Why was it that the deficit, which you were figuring was going to be 88 million last year, rocketed up to more than 500 million last year? And the Premier said, well, the reason was that we had a

lot of one-time expenditures on H1N1 flu and on the flood. And if you take away those one-time expenditures on the H1N1 flu and on the flood, then it doesn't look too bad. Well, that's really the structural situation, the base situation when you take away the one-time expenditures.

You know, the deficit, from a structural basis, really this year was only 200 to 300 million. It should have been possible with good management to come in with a budget for 2010-2011 with a deficit of, oh, say, 200 million, not way more than 500 million. I mean, you know, don't get yourself into more trouble. Don't get yourself into big trouble at a time when we have what's happening in Europe now, that the situation hopefully will get better. But there are some problems, as we're seeing in Greece, and there're a number of countries in Europe which are having very significant debt problems. Not only Greece, but there's concern about Spain and Portugal and Italy and Ireland. And if the economic situation actually got worse again in the next two years, then what we're seeing from this government would be, you know, a huge problem, because they're already, then, starting from a deficit of 500-plus million.

You know, I—if—and, given this situation, you know, it's serious enough that if, in fact, there was a second, you know, downturn in the next year or two, you know, what would you expect except that two or three years for now if the NDP were still in power—and we sure hope they're not—then they'd probably come back with more legislation. They would come back with more legislation wanting to suspend the rules again, you know, as if this wasn't enough.

So we need to be prudent. We need to be careful in the way that we manage our finances, not building up bigger and bigger and bigger deficits, not planning for multiple years to get out of deficits, not, you know, doing this kind of poor fiscal management, which means that the NDP are in such big trouble that they not only have to, you know, change the rules two years ago, but they can't even run the province according to their own rules that they got to change the rules all over again. And that is what we are concerned about.

You know, it was not very long ago that there were hardly anybody in Manitoba who could've told you what the word "prorogue" was, right? And—[interjection] No, it's not a perogy, it's a prorogue, as you prorogue a parliament. And—but, because we had a prime minister who used a prorogation in a way that was undemocratic when he didn't like the ways

that things were lining up, Prime Minister Stephen Harper decided that he wanted to prorogue the Parliament for awhile so that he wouldn't be subject to as many questions in question period, so that he wouldn't have as much, you know, criticism, so that, you know, he was buying himself some time, well, just like the NDP are changing the rules to buy themselves some time.

But the interesting note here is that just like the word "prorogue" that nobody knew about it not very long ago, and then, all of a sudden, everybody knows about prorogue and prorogation, that I'll bet that if you, right now, asked Manitobans, that hardly a Manitoban would know what a BITSA bill is, you know. Hardly a Manitoban right now would know what a BITSA bill is. But the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk), in trying to sneak through this fundamental change in the rules of balanced budget legislation, has now pointed the finger at the BITSA bill, and the BITSA bill is going to get a lot more attention, the lot more attention than it has, I'll warrant, ever got in the history of Manitoba.

And just, you know, like I was saying in question period not long ago, that what the NDP have done is to put a nasty package in a BITSA paper. And the fact is that that's exactly what that is: that the NDP have decided that they don't like the rules, that they're in big trouble and that they want to hide some huge changes, some fundamental shift in the way that we look at fiscal accountability in this province in what's called a BITSA bill.

* (16:20)

So don't be surprised if people start hearing more and more about BITSA bills and BITSA papers and BITSA this and BITSA that. And the fact is that, you know, that's not the way that this should have been done. This should have been put in a separate piece of legislation. This should have been put in a separate piece of legislation. Right? So that we could debate it properly as a major piece—as a major piece of legislation—of the government's legislation, and that the substance of changing the framework for fiscal accountability in this province, you know, would be the subject of a major debate, not just this BITSA bill.

Now, the fact is that BITSA bills usually deal with a whole series of matters coming out of the budget. They're, you know, maybe have—are called BITSA bills really because it's an abbreviation of the title of this bill, which deals with The Budget

Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act or BITSA. But it also is sort of characteristic of this bill, because usually it's tying together a lot of loose threads and actions that the government is taking. And we note, for example, that there's a series of tax increases in this bill. Tax on profits of credit unions and caisses populaires. They're taxing motorcycles and off-road vehicles that must be registered under The Drivers and Vehicles Act like other vehicles registered under this act. They're imposing new taxes on tanning services that use ultraviolet radiation. They're raising and increasing the taxes on tobacco, and bit by bit, the government, the NDP are increasing taxes, hoping—hoping that this will provide some—enough increase in revenue that they will be able to get out of trouble.

We understand that they're also considering looking at on-line gambling as a way of bringing in new revenue, and we are certainly opposed to that. We think that they're maybe a little bit naïve, that the cost is going to be more from people who get into trouble, who are addicted—the social problems—than they will reap from the on-line industry. And, as those who participate in this on-line gambling tell me, that the attraction is, in part, having, you know, rock stars involved who will bring in people to do the gambling. And that, you know, maybe that's what the NDP are planning: to bring in some rock-star gamblers. But, that be as it may, we'll see what happens.

It just points to the, you know, the situation that the NDP find themselves in, which is precarious, which is troubling, with the kind of deficit that the NDP have got this province into, and to come in, not only with that kind of attitude, but with the attitude that, you know, when we're in trouble we can just change the rules, that we don't have to play, whether it's golf or tennis or in a sandbox, by the rules of anyone else. We're going to make our own rules. They're going to work for us, and, no, that's why we are here, to hold this government, which we believe is misguided, hold this government to account, because there needs to be a level—a fiscal responsibility in this province today which is much greater than we are seeing in this bill.

The NDP should not have tried to dodge this by changing the rules. They should not have tried to get away with a 20 percent cut in salary when the rules should've given them a 40 percent cut in salary—

An Honourable Member: What are you talking about?

Mr. Gerrard: Well, you brought in this bill, which includes a 20 percent cut in ministers' and the Premier's salary, but it should've been a 40 percent cut. And, in spite of the fact that the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) is still claiming that a \$500-million-plus deficit is a balanced budget—

An Honourable Member: Summary budget, Jon.

Mr. Gerrard: —this is what you're talking about in terms of a budget. You lose credibility when you say, I have a deficit of more than \$500 million and that is a balanced budget. And we, as the opposition, need to hold you to account.

We need to keep you honest about what is, you know, normal accounting procedures, normal ways of looking at financial matters, that if you've got a deficit of more than \$500 million that that is a deficit; it's not a balanced budget.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are opposed to this legislation. We are going to vote against it because we think it's wrong to have this change in rules. We think the government should, you know, at the very least have stuck to their own rules that they devised to deal with this situation, even if they weren't going to stick to the original ones, and we believe that they should not have put in the BITSA bill this—these changes, that it should've been a separate bill.

And so we disagree with the approach, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the government has taken in this instance, and we certainly are going to vote quite strongly and, you know, speak out quite strongly against the approach, which we see as fiscally irresponsible, that the NDP are taking in this particular instance. And I hope, I hope that, you know, we—our voices will be heard by Manitobans, and that Manitobans will rise up and reject the approach taken by the NDP, and that Manitobans will see through this claim that a 500-plus million dollar deficit is a balanced budget that the NDP are making.

Manitobans will see through the fact that the NDP are trying to change the rules whenever they get into trouble, and that that's a false and wrong approach to be taken when you're dealing with serious fiscal matters which affect everybody in the province of Manitoba and affect the future of everyone in the province of Manitoba, particularly the young people, who will be here the longest, and when we build up debt, they will be the people to whom we are passing the debt on to.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, I speak on behalf of the young people of this province in particular, who need to know that there is a better way than the NDP are taking, that there is a better way of providing fiscal responsibility and fiscal accountability, that there is a better way of managing the money and getting things done.

There is—this government could have done so much better in so many ways in looking at how the province's finances were managed. And instead of trying to manage the finances well, under difficult situation, what the NDP have decided to do is to change the rules to suit them. And we all—most of us, you know, who are interested in sports, you know, whether it's golf or football, or other things, know that when you set the rules you should work with those rules instead of trying to change them in midstream to your own advantage.

And what the NDP are trying to do is wrong. It's poor fiscal management and it's going to hurt and cause problems for people in Manitoba down the road. And that is why, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are opposed to this particular piece of legislation, the BITSA bill as it's called, the BITSA bill which has a nasty present inside it.

* (16:30)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, would like to express a few thoughts that I have in regards to this legislation. And, you know, I suspect that I might possibly run out of time because there's a number of things that come to mind in dealing with this in this bill. And most of it, I must say, is not necessarily of a positive nature because I do believe that the government is a little bit mischievous in the way in which they even brought in the bill. And, you know, I must say it was interesting when the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) introduced it in first reading. I'm sitting and I'm listening, as quite often and most often I do inside the Chamber here, and once the minister moved her motion, she sat back down and she was very quick to say, leave, leave, leave—giving the bill leave to make sure that it passed through the first reading.

And I turned to some of her colleagues and I said, geez, you know, it seems to be a little suspicious that the minister seems to be quite eager about this particular bill. And then, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am then provided a copy of the bill. And here you have this thick bill—and you know what they often say about the details of legislation that comes before you, or the details of anything, you

know—and I was a little bit—thinking status quo when the minister first brought in the bill, but when she first said this leave, leave, leave issue and then you see the size of this bill, some of her colleagues said: don't be paranoid, don't be paranoid. It's implied it's a good bill, nothing out of the norm.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, we very quickly found that this bill is anything but within the norm, anything but within the tradition and history in terms of BITSA bills in the past that have been introduced inside this legislation. What was incorporated into this bill was a major—major issue: that, of course, being the balanced budget legislation.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government brought in, through BITSA, for one reason, and that is that they felt that the only way that they could guarantee the passage of this bill prior to the rising—scheduled rising of this Legislature on June the 17th, was to put it in the BITSA legislation. Because, you see, under the sessional order, the sessional order is very clear that BITSA legislation will, in fact, pass no later than June 17.

So it then obligates all members under the rules to see this legislation pass. So I suspect that the brain power within the New Democratic machine made the decision that, ha, we can fool those opposition members by incorporating BITSA—within BITSA, the balanced budget legislation. They won't know the difference.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, you might have been able to fool your—the NDP caucus and your caucus colleagues, but I don't think you're able to convince or fool members of the opposition, because the opposition members caught on very quickly. And you saw matters of privileges being raised, and a government automatically now—and I understand that the government has said to some media-type personalities that, well, we'll sit extra hours, we'll do extra things in order to make sure that there's due process given to the balanced budget component of the BITSA legislation—and it's because the government got its hands slapped because they found out what you are doing was wrong. That's why—to the Minister of Finance—she said why, why? Well, this is a balanced budget legislation. This was a major plank in an election, Madam Minister. Didn't you realize what you are doing, you know?

You know, the Minister of Finance needs to be reminded, because she was here when she was in opposition. Her and I sat in opposition, and you

know something? When we were in opposition, me and the Minister of Finance—remember those days? The good old days of being in opposition? Remember what the Minister of Finance said? She said, no, to balanced budget legislation. She said she didn't like balanced budget legislation. But, the Minister of Finance, being a team player, she recognized that her team leader, Gary Doer at the time, as we got closer to the '99 election, had his finger in the wind and determined that it was in the best interests of the New Democratic Party to say, we support balanced budget legislation, to the degree, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the degree in which they incorporated it into their election platform. That's the—what the leader of the New Democratic Party at the time had to say about balanced budget legislation. And the minister, today's Minister of Finance, that wonderful member, when in opposition with me, voted against balanced budget legislation.

But, in fairness, I, too, made a mistake back then. You know, we're not all perfect. I'll admit to that. We're not all perfect and I recognize that. Yes, the public and vast majority of Manitobans saw the merit of balanced budget legislation and, in fact, all three political parties, once you got into the '99 election, were in support of balanced budget legislation.

Now, you know, quite often, I do give credit when members or political parties recognize that it's okay in certain situations to change positions, and both the New Democrats and the Liberals, I'll admit, acknowledged under—in our case, we had a new leader come in and acknowledge that balanced budget legislation can be an effective tool, and that's what we ended up supporting, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now, fast forward it to today and what do we have today, Madam Deputy Speaker? We have the Minister of Finance who, at one time with me, opposed it, opposed the legislation, arm in arm back in those days, now actually fulfilling what she really does believe. Now you think about this. The government can go around and tell the world, in particular Manitobans, that we have balanced budget legislation in the province of Manitoba to give them that false sense of security that the government is being competent in the decisions in managing the financial affairs of the province.

After all, the Minister of Finance, who doesn't really believe in balanced budget legislation, has this

eggshell saying that we actually have—or hollow shell saying that we actually have balanced budget legislation, but you could drive a Mack truck through this balanced budget legislation that this government has in place. The same legislation that we have today is not the same legislation that we had back in 1999, Madam Deputy Speaker. That was the balanced budget legislation that this government actually supported back then.

But, understandably, given their spending habits, given their inability to spend smarter and be wiser in terms of the way in which they manage the economy, Madam Deputy Speaker, we find that we're in the situation where we are today. Never before in my years have I seen ministers move motions to reduce their own salaries.

I seen ministerials—don't get me wrong. I've seen ministerial salaries reduced. You know, let's go back to the days when we were in opposition together, Madam Minister of Finance. You'll recall the ministers, or opposition members that moved to reduce ministers' salaries. That's something that's, oh, well, you know, at one time happened quite a bit. You'd see a minister's salary being moved to be reduced, but it was always the opposition members that were moving those motions. Today, we have the ministers moving the motions to reduce their salary.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would suggest to you that they don't have any choice because they realize the issue of integrity means that they don't have any choice, that they have to take the salary reduction. For them not to take the salary reduction would be to be dishonest with Manitobans even that much more than they currently are because there is a deficit and, this time, they can't get away with it. They can't get away with acknowledging that there is a deficit.

Remember back in the early 2003-2004 budget? Back in that budget the government said, well, we didn't have a deficit. And you know what? They even—they don't even say they had a deficit. They don't even acknowledge the deficit that they had back in '03-04 today, even though the provincial auditor—as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) shakes his head in not believing what I said. Well, I'm not too sure if he was around back then, but if you take a look at the provincial auditor's report, Jon Singleton's report, he was very clear that the government was cooking the books, that the government had a deficit back then. That's what the provincial auditor said, Madam Deputy Speaker, but you know that didn't

prevent him from telling people that we've had balanced budgets and surpluses ever since we've been in government.

* (16:40)

But now what we find is that it's becoming even that much more difficult for them to be able to get away with making that sort of a statement. So now what we have is the government changing the balanced budget law once again in order to accommodate. And, you know, the Leader of the Liberal Party was—I thought was right on in terms of bringing in those analogies, you know.

You have a political entity, the New Democrats, that are changing the rules, you know. I really think that, Madam Deputy Speaker, that they should have just accepted it. You know, they're taking the salary deduction anyway. Just accept the fact that they've—they're in violation of the balanced budget legislation. But, you know, it's something in which they're not thinking of this year; they're thinking of next year and maybe the year after that.

And I suspect that if Manitobans truly understood what it is that the government is doing in regards to issues like BITSA, issues in regards to the whether it's the west-side line and the hundreds of millions of dollars that is being wasted, the hundreds of millions of tax dollars being wasted on the removal of nitrogen in water, Madam Deputy Speaker—there are issues that are there that I believe that provided the opportunity to really be able to communicate to all Manitobans that this government would, in fact, fall. And that's why—you know, it's interesting that the government of the day is saying, well, some time over the next three or four years it will be a balance.

Well, if I look into a crystal ball and somehow they get away in the next provincial election to be in government, I suspect what you'll see is that it's not a problem for them because, quite frankly, they might not be in government, but, in case they are in government, they'll just change the law again, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know. That's—they've demonstrated that. If they can't live within the law, they'll change it so that they're not in violation of the law. That's what they've clearly demonstrated. What sort of example does that set to other Manitobans?

You know, there's some aspects that I will miss about this Legislature and, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is some aspects that I will miss and some of those are as government tends to be in power a little

bit too long, sometimes they get a little too sloppy. And I'm amazed on just how sloppy this government is getting. You know, I've heard of—what do they say? You know, shooting fish in a barrel or something of that nature. You know, you're almost making this too easy in terms of—you know, one media individual asked me, well, you know, why the change? And well, maybe I'll miss the—because it maybe was inappropriate, but, you know, there's some aspects of Gary Doer that I do miss and, you know, it's the issues that are before Manitobans that we have to ensure that going into the next election that there's a higher sense of awareness.

And I look to those different stakeholders to be fair in terms of their representation of just how well this government has actually performed, Madam Deputy Speaker, because, you know, in certain areas there have been improvements, but on the big-ticket issues, the big ticket of health care, for example, I would suggest to you that the biggest threat to health care is not as much money as much as it is managing the changes that are necessary in order to provide good, quality health-care services into the future.

And I am not convinced that the government has done a good job in that area. And a couple of examples that I would use, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the Seven Oaks hospital. You know, just over a year ago, there were changes that were made in the emergency services, and the government and their spin doctors were on a mission to try to silence me and others that work at the hospital from being able to get the truth out. There was accusations of misleading people. The government tried to give the impression that there were no changes at the Seven Oaks emergency hospital. And I'll tell you, that was just not true.

There were significant changes that were taking place in the emergency services at the Seven Oaks Hospital. And this government intentionally attempted and were successful, in most part, in misleading the residents of Winnipeg's North End. And now if you go to the core of the decision, Madam Deputy Speaker, you will find, at least the bureaucrats informed me, that it wasn't because of money that they were making the change. It was because of a different vision of the way in which health care could be delivered in Winnipeg's North End. That was the reason why those changes were being made.

I'm suggesting to you, and it's because I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, because, you know, you

can grab a bunch of doctors, medical doctors, and I respect them all, and they will support some decisions that will take you in one direction, but equally you can get other doctors that will support another direction. And I'm going to suggest to you that the direction that this government is following in terms of those reduction of emergency services at the Seven Oaks Hospital were wrong—and not one NDP MLA stood up to the regional health authority to tell them that.

And I say shame on the government for that because that had a negative impact on the services being provided to residents of Winnipeg's North End. I say shame to the government for not recognizing the needs and the importance of walk-in clinics, Madam Deputy Speaker. Where is the government in terms of providing those critical important services to the people living in Winnipeg's North End or other areas of our province?

When I say health care being the issue, take a look in terms of how much money the government has spent in terms of health care. There is a bottomless pit that the government is throwing money into health care like there was no tomorrow. Well, where's that money going? The government says, well, we have more nurses than we've ever had in the province of Manitoba. Well, yes [*interjection*]—and the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) says, hear, hear, as she applauds it. You have more nurses working in bureaucracy than there ever has been in the province of Manitoba and that's the reality, Madam Minister. So, when you applaud, know what it is that you're applauding for.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is, in fact, the reality. You have more nurses pushing pencils today than you have ever had in the province of Manitoba's history. And the Minister of Education applauds that sort of an action. The greatest expenditure of growth in the province of Manitoba has likely been health-care bureaucracy.

Canvass your constituents. Listen and hear what they have to say about the Winnipeg regional health-care authority. Listen to what people are saying in terms of the need for making the changes that are going to improve health-care services on the front lines. If they were listening to what the people were saying, I suspect, that the priorities of this government would, in fact, be quite different—that there would be a better quality of health-care services being delivered in the province of Manitoba. And Madam Deputy Speaker, when I look at that alone,

just the issue of health care, that's where you see the greatest expenditures in regards to the government of Manitoba today.

You know, you can talk in terms of—well, how well has Manitoba really managed over the last number of years? You know, and no doubt government does have an impact. You spend \$10 billion, you will have an impact. But don't take away from the Manitobans and the small businesses and the labourer who's actually contributed a whole lot more than most of this government will give credit for.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's because of Manitoba's diversified economy, that has actually contributed more than anything else to the province. If you take a look at the revenues to the Province, you know, Ottawa plays a critical role and continues—and I would suggest to you that Manitoba's future is more dependent on what happens in Ottawa than any other western province.

*(16:50)

An Honourable Member: And that's why you're going there.

Mr. Lamoureux: And, you know, the member from Kildonan says—suggested that's why I'm going there. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that there's always new challenges for all of us to, at times, to take a hold of.

And I recognize that there is no province in western Canada that is more dependent on Ottawa than the Province of Manitoba. And what has this government done in order to minimize that dependency? Well, I would suggest to you that that dependency has grown over the last 10 years. Manitoba's dependency on Ottawa has grown. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I, like all members of this Chamber, I believe, will play their part and their role in ensuring that Manitoba does do well in terms of representation in Ottawa where it's going to become critically important for the future of our province in terms of being able to move forward into the future. And I look forward to the discussions in whatever capacity that actually might take place.

I genuinely do believe that there is a need for government to take a look in terms of the way it's spending the tax dollars. You know, according to my calculations, I believe it's about \$340 every second the Province of Manitoba spends, and, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, \$340 every second is a

great deal of money. And I think there's an expectation that the taxpayers have for the government and I think that, at the end of the day, the government needs to assess as to whether or not the money is being appropriately spent.

You know, every day inside the Chamber, we hear the government members and ministers and today is no exemption—exception from it. The government will say, you know, you—referring to opposition members—voted against this and you voted against that, you know, and you carry that logic through. And I'm going to tell the government this because maybe they'll feel a little bit better in knowing why it is that we don't support this legislation or why it is that we didn't vote for your budget, you know. In my 18 years, I've never voted in favour of a budget.

And, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's a reason for that and the simple reason, so that members will understand, is that in, within the Liberal Party, I do believe that we have a better ability to present better priorities, that we can spend those tax dollars a whole lot more wiser than the NDP. And, you know, it's interesting, and this is where it talks about—think of the word, get the right pronunciation here—arrogant, arrogance. Arrogance is the word.

You know, when you're in government too long, one of the signs that come is the issue of arrogance and, you know, time and time again, you get MLAs that will try to demean and try to put down other political entities because they can be the bully. They're in the position in which they have 35 MLAs and they will applaud when it's appropriate to applaud. They will—they have no hesitation in terms of using bullying tactics against individuals inside this Chamber and, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is the truth and, you know, they will say—and in the heckling.

Oh, well, I talk about Liberal priorities and there is more to a political entity than the MLAs that sit inside this Chamber. And I would like to hope and think no, thank goodness for the New Democrats. The only problem is they don't realize it. They believe that they are the rulers of the province of Manitoba. The 35 people inside this Chamber are the ones that are going to determine the future of this province. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are more people than just the 35 NDP MLAs that have a right—that have a right to assist in the determination of this province. And it is the highest of arrogance

for a government to believe that they can just walk over the opinions of others, whether they are inside this Chamber or outside this Chamber. And you, as a collective government, have demonstrated arrogance, and I believe there will come a time in which your government will be proven and thrown out of office because of that arrogance.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, you're never too late. You can always attempt to change your ways in recognizing that there is a better way in terms of governing. And I would suggest to the government of the day that they take a look at what it is that they're actually doing in the province of Manitoba. Because ultimately, they believe the polls that they read. And I can suggest to the members opposite that a lot can happen in a 30-day campaign. And if you want examples, I'll encourage you to take a look at other jurisdictions across this country. I'll tell you—you don't even have to look, you can even look outside of Canada, and there are ample examples of governments that have become too arrogant and have resisted what the public needs really are.

And I'll tell you something, Madam Deputy Speaker, and all they need to do is to open their eyes and maybe use their imagination. Get out of the sandbox and maybe, you know, do something in which Gary Doer once said, go out and hug a few people. I think he was actually referring to Liberals, I guess, at that time. But get out and see what people really have to say.

And I'll tell you, you want a starting point, do something about the regional health authorities. Do something about not only Winnipeg regional health-care authority, but do something in regards to the health-care administration that is out there. It needs to be changed, and this government doesn't do it. I don't know why. You know, I don't know why it is, which MLA believes that the regional health-care authorities have been a success. It's only a matter of

time. The regional health-care authorities will go or be dramatically reformed. But I suspect that it takes leadership in order to ensure that that reform takes place, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And that is the reason why, ultimately, I believe that there's a vacuum that's taking place in the Province of Manitoba. *[interjection]* And that's what I mean, from the member from Minto, you know, says bring on the Liberals. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I suspect that the member from Minto who takes his riding for granted, no doubt, we will wait and find out.

And whatever Manitobans decide—if Manitobans decide that there's going to be X number of Liberals that come to the Legislative Chamber, the Manitoba Liberal Party will accept that. We don't feel that there is something—you know, we all have a role to play inside this Chamber. Mr. Minister, all of us, whether you're in government or whether you're in opposition, each member has an important role to play inside this Chamber.

And you are wrong to belittle another MLA's role or a political entity's role inside or outside of this Chamber. I think you need to recognize the value of all that contribute to the success of democracy in the province of Manitoba and, indeed, in our country.

And I, if I was to leave a message to the Minister of Finance in regards to this particular bill, is to recognize the commitment that the government gave back in 1999 to balanced budget legislation. Look in the mirror, look what BITSA actually was meant to be, and what it is that the government is trying to do to sneak it through in such a fashion. Look at the reaction to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

Debate on the bill will remain open. The time being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday. Thank you.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 6, 2010

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| | | Child-Care Centres Selby; Mackintosh | 1964 |
| | | Flood-Damaged Farmland Briese; Struthers | 1964 |
| Petitions | | Members' Statements | |
| Bipole III Mitchelson | 1953 | Grant Park High School Day of Service McGifford | 1965 |
| Ophthalmology Services—Swan River Driedger | 1954 | Tammy Wood Taillieu | 1965 |
| Mount Agassiz Ski Area Briese | 1954 | VE Day Korzeniowski | 1966 |
| Multiple Myeloma Treatments Stefanson | 1954 | Sandra Herbst Mitchelson | 1967 |
| Pet Ownership—Tenancy Agreement Gerrard | 1955 | Citizen Patrol Groups Struthers | 1967 |
| Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area Lamoureux | 1955 | | |
| Committee Reports | | ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued) | |
| Standing Committee on Public Accounts Fourth Report Dewar | 1955 | GOVERNMENT BUSINESS | |
| Tabling of Reports | | Committee of Supply (Concurrent Sections) | |
| Crown Corporations Council, Annual Report, for the year ending December 31, 2009 Wowchuk | 1956 | Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors | 1968 |
| Oral Questions | | Enabling Appropriations | 1978 |
| Personal Care Homes Goertzen; Selinger | 1956 | Other Appropriations | 1979 |
| Rowat; Howard | 1958 | Local Government | 1980 |
| Driedger; Howard | 1959 | Employee Pensions and Other Costs | 1987 |
| Gage Guimond Death Mitchelson; Mackintosh | 1960 | Legislative Assembly | 1987 |
| | | Second Readings | |
| | | Bill 31—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 Wowchuk | 1988 |
| | | Gerrard | 1990 |
| | | Lamoureux | 1994 |

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