

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 27, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed—Bill 205?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 208?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 201?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 201?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 200?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 211?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 202?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Let's try this one. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 203?

An Honourable Member: There, yes.

Mr. Speaker: We've made it. Good.

**DEBATE ON SECOND
READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**

Mr. Speaker: Bill 203, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Finance, who has two minutes remaining.

**Bill 203—The Participation of Manitoba in the
New West Partnership Act**

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to stand and finish off the words of advice that I had for members opposite coming out of the first eight minutes of my speech.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke last time I had the opportunity on this bill about how members opposite are good at rhetoric, but they're not very good at content. They talk a good game, but when it comes right down to action, there's nothing there.

A very good example of that came up in Public Accounts the other night when we were talking about cancer drugs and were talking about procuring cancer drugs in Manitoba. And we started to talk about—I know this is stuff that's very much of interest to my colleague, the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux). We have some opportunities in Manitoba to procure drugs through our formulary, in particular, cancer drugs. And the Deputy Minister of Health was explaining this at Public Accounts the other night and our Health Minister was doing a good job of explaining how Manitoba takes advantage of the procuring on a wider basis than just our province. And the discussion got going about prairie provinces procuring together and working together and co-operating in order to achieve more drugs for less money for a benefit to Manitobans.

Members opposite jumped all—right to the political nub of the matter. It was—they sought their advantage. They were going to say this is the New West Partnership and why is it that Manitoba isn't participating and why are we missing out, Mr. Speaker?

You know, the fact of the matter was, Mr. Speaker—with members opposite, who totally think politics and how it's going to be their advantage—they missed the point that Manitoba—

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

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I'm pleased to rise today to put some remarks on the record on Bill 203, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act, brought forward by the member from Emerson. And, indeed, it's a timely bill; it's a very good bill.

And I got some interest or some humour out of the Minister of Finance's remarks just prior, talking about them taking actions, and sometimes I think he maybe should do some reflection on some of the actions he's taken with some of the things that have been going on lately. The flagrant thumbing of the nose at the laws of this Province and breaking legislation that is already in place. If he changes the legislation that's a different story, but to this point he hasn't changed the legislation in relationship to the PST and he intends to implement it without that change of legislation, which clearly calls for a referendum in this province.

Now—and the New West Partnership, there are so many advantages to Manitoba to be part of that partnership. Right now we are a trading entity of probably around 1.2, 1.3 million people. The New West Partnership actually creates a bloc of 9 million people with a GDP of somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$550 billion. We see the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of this Province go on a trade trip to China, which probably isn't a bad thing to do, but he goes representing 1.2 million people. The premiers of the other three provinces go together and represent 9 million people when they go over there. And our Premier seems to think that he's really accomplished something when he's done that, but 1.2 million people in China isn't even a big town. The clout that the Premier carries representing 1.2 million people is pretty insignificant in a country like China; there's cities that are 25 to 30 million people, almost the total population of Canada in China, and he seems to have the mistaken belief that he carries some clout when he goes on those trade missions. At least if we were part of the New West Partnership he would be representing a bloc that would amount to over 10 million people and have some impact when they're on those trade missions.

You know, there's a number of things happening right now that, to me, indicate a need and a significance to being a part of a trading partnership and part of the New West Partnership in having it definitely being to our advantage.

Right now there's severe flooding in Alberta, and flooding that moves this way. It moves this way, water flows into Manitoba, we're the catch basin from western—all the way to the Rockies. And we go out and we make—we set up different entities that will deal with Saskatchewan and then deal with Alberta, and all that kind of action that really doesn't put a cohesive face on what's going on.

* (10:10)

We—if we're part of an overall entity, a New West Partnership, where we're all there at the table and we're all there discussing what we can do with the water management problem across western Canada, I think you might have opportunity to make some progress.

Right now we're facing the possibility of some fairly severe flooding in The Pas with water that's coming all the way from the Rocky Mountains. And there's probably a large number of things that could be done if you were part of an overall entity that you could negotiate and develop some water management issue—criteria for all of the Prairie provinces.

You know, another thing that is on the forefront right now is discussions about energy and northern hydro development and those types of issues where, once again, if you're part of an entity—we talk about some vague references of power sales to Saskatchewan in the future, and they may well be something that could be developed. But right now most of the power from the newest dam, the Wuskwatim dam, is being sold at spot prices, spot prices in the US at 3 cents or less a kilowatt. I, in my own home, am paying about 7 cents a kilowatt, just under, and so I'm subsidizing those spot prices going somewhere else.

Now, if you can make the agreements with Saskatchewan and, probably, an overall plan for all of western Canada, it would certainly be to our advantage. But if I was Saskatchewan right now, I'd say, sure, go ahead. Build the dams. I'll be glad to buy your hydro at spot prices. Why would I sign a contract? I can buy it at spot prices. You're bent on developing these dams. You're go—you say you're going to go ahead anyhow. So why would I sign a contract? I wish I had the same advantage in my home. I wish I could say, I'd like my hydro—I'd like to buy my hydro for my home and my farm at spot price. I would love to have it at 3 cents a kilowatt. But you're sending it to our southern neighbours at 3 cents a kilowatt, and I'm paying seven. I think it

should be me paying three and them paying seven or more. But they're into that spot market, and you can't store hydro. You cannot store hydro so you're stuck with the necessity of exporting it and you export it if you haven't got firm contracts. You export it at whatever price they will pay.

Now, Ontario and Québec have partnership agreements. They work as a bloc. We have western Canada which has got most of the resources at the present time rapidly turning into, for lack of a better phrase, the economic power of Canada, at the present time and the three provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, who are part of that New West Partnership are that economic power. Why? Why wouldn't we want to be part of that? Why wouldn't we want the economic clout shared across western Canada?

You know, there's so many places where interprovincial trade wears us down, and one that I can cite is—my son happens to be a Canadian CFIA meat inspector—and our small abattoirs in this province, and there's some 20 to 25 of them they can't sell across border. They can't move their product across border. The only ones that can are the federally licensed plants, and that—there's only a mere handful of them in the province.

And that's something—interprovincial trade barriers—we have more interprovincial trade barriers than we have international trade barriers with the United States, and those are the things that can be worked on with the New West Partnership. Those barriers can be taken away. Right now, we—because of the fumbling and the bumbling of the NDP government that's in power, we have no cattle—large cattle slaughter facility in this province. They were going to do it, it was going to be put in place. It's not there, so we export live cattle. That's all we can do with them. We export live cattle, we give up the value-added portion of the cattle business, and that impacts us. And that's the kind of thing that the New West Partnership would have the ability to address.

I know there's many of my colleagues that wish to speak to this bill, and with those few words, I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm pleased to get up and speak to this bill. I believe this is, again, a great example of Conservative recycling, and congratulations for being such fine environmentalists, Mr. Speaker. They keep sending the same bills through the House time after time, and I've only been here for a short period and I keep

seeing the same bills come time after time. If this is how they want to lead the province of Manitoba into the next decade, they're in big, big trouble.

I also, just in case members weren't here the other day, want to reiterate that the Stanley Cup champion Chicago Blackhawks are led by a great Winnipegger and Manitoban, and it's accorded us—a very proud moment for me.

But with regard to the New West Partnership, Mr. Speaker, I'm a little mystified, and maybe I'll learn something—I certainly didn't learn anything from the member before, but maybe I'll learn something about why this is seen to be so critically important to the other side of the House. And frankly it's a mystery to me, so I'm hoping, among other things, during the next 45 minutes, because I didn't get anything earlier from the member who just spoke—as to why this is such an overwhelming priority for the conservative—or Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. *[interjection]* Yes, there's nothing pro—I know that's an oxymoron, but that's for another day and another time and another discussion.

But it really is—it is a mystery to me. I seem to recall the top five things in the Tory election plan last election included—I think it was ranked No. 5, the New West Partnership. And you think, well, where's stuff about housing? Surely that's a priority. How about education being a priority? Not there. Education—did I say that already? Education and health care—well, post-secondary education; not part of their priority list. New West Partnership—big, big priority, top five—No. 5, I think, on the list. And it remains a mystery to me why that's such a priority for the other side when, in fact, the New West Partnership is, in fact, a shell. It doesn't really bring any sub—anything of substance to the table.

You know, it seems to me with the other side of the House, however, the New West Partnership is like the cure-all for everything. You got a touch of the flu? Take two new—two west partnerships and you'll be fine—*[interjection]* Yes. You got a headache? Take the New West Partnership, you'll be fine. What is it that it's trying to resolve? What is it that it's trying to cure? What is it that's so essential about this agreement that it constitutes the top five things that you would do?

But you know, Mr. Speaker, having, you know, had the opportunity to know that I was going to be speaking on this very important matter this morning—and I'm sure if the people of Manitoba knew that we

were debating this particular bill again, they'd be wondering what is it that the Tories are going to bring to the table as a government, if they ever get there. Because they'd be mystified as I am.

But I had the chance to do a little research. I went onto what all good researchers do these days—I went on to Google. And I had a chance—and, of course, the New West Partnership Agreement came up, and so I thought, well, I should find out what they've done lately. What's been going on in the New West Partnership lately? So you click onto news releases—you know how many news releases there are in the New West Partnership, on their official website? One. There's one. We're the new—*[interjection]* And that's what it is, the member from Brandon East has it absolutely right—*[interjection]* Yes, it says the one and only news release from that very essential, absolutely important cure-all for things that are—make us all ill, there's been one news release from 2010 that says, hey, we're the new New West Partnership. We're here and we're making the difference in the world.

* (10:20)

It's absolutely beyond comprehension, Mr. Speaker, if I may say, to think that something that's come to this Chamber over and over, of vital importance to the Conservative Party, is, in fact, something that's a mere shell, a fiction, doesn't really exist in any kind of substantive manner.

So I thought, okay, well, I would check Google News because maybe it's not just about press releases, maybe they've been doing a tonne of work and, you know, they're just not self-promoting it on their own website. You know, why do that? Why do that? Why? So then I thought maybe some intrepid reporter had written extensively about the New West Partnership. I—you would think, you know, and then maybe there's a—some—*[interjection]* Yes, exactly. Some Jimmy Olson out there, you know, Superman's reporter, just for those of us who are—

An Honourable Member: We got it. This side of the House got it.

Mr. Allum: Okay, just in making sure—who wanted to go out and find out about the New West Partnership and write comprehensively about the substance of that agreement and all that it's achieved. You can go on Google News and you won't find one article about it, no.

The last time Brad Wall spoke, the Premier of Saskatchewan, the hero of the other side, the last

time was, I think, he had a quote in the one and only press release.

An Honourable Member: Get rid of the Senate.

Mr. Allum: That's it. Yes, that's right, get rid of the Senate while we're it.

An Honourable Member: I like Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Allum: Exactly. But the funny—and I like Manitoba Hydro.

That—but that—so there's no press releases to indicate what's actually being achieved by the New West Partnership. There's been no news stories about what the New West Partnership has actually achieved which can only lead me to believe that, one nothing versus another nothing, actually equals nothing.

And I know members on the other side of the House need some—*[interjection]* Nothing from nothing, exactly—the member from Brandon East—that great old Billy Preston song. Who can forget it? Nothing from nothing means nothing, it just really comes up to that.

But in point of fact, Mr. Speaker, on the elements that the New West Partnership is supposedly, allegedly, apparently pretending to address are the things that we're actually already doing. And I just—every time something comes up from the other side as though it's a new, fresh, innovative idea, we're already doing it. And that's the interesting thing.

I know emulation is the finest form, most sincerest form of flattery and, believe me, I'm flattered that you all—the opposition, Mr. Speaker, always wants to do what we're doing. That makes us all—pretty—feeling pretty good, I think, inside. Well—*[interjection]* Yes, well, they—you see, that's the interesting thing, the member from Brandon East reminds me, is they want to emulate. They want to be like us, they just don't know how, and that's always a problem for them.

But, in fact, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a few moments to talk about the kinds of things that we've been doing that already substantively deal with the elements of the New West Partnership. The fact of the matter is that Manitoba is a leading driver of national labour mobility efforts. We were the first province—not the seventh, eighth, ninth or 10th—the first province, No. 1 in my book, to proclaim labour mobility legislation in 2009—*[interjection]* The first in Canada—first in Canada. No small achievement

that, but then we're generally the first in Canada or top three, top five, in most things anyway.

We've already implemented full labour mobility for financial services. And I know on the other side of the House, the captains of industry on the other side of the House would be very concerned about financial services because, frankly, those are the people that they're here to represent. We represent all the people of Manitoba, all the time. These folks represent their friends in the financial industry, I'm sure.

Another thing we always talk about, how complicated government is and how complicated agreements are. But, in fact, we're simplifying corporate registration and reporting requirements just to make it easier to do business here in Manitoba, to reduce the red tape required and to make sure that capital can flow across provincial boundaries to benefit all Canadians.

And then we're improving transparency in government procurement practices, including through the designation of a single electronic tendering system for publishing tender notices in each jurisdiction. Now, Mr. Speaker, if that isn't an accomplishment, I don't really know what is. *[interjection]* Yes. Well, that's always it. We always think about, not only Manitoba but the welfare of this country. *[interjection]* And we're nation builders, as my friend from Wolseley reminds me.

And the opposition, Mr. Speaker, is, frankly, quite parochial. They're quite regional in the way they think about it. They don't think about building Manitoba and building this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I've tried to make the point today that the—what the New West Partnership appears to be in substance is, in fact, a shell. It doesn't exist. For this to be a priority of the opposition is, in fact, a disgrace to all Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased today to rise to speak to this particular bill, Bill 210, the partnership of Manitoba in the New West Partnership act.

And I tried to listen to some of the previous speakers, and, obviously, as the previous speaker said, he was trying to make a point and wasn't able to, so that's, you know, not surprising. That was his point; he had no point. And he's confused, sounded very confused about the issues. He's trying to educate himself and that is good. It's great that he's trying to educate himself.

And that's one of the points of the New West Partnership is talking to your neighbours. You talk to your neighbours and you find out the problems that they face and the opportunities they have, and you're able to talk to them about your challenges and your opportunities, and then you're able to build a better province. But that's not something that's on the radar screen of this NDP government.

Usually, when you want to come into a partnership, Mr. Speaker, you're expected to bring something along. And maybe that's the problem with this government is what do they have to offer to the New West Partnership as the NDP government? How to spend taxpayers' money, how to raise PST, how to raise taxes. That's something that they have to offer, I guess. But that's not something that I think the other governments necessarily want to learn. They seem to be moving ahead with their economies, and they are moving ahead with their economies, while here in Manitoba, we are stuck in the Dark Ages and that's very unfortunate.

Rather than building barriers to trade, rather than building barriers to our neighbours, we should be opening up and talking to them and listening to them. Is there a cost to this? There may very well be. Are there opportunities here? Absolutely.

You know, Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, I went to work for the Royal Bank in Winnipeg here, and I had several areas of the province as areas that I travelled to. And I met a number of people that worked for the Royal Bank, and often, discussion goes back to, well, where are you from? Saskatchewan. And where are you from? Saskatchewan. The vice president—where are you from? Saskatchewan. Why are there so many people from Saskatchewan in the Royal Bank 25 years ago? That's because they were leaving that province because there wasn't opportunities there. The Royal Bank in Manitoba at that time was filled with, you might call them refugees from Saskatchewan, because Manitoba offered some opportunities.

And now the reverse is happening. We are seeing Manitobans going to Alberta. We're seeing Manitobans going to Saskatchewan, and we're seeing Manitobans going worldwide. And, yes, we've created opportunities for them there, but they are seeing opportunities that they can take there, and now I would hazard a guess, if you went to some of those corporations, you would find many Manitobans in Saskatchewan and Alberta. And I know that they're there.

So, you know, we need to create those opportunities for Manitobans. And these barriers to interprovincial trade—and we have many in Canada. In fact, often there are more barriers for interprovincial trade than there are to international trade. And it's very unfortunate because that costs Manitobans. It costs Manitobans jobs; it costs Manitobans opportunity. There's lost opportunity costs. And it's not just in trade, Mr. Speaker; it's in knowledge.

And the previous speaker did talk about labour mobility. Well, if they've solved that problem, then why do I constantly get calls from people that are having challenges with labour mobility? People that are trying to come into the province to work here—people are trying to bring in staff to work here because they can't find that qualified staff in Manitoba, and they're having problems with certification. They're having difficulties with barriers that this government puts up to that labour mobility. So, if they've solved it, then why are there problems? And, obviously, they really don't know what they're doing or what's going on. These are all challenges that are brought on by this NDP government.

* (10:30)

We have challenges in Manitoba, but we have a tremendous amount of opportunity. And I truly believe that we have some of the greatest opportunity of any province in western Canada and, perhaps, in Canada. Those opportunities are being ignored by this government. We tend—they tend to blame everyone else for their problems and then take more taxpayers' money and spend it.

Where are there opportunities? There are opportunities in mining. There are opportunities in the potash sector of mining. We have just as much potash, perhaps more, as Saskatchewan. We have a potash company on our books that we have invested in. There's money sitting there or somewhere—interesting to see where it might have gone, nothing being done with it. You go up into parts of Manitoba, and you can look just across the border and see the tailings from the potash mine. You can see the traffic going from Manitoba to work in the potash mine. But we don't create it here. There are opportunities there, Mr. Speaker.

And, of course, we have hydro. And we have the minister across the floor and, you know, he talks about the opportunities there, and certainly, there may be opportunities, and those are opportunities that we need to explore. But it is not Manitoba's oil,

because we do have oil. And that is something that the minister didn't seem to understand, because he was talking about oil mines. I don't know that a lot of oil mines exist, Mr. Speaker. But, nonetheless, that seems to be how he understands that oil works.

But, if he took a trip down to what is now called—now known as the Bakken reservoir or the Bakken formation, perhaps he would learn something. He would see the opportunity there. If he talked to Saskatchewan, if he talked to North Dakota, perhaps he would learn some information about how we can help develop that resource in Manitoba, and how it can benefit Manitobans and Canadians. And that opportunity is there, Mr. Speaker, but again, it's ignored.

And, you know, this—these—the previous speaker did speak about education. And, well, if you're supporting education, then why do you cut grants to universities by half? That's what they did this year. And then we see the universities are having to cut their budgets. They're having to lay off professors and reduce offerings to students. Is that going to help a student graduate through those universities, Mr. Speaker? Is that going to help a student achieve his goal or her goal of getting a degree in a reasonable time at that university? If you can't get the course, what are you going to do? You either take longer, which may work to this government's favour—they're—the students are going to have to pay more for their education, they're going to have to borrow more money—or you go elsewhere. And that is very unfortunate that we drive students away because we're not offer—able to offer things in our universities because of this government's cuts.

It's very disconcerting to see the protectionist mentality of this government. Because protectionism will not help Manitobans. If we look back at economics, it tends to damage long-term productivity of a province, long-term opportunities of a nation. And it is very disconcerting to see this government take that stance. Why they won't even talk to our neighbours—simple, simple process, Mr. Speaker, just talk. Bring something to the partnership.

Mr. Speaker, if this isn't the year that they want to do it, well, why not? I mean, we have flooding problems in Alberta, we have flooding problems in Saskatchewan, and we have flooding problems in Manitoba. And a lot of that water does eventually drain through Manitoba. Perhaps we should talk to our neighbours about how we manage that resource in those other provinces before it gets here. Because

Saskatchewan, as I'm sure you know, is very good at draining agricultural land, and that land goes directly into the streams, goes directly into the rivers, and as you accelerate that drainage, it comes here faster into Manitoba, and then we have to deal with it. So maybe we need to talk to them about retaining water on the land, all the way back to the end of the watershed.

Those are things that come from the New West Partnership, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why this government doesn't want to talk to other provinces, to other people. I'm just mystified by that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll let others talk to this one.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): I'm pleased to have a chance to put some words on the record right now, but I would have to just take a few moments and just mention the fact that, of course, it's graduation week so I've been spending a lot of time in my constituency and watching a lot of young people move on to the next chapter of their life, and whether it's grade 6 grad or grade 8 grad or grad 12 grad, they are all big moments.

And what I found really fantastic is, particularly in the grade 12 grads, is how many of them have plans in place to go to post-secondary education. And that's exciting for me as a parent, it's exciting for me for the future of the province, but, of course, as Minister of Advanced Education I'm always happy to see that our young people are seeing post-secondary education as affordable and accessible for them and that they're seeing that this is a path for them to take, and that's fantastic news and I congratulate them all and wish them best of luck on whatever path and whatever journey they take over the next little while.

I also think it's fantastic to see how many of our young people are completing their post-secondary education and then choosing Manitoba as a place to put down roots. We know that more and more are doing that. There was a time—and the member opposite spoke about—about a decade ago when people were leaving the province. Under the Tory government, young people were not seeing a lot of opportunity here, but we're seeing increasingly more and more people choosing to either stay in Manitoba or come to Manitoba to make it their home.

It's not surprising that students are doing that because, of course, we have a fantastic education

system here, and I know that our provinces, particularly to the west of us, are looking at our post-secondary system right now with great envy. Folks in Alberta are looking at 7 per cent cuts to their universities and I know that their universities look with envy that ours are getting a 2.5 increase, the best funding in the country, actually. So, certainly, more and more people in the West and around the country are looking to Manitoba and how we've managed to make the priorities of families our priorities and an important thing.

And, of course, with our tuition rebate that's eligible for folks who want to put roots down in Manitoba, whether they come from Alberta, whether they come from another country, anywhere in the world, we're welcoming students when they complete their studies to come to Manitoba, put roots down in Manitoba, and of course they'll all see the 60 per cent rebate should they choose to do that.

So it's certainly been good for us in the last 10 years as more and more people are coming here, but the member opposite is right, in the '90s under the Conservative government we did see people leaving Manitoba. They were choosing to go to Saskatchewan. They were choosing in the '90s to go to Alberta.

Some of it was because they were getting fired. You fire a thousand nurses, not only do those ones have to look for new jobs, but other ones coming out of the system are a little bit worried about taking a job and so, of course, in the '90s we saw nurses fleeing in huge numbers, not just the ones that the Conservatives fired but the ones that were scared to take a job in Manitoba.

And, of course, they cut the fun—the medical spots to doctors. So although there were doctors fleeing Manitoba under the Conservatives, there were less of them to flee because they cut the medical spaces so they weren't training as many doctors. So there were some leaving and a whole lot not being trained.

We're seeing the reverse now. Nurses are choosing to come here. Doctors are choosing to come here, and, of course, more and more people are coming to Manitoba all the time, which is fantastic.

I do want to talk a little bit about the bill and just mention that I think that the members opposite perhaps are a bit naive and don't understand how government relations work. Well, of course, we are always in discussion with our partners to the west,

our partners to the east, our partners to the south and around the world; that's what governments do. We continually talk about opportunities, about trade, about ways to help each other.

I certainly know that that's been some of the discussion in this last week has been, how can we use some of Manitoba's expertise and experience? Unfortunately, we have a lot of experience on flooding, but we have become quite good at it and people look to us for our expertise. So there's just one example of some of the discussions that we're having right now is, can we offer some of that experience and expertise to Alberta? Because, of course, people are going through very difficult time right there, and if we can do anything to speed up that recovery and help them get back on their feet, we're happy to do that.

But we also continue to have conversations with our partners about eliminating trade barriers and making sure that we're promoting labour mobility. We do a lot with that. I know the—our member already spoke about the fact that we were the first folks to talk about labour mobility and to make that more simple between provinces, but we also do a lot in terms of bridging programs. We know that a lot of people want to come and work in Manitoba, particularly in health-care system.

People look at our health-care system, again, with envy, as they do at our post-secondary system, because this government makes it a priority; because Manitoba families tell us it's their priority and listening to them means that—when you listen to what Manitobans want, they want education, they want health care, they want opportunity for young people, and that's what we're trying to provide.

* (10:40)

But, of course, when people have been trained outside of Manitoba they sometimes need some training in order to bridge into our labour market. We have very high standards both for our educators, for our teachers, for our nurses, for our doctors, incredibly high standards as we want to make sure we're providing the best care to Manitobans, and so we have programs in place to help people meet the standard of care that's expected in Manitoba whether it's through our teaching, whether it's through our nursing, whether it's through doctors. We do that as well.

So, of course, we do continue to have excellent relations with Saskatchewan, with other western

provinces, and are in discussion right now with participation for the New West Partnership.

But as I was saying, we are already the leading driver of national labour mobility efforts, first in Canada to proclaim labour mobility legislation in 2009. We've implemented full labour mobility for financial services and we're simplifying corporate registration and reporting requirements. We're improving the transparency in government procurement practices, including through a single designation of a single electronic tendering system for publishing tendering notices in each jurisdiction, which sounds like something that, obviously, those words translate to meaning, that it makes it easier for people to come to Manitoba and we welcome them when they do that.

We know that Manitoba already exports to the western provinces. It accounts for 43 per cent of the total interprovincial exports demonstrating how strong our relationship is with the west, of course, and we're always looking for opportunities that will help deliver those benefits to Manitoba. It's important that we not only look to the west, but, as I said, we have to continue to look to the east, to the south and around the world. We've been updating our trade—international trade focus to reflect the increasingly rapid growth of countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China.

And we have, certainly, in post-secondary secured a very good relationship with Brazil. A couple of years ago Brazil brought in a new scholarship for their students called—that—it encouraged students to leave Brazil to get a post-secondary education in other countries around the world. They're sending a hundred thousand students around the world over the next few years.

Now, unfortunately, the difficulty we have in Manitoba is when people in Brazil think Canada and they think very positively of education in Canada, but, of course, they've heard of Montréal and they've heard of Toronto and they've heard of Vancouver and they haven't always heard of Winnipeg.

It's hard to compete with some of the big cities, but we have made really good inroad with Brazil on our post-secondary education, and when they started sending students over here we've been the No. 2 destination in Canada. Now, perhaps, people will say, well, what about No. 1? And we're working towards that, of course, but it's pretty rare for Winnipeg to beat out cities like Vancouver and

Montréal and Toronto as a destination only because people haven't heard of them.

But when we talk about what Manitoba can offer to students, when we tell them that you'll have an experience in Manitoba that you can't get anywhere else, it's not a difficult sell. People know we have a good education system. They already know the reputation of our post-secondary system and trust that it is some of the best around the world. Certainly, in Manitoba we have a very affordable, accessible 'educa'-post-secondary education system, even for international students where our rates are still amongst the lowest in Canada and we have advantages of things such as free health care for students when they're here in Manitoba. And we know that many of those students decide to stay once they see Manitoba and what we have to offer and, of course, our famous friendliness that everyone is aware of. But it's fantastic to see Brazilian students choosing Manitoba, and you wonder when they get here and experience their first winter, if they stay. But they are staying. They're finding it as an experience they can brag about back home. It's hard for people back home in Brazil to understand what -40 means, but when you can show pictures that you've been skiing, that you've been hiking, that you've been snowshoeing, and particularly that you can walk on water, this is quite impressive to family and friends around the world if you come from a country that's got a little bit more comfortable climate year round than we have but doesn't offer the same sort of diversity of climate that we do.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess, in wrapping up, I'd just like to say that members opposite, perhaps a bit naive on the fact that we are always having discussions with our trading partners, that we're pursuing opportunities through the agreement on international trade and we'll continue to have discussions about partnership and the New West Partnership.

This bill doesn't offer anything of substance and we are offering substance. We're working on making more partnerships and delivering on trade, and we will continue to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 203, and I thank the member from Emerson for bringing it forward.

It was interesting listening to the Minister for Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. Selby) chatting about all the great things that we are doing in the province in regards to post-secondary, and there are many things, Mr. Speaker, that are fantastic within our post-secondary education. But she, unfortunately, doesn't—she fails to chat about the cuts that she's made to our post-secondary institutions within the province. There's many, many hurdles that a lot of the students have to go through even to get that education here in the province, and I have to, unfortunately, disagree with her, that there are many students that are seeking their education outside of the province for various reasons.

But, at the same time, I know that instead of talking to Bill 203 in regards to a 'newth'-New West Partnership, she spent a lot of time looking in the rear-view mirror, Mr. Speaker. I think if she would start looking to the future, things like the northwest—or the New West Partnership would be an advantage to the wonderful province that we live in of Manitoba. And, you know, I've spoken to many students that have come here on an exchange or those type of things, and we don't necessarily talk down about the—about the -40 weather, the plus 40 weather in the summer. We actually talk about the great diversity and the many things that this province does have to offer. The only problem is, is that we have a government that's not necessarily thinking along those lines, and to continue promoting the province without actually forcing people to leave.

The participation in the New West Partnership would help advance our economy with economic agreements. Manitoba's isolation from such ties and partnerships under this NDP government is hurting our economy in the business sector. I know that the New West Partnership would only improve the trade relations between British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, and for that matter, Mr. Speaker, the rest of the world. I know that the member from Fort Garry-Riverview is concerned about that he was having a tough time doing some research in regards to the New West Partnership, and he was sticking with the Google search engine, which, again, is a great tool, but it's one tool of many. I think he was basically lobbying his—the rest of the government and some of his ministers so that maybe they would send some of their spinners over to him so that he could utilize them and help with some research, or maybe he's padding the way to add to those 192 communicator spinners on the government side

at a tune of \$12.5 million a year in salary. I'm not quite sure why he's choosing that.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about the fact that both speakers before me had stood up and chatted about how they encourage and they welcome the opportunity to speak and partner with various provinces around the—this great country of ours, to the west and to the east. The fact is they're showing—in the last couple years since I've been here, they're showing many, many, many evidences of them unwilling to listen. If they're unwilling to listen to their own people—Manitobans, I can't see them being—going to these meetings and being open-minded and listening to our other friends or allies within the country.

For one, you know, we're only a few days away from the PST increase of one point, or almost 14 per cent, and I feel that, you know, it's not too late. I think they should take that opportunity to pull Bill 20 off the table, call a referendum and actually walk the talk. They're saying how much they listen to other people—I think, take this opportunity, listen to Manitobans, call a referendum, and I encourage them to let this bill, Bill 203, the partnership of Manitoba in the New West Partnership act, pass.

Thank you.

*(10:50)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): It really is a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to put a few comments on the record. And I know that members opposite, I'm sure, realize that when we're talking about the New West Partnership, there's various parts to this. But really what I'd like to talk about is the practical issues related to partnerships in general but certainly western Canada.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the province of Manitoba for certainly the time that I've been in government, since 1999 and have been a minister, that we've had a lot of practical agreements and relationships with the western provinces, and that we're certainly proud of and I know the other provinces are equally as proud.

One as—when I was Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, the premier of the day and the current Premier (Mr. Selinger) have taken the lead with regard to harmonizing trucking, for example, with weights and measures. Some practical, real-life examples where you've got the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and Manitoba Trucking Association and others have certainly been very,

very supportive of those initiatives where we have initiated harmonization of weights and measures, where trucks can cross borders in western Canada and not be hindered in any way by the weights they're carrying. And this realistically and practically is a way that we can improve our economy but also the economy of western Canada.

Manitoba has been a member of WESTAC, which is the western advisory council on transportation based out of Vancouver. But we, again, in practical terms, we have belonged to that organization, talked about trade, talked about cross-border trade, talk about trade with Russia, India and China in a way that will help all of our economies. That is using our influence working with the western provinces in a real practical way that we believe that is certainly the way to go.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, you take a look at what's happening in Alberta today with all the flooding and now they're going to be into a cleanup mode. I know our Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) and I, myself, and the Premier and others have contacted our counterparts in Alberta to offer whatever assistance we can give. Not to be running whatever is going on in Alberta, certainly not, but to provide any kind of assistance in any way we can to help our neighbours to the west.

We know, as a province, we endure and deal with flooding every single spring and—to different degrees, some years it can be like 2011 that was experienced in western Manitoba and, indeed, we see some flooding happening even now as I speak in western Manitoba. But again, because we have this experience, we share that with our neighbours. In practical terms, we work with our neighbours and in ways that'll help them but also help us.

And so, quite frankly, do you really need this New West Partnership and the US partnership act that the member from Emerson is putting forward? I would argue no, absolutely not.

We work very, very closely with our counterparts and our colleagues in other provinces. The flood is an example, the Trucking Association is another example, and there are many, many more on where we have worked closely with our western provinces to deal with trucking, training, trade and, of course, Manitoba—Emerson is the busiest port in, cross-border port in western Canada for trucking. And many of the trucking industry and goods that are sent to the United States come via No. 1 Highway or Highway 16, the Yellowhead Route, into Manitoba,

down Highway 75 and then I-29 to I-35 or different directions in the United States. But that cross border for us is something that we see a lot of traffic coming from the west, and it's something that we work closely with our western partners on.

Is—I won't repeat about our national labour mobility efforts and Manitoba being the leading province with regard to labour mobility; we've talked about that often.

And I did want to talk a little bit, Mr. Speaker, on Manitoba's geographic location and transportation systems being a key advantage in the supply-chain hub.

We have CentrePort and CentrePort Canada. The opposition—they reluctantly supported it initially. It took—it's like the MTS Centre; you would think that they had supported the MTS Centre all along, Mr. Speaker, but now, you know, by virtue of history and the revisionist history on their part saying that, oh, yes, they were very supportive of the MTS Centre all along.

It's like CentrePort. CentrePort now is really starting to take off, and, of course, where's the opposition? Oh, we love CentrePort, you know. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, they're very critical of it at every turn, and yet that was one of the most important initiatives that will be in—history will show—one of the most important initiatives in Manitoba's history, because for one of the first times since I was elected in '99, you had organized labour—the MFL—you had the Manitoba Business Council, you had the chambers of commerce of Winnipeg and Manitoba, you had the municipal government—the City of Winnipeg—you had the Province, you had the federal government all pulling in the same direction with regard to CentrePort, and yet we had to drag, kicking and screaming, the opposition to see the importance of CentrePort.

Again, other provinces, you know, Mr. Speaker, equally were trying to—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lakeside, on a point of order.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, clearly the minister of rural development has put false information on the record in regards to CentrePort. That was—motion was carried unanimous in the House. Ask him withdraw the information.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Lakeside, the information obviously appears to me to be a dispute over the facts, and I must rule respectfully that there is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable minister, to continue his comments.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry that, you know, the member opposite had to jump out of his seat, but, you know, with regard to the New West Partnership that he refers to, you know, we're proceeding with CentrePort.

Other provinces in western Canada have their own inland ports that they're trying to promote. I know that Alberta, Port Alberta, is doing a great job, just outside of Edmonton, also promoting their port. They work closely with Diane Gray and CentrePort Canada here. Obviously, the federal government have designated this port as being the inland port for Canada and western Canada, and yet we are working closely and try to work closely with Regina or Saskatchewan and Alberta in practical terms on what is best for all provinces, including their inland ports. Yes, we're the leader and, yes, we are the—going to be the largest one, but that's not to preclude all the conversations and ideas that are shared between them.

So my point is this, to be on point, Mr. Speaker, is that we share with our neighbours. We work with them in practical ways to make sure that the West is strong. We believe that the West as a bloc is truly important. This century is going to be the West's century. It's going to be Manitoba's century, and we want to be, and we are going to be, part of a strong western Canada that will be everything that we can be, and we will make Canada a stronger and better country for it.

We are starting to look at all the advantages that we have, not only on hydroelectric power, but you take a look at Alberta and Saskatchewan and the resources that we all have in western Canada, and truly the West is going to be very, very strong going not only in years but decades into the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, just on the trade issue itself, I know that I talked about CentrePort and the importance of CentrePort, and I'm really pleased to see that the member for Lakeside and others are very supportive of CentrePort. I'm pleased to hear that. It was a long time coming, but I'm really pleased. I'm

pleased—I'm really pleased to hear that they are supportive of CentrePort, because that's our future and that's our children and grandchildren's future.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, we know that organizations like WESTAC, other organizations like NASCO, for example, are truly organizations that we believe are important not only for us but the United States and Mexico. We work with them closely. We, indeed, work with our provinces to the west, Saskatchewan and Alberta and even British Columbia, to belong to those organizations. We feel how important NASCO, for example, can be as a North American trading bloc. We're all part of NAFTA and we believe that the West and western provinces should belong to organizations like NASCO and certainly work with us to ensure that we're taking a look at all of North America, not just western Canada but, indeed, North America as a bloc, including our friends in Mexico, the United States and all of Canada.

Currently we have Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Québec belonging to NASCO. Manitoba was the lead province with regard to NASCO and NASCO's organization based out of Texas, but in Kansas City and—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Local Government will have one minute remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private member's resolution, and the resolution that we will be starting with first, I believe, will be the one sponsored by the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger). The title of the resolution is Provincial Taxation Broken Promises, standing in the name of the honourable member for Selkirk, who has eight minutes remaining.

DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

Res. 4—Provincial Taxation Broken Promises

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It's an absolute pleasure, Mr. Speaker, an absolute pleasure to get up and talk this morning about taxes.

You know, and as I was saying in my last comments, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the members opposite and the fact that they have absolutely no credibility on this issue whatsoever. They could stand here, the members, maybe the older, more veteran members opposite could try to

fool—they could try to trick some of their newer members into believing that they have a record on tax cuts, or they may be able to try to convince some of the newer members on this side of the House that they have a record on tax cuts. But the truth is they've never cut a tax in their lives. They never cut a tax in their lives.

The member for Charleswood, she was in the Filmon government, Mr. Speaker. Remember, she was sitting over here. She was a legislative assistant, I believe, had a very prominent role in the Filmon government. Did she cut a tax? No, not a single tax. And a couple of the members—some of the members opposite, they had leadership roles in certain municipal governments. I know the member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese), I believe he was a member of municipal government. I wonder if he cut a tax when he was in municipal government. I somewhat doubt it. I somewhat doubt if he cut a tax when he was a reeve there.

What about the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler)? The member for St. Paul used to be a school trustee, Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Paul, the same individual who wants us to politically manipulate the routing of a hydro line in his constituency, the very same member. We know the member for St. Paul who's—very much favours the bipole line going down the west part of the province, as does the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). We know that they very much favour that.

The member for St. Paul was a school trustee for many years up in the eastern—northeastern part of the city, Mr. Speaker, Transcona, I believe, maybe further north. But I believe—I—you know, I talked to some people in that area and I said that the member for St. Paul, when he was a school trustee in that area, did he cut a single tax? Well, the answer is no. When they had the chance to deliver, they did 'nev'—they did not. And, as I said, the tax cutters are on this side of the Chamber.

But it—you know what? We're talking about taxes. We're talking about government, Mr. Speaker, and I had—I really enjoyed the debate here the other day. We were talking about the Senate, brought forward by the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). And, you know, the member was saying—I really enjoyed watching the members opposite squirm on this debate. I think, you know, it really upsets me that hard-working Manitobans see their tax dollars go to Ottawa, and then they use it to pay Mike Duffy. They—the hard-working Manitobans

who work every day, paying taxes to this government, paying taxes to the federal government, and that money goes to Mike Duffy. That muddymoney goes to Pamela Wallin. That money goes to Patrick Brazeau. And members opposite defend them. They stand up in this House and they squirmed. Oh, you know, there were—they didn't know what to say about the issue. But every single member opposite, they supported our moneytaxhard-working Manitobans, pay their taxes, go to support this Senate in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the members opposite, we know opposition's depressing; I was there for a few years. But, you know, it's really—give us a break. You know, I mean, all they ever were talking is gloom and doom. All they see in the economy here in Manitoba is gloom and doom, but there are good things happening.

We see the United States—the United States is beginning to recover, Mr. Speaker, which is good. Their deficit is projected to be almost half at what it was at the beginning of the year, and that's a good sign. Reality is, the Republicans no longer—they can no longer attack Obama on the economy, so now they're finding all sorts of other things to attack him on, which is a good 'singh'—a good thing for us. Obviously, it's one of our largest trading partners, or it is our largest trading partner as a country and largest trading partner as a province as well.

And I listen to the—I enjoyed the comments from the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). You know, he spoke a lot, but he said very little—you know, he spoke a lot, but he said very little. He did—never explained how the members opposite would manage over \$600 million less money if they were to ever, heaven forbid, run this province, Mr. Speaker. They promised to cut an equivalent of the PST, which is \$280 million. Then they also promised to eliminate the revenue source as well, so that's almost \$600 million. And they never—he said a lot, but he never once did he say how he's going to—or his government, will manage with 600 million less dollars.

They said they'll fire the military envoy. Well, you have to fire her 7,000 times—fire her 7,000 times—to make up the equivalent amount. Then they—you know, they grab numbers out of the air, well, we'll fire civil servants, we'll put a freeze on this and, oh, we'll get rid of communicators.

They said they'll get rid of communicators. You know, I was here and the member for Elmwood (Mr.

Maloway) was here, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) was here. We'd walk out of the Chamber in the Filmon years—you couldn't get out of the Chamber, there were so many spinners outside. There were so many Conservative communicators in the hallway, you couldn't even leave the Chamber.

An Honourable Member: They're at City Hall now.

Mr. Dewar: Now, well, the member for Elmwood said they're all working for Sam Katz in City Hall now.

But that's absolutely—for them to suggest that they'll have no communication staff if they were to form government, is absolutely ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, because we know that they had—as I said, you couldn't leave the Chamber, there were so many of them, as I said.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I enjoy the—we enjoy the—having a chance to speak to the—to this issue. The members opposite, we know what they'll do. You know, we know what they've done in the past. They've laid off nurses; they've cut money to municipalities. We know that we're—teachers, of course—we're a good supporter of the municipal governments. We believe in amalgamations.

I'm surprised, I'm disappointed with members opposite when it comes to the issue of amalgamation. We know the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) supports amalgamation. We're pleased that he stands up and states so, Mr. Speaker.

One thing you believe about conservatism is their blind faith in the free-enterprise system, Mr. Speaker, to solve all problems. The rights of the individual over the collective, and their belief in smaller governments. This is what conservatives believe in. And what we're offering them by amalgamations, we're offering them less elected officials, we're offering them less administration and less regulation.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) made a very good point. He said the members opposite are lousy capitalists. They're also lousy conservatives—they are. They don't even believe in conservatism. Conservatives believe in smaller government, and we're offering them that. We're offering them less government, less elected officials, less regulation when it comes municipal government, and they reject it.

I'm disappointed that I don't have enough time to go on and on and on, Mr. Speaker, but I'm eager to let others engage themselves in this debate. Thank you so much.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): It's certainly a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to this resolution, and I certainly want to acknowledge the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) for bringing forward this resolution on provincial taxation and, certainly, broken promises.

You know, when it comes to broken promises, Mr. Speaker, we, on this side of the House, could have went almost anywhere in terms of broken promises. It's certainly one after the other when it comes to the current NDP government.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, it's a sign that a government has been in power too long when they—they have certainly have lost their way and they're willing to say almost anything at any given time, and it's certainly unfortunate.

And I think Manitoba taxpayers are certainly becoming wise to what the NDP are up to in terms of their announcements. And, Mr. Speaker, we certainly recognize the announcements that are coming out of the NDP day after day after day—a record number of announcements, and mostly reannouncements. And quite frankly, what they're doing, those announcements, they're using taxpayers' money. I think the NDP lose sight of that on a regular basis. They lose sight of the fact that they are using taxpayers' money to make those announcements. And clearly, I think, as we go forward, more and more Manitobans are recognizing what the NDP are up to in terms of making those announcements.

Clearly, they're focused on announcements within the city of Winnipeg. They're clearly trying to shore up their vote here in the city of Winnipeg, and there's no doubt about it. And I'm sure Manitobans are becoming more aware of that as they read the announcements and the barrage of announcements that come out each and every day.

Clearly, the member for Local Government—and I was curious to hear his words early this morning, talking about a previous piece of legislation. And I know, Mr. Speaker, he talked about Saskatchewan and he talked about Alberta. And clearly we are competitive with Saskatchewan and Alberta. At least, we should be competitive with Saskatchewan and Alberta, because those are the jurisdictions that are close to us and, quite frankly, that's where a lot of

our young people are going. They're finding opportunities west of us in both Saskatchewan and Alberta, so a lot of our young people are moving to Saskatchewan and to Alberta. And clearly a key component of that is because of the taxation here in Manitoba. Manitobans are becoming more and more aware of the tax burden that we face here in Manitoba.

* (11:10)

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I got an email from someone just outside of Brandon, one of my constituents, just the other day, and clearly he is recognizing the increase in taxes and the tax burden on him and his family. And he specifically made that comment that, you know, in view of those heavy tax burdens that he's facing, he is seriously looking at moving outside of Manitoba because of that tax burden. And it is quite shameful that our provincial government, the NDP government here, doesn't recognize the importance of their taxation programs and the importance that those tax regimes are having on everyday Manitobans.

And this is just a classic example of a fellow that actually—he admitted he'd had previously voted NDP in his previous history, Mr. Speaker, but he recognizes now the importance and what's happened with the NDP in terms of their tax policy on him and his family. He's decided that it's time for change. He's going to turn—change his vote in the next provincial election.

Certainly, on this side of the House, we're happy to see that. We're happy to see Manitobans wake up and see what's going on in terms of our tax policy here in Manitoba. And I think more and more Manitobans, as we move closer to the next election, will see that. They will see the—what the NDP is doing to them and what they're doing to their children. And it's certainly understanding, I think, that more Manitobans are coming to realize that, and they're waking up to the fact that there's other opportunities in other jurisdictions.

We look at the provincial sales tax, for instance—just the provincial sales tax, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, it is three points less than what we are going to have next week in Manitoba. Clearly, July 1st, we're going to be at 8 per cent whether—and clearly Manitobans aren't going to get a chance to vote on that increase in the provincial sales tax. The NDP are going to ram that increase in the provincial sales tax through this weekend, whether Manitobans get a say at it or not.

In fact, what's going to happen in committee next week when people come to speak to committee? You know, the legislation's going to be passed. They're going to be forced to pay the provincial sales tax already. They're not going to have a say. I mean, it's unbelievable that a government would take that kind of an approach. It's a sign of arrogance, I think, Mr. Speaker, that a government would come in, implement a legislation, tear up existing legislation—the taxpayer protection act—that's in place now which clearly says that Manitobans have a right to a vote on an increase in provincial sales tax. It's a fundamental right that we have.

The NDP have chosen to ignore the law as it exists today, Mr. Speaker, and, in fact, they have chose to ignore the law in so many different areas. In fact, I'll just remind the House this morning and for the members opposite that are here, the NDP government is currently in court this morning on another issue where they—[interjection] Yes, let me tell you about it, if I can. I have no idea how many lawyers—again, taxpayer-funded lawyers, I would assume—how many lawyers are going to be defending the NDP government this morning in court just across the street.

Here we are—we've got the NDP. I don't know how many lawsuits, in fact, are ongoing with the NDP government right now. I know there's just a few in regards to Assiniboia Downs and the activities that the NDP government have been involved in with Assiniboia Downs. There's court affidavits—and this is a good read for the NDP members opposite—if you go onto the court documents, pull up the court documents, have a look at the court documents.

Have a—and I'll tell you the relevance in this thing. The relevance is that we as taxpayers are funding the lawyers that are in court this morning because of that—obviously the government needs tax revenue from the provincial sales tax to fund the lawyers that are in court this morning. That's the reason they need the extra \$270 million is to fund all the legal bills they've got.

Now, we know two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker—the NDP were in court two weeks ago on allegations that, you know—very serious allegations there, and they had 12 lawyers in court to defend the NDP government and the three ministers that are named in those lawsuits—12 lawyers in one day. On one day they had 12 lawyers there. Clearly, they need more money—tax money from the Manitoba taxpayers—to defend them. The next day in court they had five

lawyers in there to try to defend the NDP's position. Well, clearly there's not enough money in the budget to fund all the lawyers they need there.

And talking about the budget, even with the extra \$200 million they're going to generate this year alone in six months, Mr. Speaker, they still are going to be \$500 million short of balancing the budget. Clearly there's some issues there about getting value for the money that taxpayers are spending.

Mr. Speaker, when we ask questions in the House day after day about different issues the NDP are pretty quick to stand up and say, yes, we can spend money. We've spent money on that issue—we've spent money on that issue. We know the NDP can spend money, that's no secret. Manitobans know the NDP can spend money. The question we have is what about the value for the money they're spending? What about the results? Manitobans are asking where are the results? Well, the results are we see the NDP government in court. They're in court all the time. They're trying to defend their positions and they have to defend it in court, it's unfortunate.

You know, we've got the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) named—and I don't know how many lawsuits he's named in, but he's certainly named in the lawsuits before the courts this morning. The Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) is named in the law 'cuits'—the law courts this morning, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, we got the minister in charge of lotteries, you know, he's name—he's also been—the corporation's been named in the lawsuit as well because they're tearing up contracts. They're tearing up contracts that already exist. That's how they treat Manitobans. That's how they treat third parties in Manitoba. That's how they treat non-profit organizations in Manitoba and it's an unfortunate way that they're doing business here in Manitoba. And more and more Manitobans are becoming aware of how the NDP govern and how they act behind closed doors and the bullying tactics they use to govern in this province of Manitoba, and it's very, very unfortunate how they're doing things here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I—I'm not sure where to go from here, but I'll tell you—I can tell you, I'm hearing from a lot of municipalities, too, that are being forced to amalgamate because this government is forcing them to amalgamate, and that's another sign of the way this government is doing business. And there's no reason that they need more taxes on the backs of Manitoba—hard-working Manitobans to fund their

spending habits. It's time the NDP government had a look in the mirror and took ways to fix their own spending problems.

Thank you.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to add some words to this bill. And I'd just like to say, the honourable member from Spruce Woods brought up the—I guess phrase, you can say, that the—our side of the party likes to spend. And I have to concur that, yes, we do like to spend, but spend in a responsible way for all and not just for some Manitobans, but for all Manitobans, not just for southwestern Manitoba, but for the north, for the south, for the east, for the west.

I'd also like to say, Mr. Speaker, that history will prove that this budget is a budget that is thinking 10 years ahead of time. It's a budget where the honourable members on this side of the House said that there was no flood. You know, let's not worry about flooding. Well, tell that to the people of Reston. Tell that to the people of Winnipegosis. *[interjection]* Yes, I have. *[interjection]* Yes. *[interjection]* No, I didn't, but I have been there. I almost taught there. I've also been to Le Pas and I was wondering if the honourable member has been to Le Pas—*[interjection]* But not recently? They're sandbagging—sandbagging—okay? And this—*[interjection]* Have you been there recently?

But the thing—the point I'm trying to get is that our government is thinking about the people of Manitoba, not reacting, but acting. And I think when you look—if you look to our fine neighbours to the west in Alberta, when you look to Alberta they're looking at Manitoba as looking into the future. They're looking to Manitoba and saying, why didn't we spend the \$300 million, where we are spending \$1 billion to ready ourselves for future floods.

* (11:20)

I have to say that when Manitobans come to realize that that 1 per cent is for the infrastructure, for flooding, for schools, for everything, I think they realize that was a good move; in fact, I've been around to my constituency and they said, well, you know what, we don't want to lay off teachers; we don't want to lay off nurses; we don't want to lay off social workers, like the honourable minister of the opposition has said a 1 per cent decrease would lead to—*[interjection]* We don't want to go back to the '90s, right.

So, it is responsible in that, you know what, we are here to employ people, not to lay off people, and I think what you'll find in the future is people will look back and say that it was the NDP, again, that led this province, through their leadership, through the Premier, into better times which will come with this budget.

Also want to say that with the 1 per cent that we're looking at, it's something that affects all Manitobans, okay, and it's something that will—it's something that will be—we'll all be thrown into the pot so that we all are better off. It's better to spend \$1 billion now than \$10 billion later.

And as you look to the west in Alberta, you can see that they're looking and saying, why didn't we act like Manitoba? Why didn't we have flood thing? Why didn't we? Why don't we have a sales tax? And now, honourable members, you have to agree that they probably will be moving to a sales tax because they're going to have some pretty big bills, and we should be looking to them with, I guess, a little more compassion and that, saying, you know, cut, cut, cut. No, they should be spending money on the people of Alberta like we're spending money on the people of Manitoba.

We also have to realize that Manitoba is a unique province, and with global warming coming, there's going to be different changes throughout the province, in the south, in the north, east and west. And what we're going to have to do is ready ourselves for things of changing even in the north, up at Churchill. Churchill could become an all-weather port which is—seems unreal, but then we're going to have to realize with that comes a responsibility for the environment up there, but not only that, the economic benefits with that that will come, too, the shipping of other products, maybe oil, maybe coal, maybe whatever from the other western provinces. So, there's unique things that are going to be happening in our province because of the global warming, not just the bad things that we're preparing for like in our flood preparation.

When you look at the alternative, and I think that's what the people of Manitoba are looking at, is no one likes to raise taxes; nobody does. Nobody does, but we stood up; we stood up and we looked Manitobans in the face, in the eye, and said, we're going to raise taxes. There is a flood, okay, there is a cost to this, and you know, we have to spend money to prepare Manitobans for more floods. So we've done that to Manitobans.

I resent the fact that the opposition members said that we lied. You know, when you're in government, you have to make tough choices, and I have to say on this side of the House, we made those choices. We made those choices and we'll stand up for those choices. I know they're preparing themselves for an election, but, you know what, Manitoba people need a responsible government. They need a government that will act now, okay, and we the NDP are that government.

We're not going to waste \$12 million on another election that's going to happen in two years. We're not going to ask Manitobans for something that we need right now, later on. We're going to act. We're going to act now. I mean, what can you do when you have disasters happening? You've got to be there right in the front trenches, and I have to say that our government has done a great job in being on the front line. I also have to say that we don't represent a small segment of the population when it comes to Manitoba. We represent all Manitobans, you know, and I'm proud of that.

I—[interjection] Yes, yes. And I have to say that when it comes to an MLA, and if you're speechless, you just have to look to this side of the government and see the good things that we're doing. We build Manitobans. I mean, now you're going to be going to the football game tonight—we built it. In the fall, you'll go to the hockey game—we built it—we built it. We're proud of that—we're proud of that. We enlarged—if you live in Winnipeg, we enlarged the Duff's Ditch—we did that, okay—we did that, and we're proud to do that. We've increased the outlets from Lake Manitoba to Lake Winnipeg—we did that, and I'm proud to say we did that. We stood up for Manitobans, whether on the lake shore, whether they're on the river shore, whether they're on—in the city of Winnipeg—we stood up. Did we make everybody happy? No, maybe just 90 per cent, but we're happy we did that.

And as we go on further in our government, you'll see tough decisions will be made. But we make it—we make these decisions with the Manitobans involved. We show leadership, we show that we are looking for the best of Manitoba. And I'm glad to be part of this government, I'm glad to be from the north, where a party recognizes the north and has been up to Le Pas and been up to Flin Flon and been up to Thompson, and Tadoule and Brochet and Lac Brochet. I'm glad to say that I've been to the places of the north—I've lived there. I'm not here reading travel booklets, wishing—wishing I was there.

I was there and I've been there, and I can see that we've got a lot of work to do. And there's things that I want to see changed, and I want to see the honourable members make—try and make a difference in the north, try and come up with some ideas.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that, to sum up, I'm a proud member of the NDP party, I'm a proud member of this government, proud member of the leadership that has been shown by our government. And when I look to other provinces, I think we're looking pretty darn good. I think when you rate us, when you look—rate us when it comes to livability in Canada, we're one of the top provinces. And I'm proud to say that I live in that province; I'm proud to say that affordability is one of the strong points of living right here in Manitoba.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And I think I've just heard it all—yes, anyway.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I mean, I can't help but make a few comments about the previous speaker when he talks about standing up for Manitoba. Well, we have an NDP government that stood up for Manitoba and lied to them in the last election. The 2011 election campaign, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and his colleagues all stood up and said, read my lips, no new taxes. And Manitobans voted for this group of individuals—this group of individuals that blatantly lied to Manitobans during the last election campaign. And for anyone to stand up and say that they're proud to be a part of a government that will lie and say anything just to get elected, is something, I think, that they should be ashamed of, not something that they should be proud of. I certainly wouldn't be proud if I was a part of that crew.

And you know what Manitobans are telling us—and they're telling us very strongly, Mr. Speaker—that they don't agree with the tactics of this government. We're seeing that more and more Manitobans are turned off with a party that doesn't tell the truth.

Mr. Speaker, people are cynical of politicians at the best of times, but when taxpayers' pockets have been picked like they have been in the last two budgets by this government, Manitobans should be enraged. And they're saying to us, enough is enough. We've had enough of a government that will tell us anything before an election and then do something different afterwards.

* (11:30)

And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the amount of money that has been taken out of hard-working taxpayers' pockets in the last two budgets, unprecedented tax grabs, tax hikes by this government and a debt load that is increasing on a regular basis year after year after year, Manitobans should be saying enough is enough. They should be trying—and they will be holding this government to account for the decisions that they have made.

Mr. Speaker, and is it—that not bad enough that they're taking money out of taxpayers' pockets, what are they doing with it? They're using that money to hire lawyers to represent government ministers that have broken the law. They are using that increase in the PST to give themselves a vote tax.

And the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick), who speaks from her seat, I hope she'll get up and speak on this resolution. But she's speaking from her seat when she's taking \$5,000 of taxpayers' money out of the increase in the PST and lining her own political party's pockets with that money. I say shame on her. When a family of four, who over the last two budgets will see a decrease—or an increase in the taxes that they pay of \$1,600 and she's taking \$5,000 to line her own political party's pockets, Mr. Speaker, I say shame on her. And shame on every member of the government side of the House.

We are not going to let Manitobans forget how they have had a government that says one thing before an election, lies blatantly, and after an election makes a complete about-face. Mr. Speaker, Manitobans will not tolerate it, should not have to tolerate it, and they're saying to us enough is enough.

I would hope that all members on the government side of the House stand up and speak to this resolution and apologize to Manitobans for the tax hikes, the unprecedented tax hikes, that they have imposed on hard-working Manitoba taxpayers. And will they stand up today and say—Mr. Speaker, it's not too late—that we will hold a referendum and give Manitobans a say before we raise the PST?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, while the members are out, like, measuring offices and bringing out their tapes and looking at the curtains and chortling about how they're the second coming of the—in the province of Manitoba, the reincarnation of Duff Roblin in Manitoba, I think they ought to look a few facts. And when it comes down to facts,

that is something the members opposite are so short of.

Now let's talk a little bit—just before I begin, they want to talk about tax and about lawyers. How many lawyers were used in the Monnin commission where Monnin said he had never seen so many liars in his life as the Conservative Party across the way? And there's members sitting there who were part of that party and members sitting there who could have had criminal charges taken against them, Mr. Speaker, except it was already so bad they dismantled.

And let's go next door to Saskatchewan where Allan Blakeney ran 10 balanced budgets, then Grant Devine promised all of these tax break just like members opposite who are measuring the curtains in the offices right now. Just like them, promised tax breaks, was elected, and where's the Conservative Party in Saskatchewan? There is none. They're all in jail. They went to jail, Mr. Speaker.

So before they go out and pretend they're the second coming, Mr. Speaker, they ought to look at a little bit of facts. They have one-trick pony.

They're now talking about a tax. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we raised a tax to build infrastructure, to prevent floods, to prevent harm.

You know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and a couple Tories, who would still—at one time pretended they were progressive, went to hear Obama speak. What did Obama say two days ago? He said, what's the United States going to do? It has to deal with climate change. How will it deal with climate change? It'll do it with renewable energies. They want to stop our renewable energy, Mr. Speaker. Obama said, we've got to improve health care because of climate change; they want to cut health care, they want to go to a US system. Obama said, we have to build infrastructure because the climate's changing; they deny that climate's changing. What kind of fools are we dealing with? What kind?

And they stand up and they talk about the rhetoric. Look around the world. Climate's changing all over the place. The sea level's rising, and they want to sit back in Manitoba, which, by the way, is the lowest—one of the lowest spots on the continent, Mr. Speaker, where two thirds of the water flows through this jurisdiction into Hudson Bay, and they want to not develop hydro, they don't want to develop flood proofing, they don't want to improve

health care. What planet are they living on? What planet?

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, when I went to the bioconference in Chicago, I met a fellow who was looking for people who wanted to go to Mars, because he wanted to—they wanted to send humans to Mars, because they felt that we were destroying the climate. I think members opposite ought to get on that spaceship, because they're not doing anything here and they won't do anything here to improve this jurisdiction. They may as well go to Mars. That's how far out their ideas are. That's how far out they are.

I cannot believe what I heard this morning. All I heard about was tax cuts. I heard about lies and I heard about lawyers. You know, Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about lies? Talk about the Monnin commission. Talk about the chief justice saying he'd never so many liars in his life from the Conservative Party. Talk about liars; we'll talk about that. Talk about criminal charges; we'll talk about that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the duplicity of members opposite in going around and rallying and think—*[interjection]* Well, they do have—you know, there is no question that nobody wants to raise taxes. Gosh knows, we lowered taxes, previous budgets, and members opposite voted against it. They voted against every single budget. Then they bring out the alternatives, and what do their alternatives say? Cut half a billion dollars from the budget. This year, cut and slash across the whole board.

Now, it was the 'fremier'—the former premier, who they now treat as St. Doer—you know, they used to attack Doer left and right. Now it's St. Doer, Mr. Speaker, to hear them talk.

I worked for Ed Schreyer. You should've heard the things they said about Ed Schreyer. You know what's the first thing they did after becoming government in 1977? They set up a royal commission to attack Ed Schreyer on hydro development. That's what they did. They set up a darn royal commission to attack him on hydro. And now it's St. Ed, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe them. And it's St. Doer. I don't believe them.

Mr. Speaker, the best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour. What was past behaviour? Connie Curran—Connie Curran. Lay off nurses, lay off doctors, cut schools, retrench, become this little—timid, little group that sits there and doesn't want to do anything and shakes and says, tax cuts,

tax cuts are the panacea for everything. They are so wrong, they are so off track.

Now, I know, they got a lift from the polls. They're out there—they're out there with their measuring tapes. You would not believe, Mr. Speaker, they're down in the hallway. They're fighting over office space. They are just—you know, they're right on that track. You know, they—you know, I don't know where—they're fighting, you know, if they can have the offices. You know, they can have them.

But you know what they can't have, Mr. Speaker? They can't provide hope to Manitobans. They can't provide dreams to Manitobans. They can't provide for the people that we want to work for every single day—that's Manitobans. That's the Manitobans that got the break yesterday that have jobs over the summer. That's the Manitobans that have the child tax benefit provided back to them. That's the Manitobans that are going to have flood protection in areas where the province—that are flooding right now, despite the fact that members opposite laughed in 2011 and said, why are you preparing for a flood? Why are you preparing for a flood? When there was a flood, they then said, well, you didn't do enough. Then they say this year, oh, you put together a capital plan for flooding; there's no flood. Well, while there's overland flooding this year—overland flooding this year—overland flooding this year—overland flooding this year, and you said we didn't have any flooding. They are so wrong.

And while we build infrastructure for—and infrastructure just is not any more roads. Infrastructure is the Internet. Infrastructure is schools. Infrastructure is education. Infrastructure is programs to people to lift them up, to let them be contributing members of society, Mr. Speaker.

Infrastructure is—*[interjection]* Oh, I made a mistake. Oh, I said oil comes from a mine. Oh, my gosh. Members opposite had so much fun with that. I should say it three or four more times.

* (11:40)

All I know is we're pumping more oil in Manitoba than any time in our history, 50,000 barrels a day, and when I predicted that two years ago, they laughed. They laughed two years ago when I said we would pump 50,000 barrels a day—*[interjection]* And the very members who are chirping now laughed, and we're 50,000 barrels a day and we're growing, Mr. Speaker. And we're developing the largest mine

in Manitoba history at Lalar Lake, three quarters of a billion dollar private-private-investment-and Vale's expanding-private investment.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you can shake all this talk and you can shake all this rhetoric, but you have to look to the actions. You have to look to the actions, and there's only two things that members opposite have done the entire session, (1) is deal with the tax issue, and (2) it's talk about the New West Partnership. You know, if they were government, they'd occupy all the offices. They'd put New West Partnership signs in all of the offices and maybe they'd cut the 1 per cent tax, but you know what? We wouldn't have the flood infrastructure. They would ignore it and we'd end up as my—as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen) said, we'd be ending up paying billions and billions of dollars in reclamation and billions and billions of dollars rebuilding the infrastructure and the communities that have been destroyed by floods that are going to come because the climate is changing.

And they can deny it. I've yet to hear a member opposite stand up and say they believe that climate change is real. But, you know, I've yet to hear those regressive conservatives, the tea party wannabes stand up and say, Mr. Speaker, that they believe in climate change. Because they don't, because if they did they would do what Obama has said to do, and that is to build infrastructure, that is to deal with floods and those natural disasters and that is deal with renewable energy.

Mr. Speaker, we have customers for our hydro. Alberta wants our hydro. Saskatchewan wants our hydro. Ontario wants our hydro. Minnesota wants our hydro. North Dakota wants our hydro. Wisconsin wants our hydro. They are all customers that want Manitoba hydro, and members opposite, they don't want to build it. Hydro will be our future benefit and they don't want to build it. They say, oh, hold off, hold off. Well, I'll tell you, if we hold off, in light of what Obama and United States are doing, in light of the demands in the oil fields of Alberta, the demands in Saskatchewan—Saskatchewan's spending as much on infrastructure almost as we are except to renew coal.

Mr. Speaker, you have a choice. You do nothing as members opposite would do. You renew your coal, your coal fire which, unfortunately, some jurisdictions are doing, or you develop hydro. It's not that complicated. We have a natural resource we're endowed with. We have a responsibility. We're a

hydro province. There aren't hydro provinces all over the country. We're one of the few. We have a chance to contribute to the national grid, to our fellow provinces, to clean energy and for 22,000 job-years of employment. That's what Manitobans want and need, not the rhetoric from the other side—

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

Any further debate on the resolution?

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a few comments on this PMR.

I come from the country and I did not come over here to see the same thing what happened over there. There is a saying in Punjabi, a mouse ran away from the cat, but the cat got him again. So I don't want to be in that situation. That's—every immigrant feels that way. Because this country, where services are being provided and those services are available. Those services are not available in those countries. Free medical care, those services, where do those services come from? You have to have them come from somewhere and you have to have tax.

I was reading other time in Scandinavian countries, they are the most taxed people, but they are the happiest people in the world. So that's the way—sure, we can look at the budget. We can balance the budget, but those services won't be available.

Other day, a person came to me. He said, how come you are increasing the PST to 8 per cent? I said, that will be only 1 cent per dollar. How much will it cost to you? I think, hardly \$10 per month. How much it will be per year? A hundred and twenty. And how much—look at the school tax, bring your bill and look it over there. You are getting a tax credit, about \$700. And then \$250, add \$120—even if you add that insurance tax, and still it will—you will be far ahead of the game. So that guy said, look at it. He said, let me pick up my property tax bill. He went inside, brought in the property tax bill, and it was [*inaudible*] I never even thought about that. So this way—I guess, it's important if you run—how to run the economy, you have to have money, and that's what happened.

When the recession started coming in the world, and especially European countries, and in Europe, at that time our government's vision at the start—and we started spending money so that it will have a ripple effect. Those businesses will flourish, and that way—that's why during the those recession years, it was

only Manitoba province had expanded its economy. Other economies shrank but Manitoba went ahead.

But compare back to the 1990s. At that time, I was working in government services. And the Leader of the Opposition was the Government Services minister, and then he brought in Filmon Friday. What that will have effect on the economy, because people will have less money, they will spend less money and other businesses will also suffer. They won't buy all those necessary things. And that way, the economy will shrink and it will shrink.

Now, sometimes you cannot control nature. If Mother Nature had brought a flood—and that's why we have to be ready for that. And to be ready for that, we need money.

Look at what happened in Calgary. Those people were not ready for the flood, flooding. What happened? So many houses have been damaged. But look at Winnipeg. Because we have infrastructure, that's why we did not have that loss. Sometimes people are—or sometimes we don't think in those terms. Think in those terms: If we don't have that infrastructure, what could have happened? It's not only those remote communities. This, I would reason, has saved Winnipeg and other big cities too.

So this way, we—it's not—sometimes we make budgets in the House, but something happens. We have to make those changes. That's why we have to make those changes over here too. We have to have tax otherwise we will cut all the services. As they say, what about—we can balance the budget. We won't pay money to the doctors, and ordinary people have to pay for it. If they have to pay for it, it will be far more cost as compared to 1 cent per dollar. So we have to think in those terms. I think ordinary people sometimes are being fooled by the Tories' propaganda. They always say about \$1,600 will cost per family. That will be the cost to the rich people, just like those people who have \$6-million house. But ordinary people, it will be very minimum.

So I think it's not that much hard to understand why we have to increase tax. We have no choice. We have no choice because otherwise the economy will go down, people will lose jobs, we'd have to lay off more than a thousand nurses, we have to—more than 2,500 nurses, we have to make them lay off teachers, and those services won't be available.

And what will happen to our infrastructure? What will happen on the roads? What will happen on the highways? Now look where they are, how much

work has been done on the highways, but that won't be done. You just leave it as it is, and let nature take care of it. That's their philosophy, survival of the fittest. But we believe in coexistence, and we—so there are—like the difference between reason. Reason is there, and inclusiveness. On the other side, there—the reason is not there. They're just for themselves. If you can survive, you can survive. If you die, you die. Who cares. That's what their philosophy is.

* (11:50)

I had—you know, another time, one of the members of the opposition went to Gurdwara. They were talking about Bill 18. And that's again a promise; equality is a promise. They were telling these—those people, listen, because of this way the bill is coming into effect, it will take away freedom of the religion. How it will take away? Because the guru—11th guru—sorry—ninth guru died for the other religion's sake. He was assassinated because he stood up; he wanted equality. Similarly, some—there is many other examples I can give. There's only one race, the human race still; however, if there's only one race, the human race, how you can leave some section of the people out and don't give them their right? Because our religion wants inclusiveness. That's why I think it's important to understand the different cultures, different religions.

And so, you know, the other day, when I brought that resolution and the opposition did not want to pass it, they just wanted to talk it out. Why? Because they don't understand the minorities. They must have to go and understand the minorities; then they won't mind 1 cent tax per dollar. Because if I spend \$2,000 out of the maybe \$100 or \$1,000 per month will be in the food, what it will be left? Only a thousand dollars. So, 1 cent per dollar will be \$10 per whole family. So we have to look at it: with a little pain, we get lots of gain. That's what will happen.

So, again, I think, unlike most other provinces, we don't have an HST, meaning that few essential items are taxed. We are—also remove the PST from items like baby supplies, items that opposition leader put the PST on in the 1990s.

When directly asked whether we would bring in an HST, the opposition leader refused to answer whether he would rule it out.

Our government has been very clear. We are not interested in HST because it would mean a \$400-million hit to families, as well as an addition \$400-million hit to the budget.

We have the second-lowest provincial taxes on fuel and every cent of fuel taxes goes back into roads, as granted by provincial law. We also don't have health-care premiums like some other provinces. BC has increased their health premiums for 15 years in a row. And by over 4 per cent in 20, 40–

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

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): You know, we've heard a lot of hyperbole this morning, so I'd like to put facts on the record.

Fact: Over the last 12 years, Manitobans have enjoyed \$1.4 billion in tax reductions. Fact: Budget 2013 is a balanced, responsible plan for the next 10 years and beyond. Fact: To keep our economy going, we need to keep building. This is our best defence against an uncertain global economy. Fact: Austerity budgets are failing. One may only look at south Europe–Greece, to be specific, Mr. Speaker, to see that austerity doesn't work, and this is from *The Economist*.

Fact: We are continuing to build our critical infrastructure, flood protection. There's a major flood going on right now, Mr. Speaker, and nobody is aware of this because of the expansion of the floodway. Fact: We're protecting families and our economy from uncertainty and repeated floods. Fact: We are facing these challenges head-on; the Leader of the Opposition has turned a blind eye. Fact: He still believes that the same failed PC policy of cuts to services is okay in Manitoba. Fact: The federal parliamentary budget office says that cuts by the federal government are expected to result in lower economic growth and fewer jobs. Fact: The Leader of the Opposition calls this tough love.

Fact: He says that Manitobans need to choose between flood protection and critical infrastructure and front-line services like health care and education. Fact: We don't believe Manitobans should have to have their backs up on the wall as to whether they should send their kids to school or protect their homes from flooding. Fact: The PC cuts to front-line services in the 1990s hurt families and they hurt the economy.

Fact: The PCs wrote a balanced budget act that left future governments with no other option than to cut services when faced with uncertainty. They tried to legislate cutbacks, Mr. Speaker. If we are to keep

this legislation, which we're not, when faced with the urgent need to invest in flood protection and critical infrastructure, the only option would have been for us to cut services that would hurt families and undermine the economic economy. Fact: This is something we are not going to do.

Some more facts, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition is very proud of his record. When he was the sole runner, the Leader of PC Party of Manitoba, he talked about the fact, his fact, that the Filmon government was the great government of Manitoba. In fact, he said, I think the Filmon government's record was admirable. I think historians will say this was one of the finest government's Manitoba has been blessed with.

So back to the future. So let's look at the facts of the governments of the 1990s. In the 1990s, health-care fact: Fired a thousand nurses and froze health capital spending. Education fact: Five years of cuts and freezes took 700 teachers out of the Manitoba classrooms and new schools like the one in Sage Creek certainly weren't under construction.

Fact: They froze funding to universities for five years in a row and increased tuition fees. Fact: They cut the bursary program by a hundred per cent. Fact, child care: Reduced child-care operating grants forcing parents to pay double what they were paying before. Fact: Cut benefits from single moms, clawing back their benefits by \$533 per month.

Fact, roads and bridges: When they had the choice to invest in highways and bridges they made the conscious decision to put the brakes on infrastructure spending for five years. Fact, water protection: Slashing regulations that promote—that protect drinking water quality, workplace safety and our lakes and rivers.

Fact of the Leader of the Opposition when he served as an MP in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker: He voted against the expansion of the Winnipeg floodway, and as Leader of the Progressive Conservatives of Manitoba, joked about flooding out the city of Winnipeg. Those are facts.

Fact: He wants deep cuts to schools, health care and services for families. Fact: The Leader of the Opposition wants American-style, two-tier health care in the province of Manitoba. This is where the wealthy can buy their way to the front of the line for tests and treatments. He calls it a system we need, Mr. Speaker.

Fact: As an MP in Ottawa he voted against same-sex marriage legislation, Mr. Speaker, and put equality rights at risk today. Fact: He and the PC caucus oppose the new antibullying laws that would protect all children from bullying, including gay students.

Now the Leader of the Opposition has more PC cuts he's proposing. Fact, Mr. Speaker: His response to the budget of 2013 was announcing \$287 million in cuts and he still has 265—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House—
[interjection] Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism will have three minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 27, 2013

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