

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 24, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 56—The Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), that Bill 56, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil, be now read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, The proposed amendments remove transsexual surgery as a mandatory step for transgender individuals to change their sex designation. The proposed amendments to The Vital Statistics Act address the needs of transgender individuals in Manitoba, harmonize with the identity management standards of other provincial and national identity management organizations and reflect the evolutionary nature of human rights.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

**Bill 62—The Consumer Protection
Amendment Act (Contracts for
Distance Communication Services)**

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I move, seconded by the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald), that Bill 62, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Contracts for Distance Communication Services); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats de services de communication à distance), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: This bill expands the application of the cellphone contract provisions in The Consumer Protection Act to other types of distance

communication services such as cable television, satellite television, satellite radio, phone service, Internet and home alarms.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments act on the concerns of Manitobans about misleading and unclear special offers for these services that can lead to hidden surprises on their bills when the promotional period is over. We believe Manitoba families have the right to clear, upfront information to understand the full cost of these services before they sign up, and this legislation will achieve just that.

Thank you.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

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

**Provincial Sales Tax Increase—
Effects on Manitoba Economy**

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Good afternoon. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) The Premier of Manitoba is on record of calling the idea of a hike in the PST ridiculous.

(2) Economists calculate that the PST hike has cost the average family \$437 more in taxes after only six months.

(3) Seventy-five per cent of small businesses in Manitoba agree that provincial taxes are discouraging them from growing their businesses.

(4) The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association estimates that a 1 per cent increase in the PST will result in a loss to the economy of \$42 million and threatens hundreds of jobs in that sector.

(5) Partly due to the PST, overall taxes on new investment in Manitoba recently stood at 26.3 per cent whereas in Alberta rate was 16.2 per cent and the Ontario rate was 17.9 per cent, according to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

(6) The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce are concerned that the PST hike will make an already uncompetitive tax frame rate even more attractive to job creators in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge provincial government to reverse—reverse the job-killing PST increase.

(2) To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to reject or approve any increases to the PST through a referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of K. Hennessey, E. Brennan, I. Mullan and many other fine Manitobans.

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

Beausejour District Hospital— Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by D. Mazur, S. Mazur, S. Martin and many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Effects on Manitoba Economy

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Premier of Manitoba is on record calling the idea of a hike in the PST ridiculous.

Economists calculate that the PST hike has cost the average family \$437 more in taxes after only six months.

Seventy-five per cent of small businesses in Manitoba agree that provincial taxes are discouraging them from growing their businesses.

The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association estimates that a 1 per cent increase in the PST will result in a loss to the economy of \$42 million and threaten hundreds of jobs in that sector.

Partly due to the PST, overall taxes on new investment in Manitoba recently stood at 26.3 per cent whereas the Alberta rate was 16.2 per cent and the Ontario rate was 17.9 per cent, according to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce are concerned that the PST hike will make an already uncompetitive tax framework even more unattractive to job creators in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the job-killing PST increase.

To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to reject or approve any increases to the PST through a referendum.

And this petition is signed by J.W. Pauls, B. Wiens, R. Wiens and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further introduction of petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): I rise today to table the Children and Youth Opportunities Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2014-15 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): I'm very proud to table the Manitoba Family Services Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, the 2014-2015 Expenditure Estimates.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): I'd like to table the Mineral Resources Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the year 2014 to 2015.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

*(13:40)

Introduction of Guests

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

I'd like to draw the attention to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Bishop Rueben Ngozo of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon. Accompanying the bishop is Reverend Richard Sauer of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Winnipeg and David Sauer, president of the Winnipeg Labour Council, all of whom are the guests of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan).

And also, in the public gallery we have with us this afternoon from Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre 18 adult education students under the direction of Ms. Lucille Miller. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister.

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

And also seated in the public gallery, from Landmark Collegiate we have 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Chelsea Hoffman. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable

Minister of Tourism, Culture, Sport and Consumer Protection.

Welcome, to our guests this afternoon as well.

And also in the public gallery, from John G. Stewart School we have four grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Jenn Rosen. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Jockey Club Cost of Lawsuit

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, as if we needed another example of why bullying costs, Mr. Speaker, we have it again with the results of this, made public yesterday, so-called negotiation between the Jockey Club and the government of Manitoba.

The previous Finance minister and his colleagues, in their attempt to intimidate the horse racing industry into submission, failed miserably. And that minister, in fact, was quoted as saying: I'll win. I'm a politician.

Well, no one wins through a kind of process that's as disrespectful as this one was. No one wins. The minister lost. His colleagues lost. Perhaps some lawyers were employed in the process, but the taxpayers of Manitoba lost. Five hundred people who depend on the horse racing industry were put into a fearful position. Their families were threatened by the actions of the government for a considerable period of time. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans were the losers for this.

I ask the government to respond, finally, with some openness and tell the people of Manitoba what the costs, in terms of the legal fees of this ridiculous and embarrassing process, were to Manitoba taxpayers.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): We are pleased to be able to conclude a negotiated settlement with the Jockey Club that will see the sustainability of the horse racing industry and will see that industry sustainable in a way that diminishes the public subsidy over time. This is a deal that will make sure that industry can be sustained. It also provides a bridge while they work with their new partners, Peguis, to ensure that that is sustained.

It's always regrettable when there has to be court proceedings, but government will defend itself when its decisions are challenged in court, as we did here. The cost of defending the government's decisions in this case is about \$160,000, the majority of that for in-house government lawyers.

Election Strategy

Mr. Pallister: That's a laughable response, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't the government that was put in a position to defend itself. It was the people at the Jockey Club and the entire horse racing industry that were put in a position of having to defend themselves against the unilateral, dictatorial approach the government took on this issue.

The government bullies the Jockey Club. They try to shut down horse racing. The Jockey Club, understandably, pushes back. The government then settles. The question is: Why would they settle? Perhaps bad PR for the government, Mr. Speaker. That's what many are speculating.

Lawsuits—lawsuits made necessary by the unprofessional, dictatorial approach that this government took when they could have simply been frank and straightforward at the table in the negotiation as Manitobans would have preferred them to do.

I've got to ask the government, and I'd like the Premier (Mr. Selinger) to respond to this honestly: Is this simply pre-election damage control by the government?

Ms. Howard: There are many, many inaccuracies in that question, as we have come to expect from the Leader of the Opposition, and I'm going to give him an opportunity to correct one of the inaccuracies that his party put on the record yesterday.

Yesterday they made a charge that inflation is the highest in the country since July. That has been demonstrated to be false, and I'm happy to table that information for the members opposite. In fact, since July 2013 Manitoba's inflation rate has increased by about 1 per cent, one of the lowest in the country and lower than the Canadian average. So I just want to be clear with the members opposite that it is important for them to be accurate when they bring information into this House and I want them to have that accurate information.

On the question that the member asked, we have always said that we wanted a sustainable horse racing industry. We want that sustainability to come

at a diminishing cost to the public. That is what this settlement achieves.

Legal Proceedings Government Response

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): And the minister can take up her case with StatsCan. I know they don't like Statistics Canada, but the Statistics Canada's report's clear: highest increase in inflation of any Canadian province since the PST was introduced.

You know, this is the thing with this government. They try to intimidate, and it just simply isn't working. We're not intimidated.

Manitobans aren't intimidated, but why should Manitobans be forced to go to court? Why should the AMM be forced to go to court to defend its interests against government bullying? Why should the Whiteshell Cottagers Association be forced to go to court? Is it the government that's on the defence? Hardly, it's Manitobans. Why should the Jockey Club have been forced to go to court? Why should farmers who were promised by a minister opposite that they would have multi-year compensation be forced to go to court? Why should First Nations have to go to court? Why?

Mr. Speaker, is it because this government is dictatorial in its approach and unprofessional? I ask the government to respond.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): I would ask that the member opposite at least do us the courtesy of looking at the information that's provided to him before he continues to repeat the inaccuracies that he's put on the record, but perhaps that is too much to ask, that he would take a second and look at actual information before he makes a response.

I do, though, want to say to the member opposite, we on this side of the House take the fight against bullying very seriously. And to hear him cheapen that fight in the way that he has just had and try to use it in a political discussion—which we can have a debate about the Jockey Club and what's transpired there.

But I want to be very clear. When it came time to stand with kids who are fighting against bullying, when it came time to stand for their rights to fight against bullying in their schools, we stood with them. The members opposite sat on their hands and abandoned them. There's no question in this House who stands against bullying.

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

**EIA Housing Allowance
Request to Implement Raise**

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Standing with Manitoba's children and their families, Mr. Speaker, is what we do by nature, not just as a public relations stunt.

Now, the benefits to the Jockey Club of the government's settlement are immediate and they are guaranteed. The benefits to the political party that negotiated the settlement, they'd hope are immediate, but they are certainly not guaranteed.

But there's another group in this province that waits for fair treatment and that's the group that is forced to live on social allowance. Now, we have been saying since the outset that the rental allowance increase to 75 per cent of median market rent, as espoused by a great number of Manitoba individuals and groups, should not be phased in. It should be done immediately. It should be raised now.

Now, this government has half a billion dollars of additional revenue each year in broken-promise tax and fee hikes. Promises don't feed Manitoba's hungry children.

I ask the government today to agree with our position and immediately increase the allowance for Manitoba's most vulnerable citizens. Do not defer and delay something that is necessary today.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I hope I didn't just hear the member opposite call those kids who came to committee last year to talk about the pain of bullying in their lives, to talk about the work that they are doing to combat it—we sat in that room and we heard stories of kids who had contemplated suicide because of pain of bullying. I hope I didn't just hear the member opposite claim that that was nothing more than a PR stunt. Because, of course, that's exactly what we heard one of their federal candidates claim Evan Wiens did in Steinbach when he stood up to bullies. That is the position of the members opposite. Their position is not to stand with all families and children. They've demonstrated that very clearly.

In this budget in this year families who are in need will see increased assistance so they can get better places to live. That is the budget that members opposite voted against. In this year we will see for the 14th time an increase to the minimum wage so

working families can get a better deal. That is a measure that the members opposite have never supported and will continue to not support.

* (13:50)

We continue to make progress for all Manitobans and we stand with all Manitobans, unlike the members opposite who claim that kids who stand against bullying are doing nothing more but engaging in PR.

Mr. Pallister: No, Mr. Speaker, I'm claiming that the 37—no, 36 NDP MLAs in this House are in a public relations campaign both with the settlement with the Jockey Club and in their mishandling of Bill 18.

I stand with—and we stand with the children and families in this province. And I've personally spoken to Evan Wiens and I supported Evan in his time of need, unlike many of these people opposite, and I'll continue to do that.

When it comes to Manitoba's most vulnerable citizens, this government had a choice and it made that choice. It said, you're vulnerable and you're going to stay vulnerable, and we're going to phase in our kindness to you, our support for you. It's going to happen later. Our vote tax to us, mind you, that'll happen now. When it comes to Manitoba's most vulnerable citizens, it's clear where this government lies. It's clear where its priorities are.

The need is now. It is not in four years. Children are in poverty now. They need the help now. NDP promises do not cut it.

I ask the government again, with all sincerity, I ask the government again to do the right thing and raise the rental allowance now, not in four years' time.

Ms. Howard: I'm glad the member opposite has taken the time to talk to Evan Wiens. I hope he learned something.

But I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, action matters. And it's nice that he talked to him. It would be even nicer—*[interjection]* I'm glad that he talked to him. It would be even nicer if he stood up for his right to sit with other kids in his class in his school and talk to them and form a gay-straight alliance. That is something they very clearly voted against.

In this budget EIA rates will increase. That is a budget that those members voted against. It's very clear where they stand on that. In this year the

minimum wage will go up. That will help working families.

And we will continue, as we did when we first came into office, to end the clawback of the National Child Benefit, a policy that members opposite put in place that took millions of dollars out of the hands of families who needed it.

First Nations Communities Manitoba Hydro Consultations

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): First Nations communities like NCN across the province have been strong-armed in working with NDP hydro-development-based and inflated promises and profits and prosperous futures. Wuskwatim is a perfect example of the NDP. What they promised to NCN was profits and losses of \$24 million this past year alone.

Will the minister commit to exercising due diligence and listen to NFAT before spending more on this unproven, unpredicted, \$30-billion project?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I wonder if the member from Lakeside would commit to help his leader tell the truth.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Mineral Resources, I know, is aware of the rules in the House with respect to making reference and the use of unparliamentary language in reference to a particular member of the Assembly. So I'm going to caution the honourable minister, please make sure that we keep our language parliamentary and that I'm asking the honourable minister to make sure that he adheres to that.

Mr. Struthers: Yesterday the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) quite incorrectly said that we have the highest hydro rate increases of any Canadian province last year. That is absolutely incorrect.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would care to stand in the House today and retract what he said yesterday and apologize for Manitobans, because, very clearly, SaskPower last year increased their rates by 5 per cent. Manitoba's rate increase was much lower than 5 per cent. In the coming years SaskPower is going to increase by 5 and a half per cent, 5 per cent and 5 per cent. Again, that's vastly—

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

Mr. Eichler: This minister's the one that had eight—three 8 per cent increases in the last year alone. He can't get it right, obviously.

The stakes are simply too high to not get it right. First Nation groups are incurring losses. Their share of Manitoba Hydro projects last year lost \$24 million on Wuskwatim alone.

This NDP government does not exercise caution. We've been asking for months for them to listen to the experts and let the NFAT do its job.

Will this government commit to respect the process and, before they go ahead with the \$30-billion projects, let the committee do its work, listen to the experts, listen to all those people that are—been asked to do their job, yes or no?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the lesson out of that question is that maybe the member for Lakeside should stand with his Leader of the Opposition and apologize together to the people of Manitoba because now they both have it wrong.

There was not a 23 per cent increase like the members opposite, including the official opposition leader, said. He's making it up. It was half of that.

And, Mr. Speaker, do they want us to do like they did in Ontario, which had a 42 per cent increase over the next number of years? Would they rather have us do what BC is doing in terms of a 9 per cent increase?

Our rate increases are kept low because we sell into the export markets, something the Leader of the Opposition says he won't do. That would put rates through the roof in Manitoba. The biggest threat to Manitoba families and their hydro rates is the person sitting right across the *[inaudible]* from us.

Mr. Eichler: Perhaps the minister should look in the mirror. Twenty-four million dollars in losses, that's not a small significant amount of money.

I ask the minister. On this side of the House we support reasoned hydro development, which is in the best interest of the real owners of Manitoba Hydro; that's Manitobans, not 36 members on the other side. They seem to think they're the only ones with the real answers.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to listen—it's time to listen—learn and educate about really is what going on with

Manitoba Hydro. Why won't this government do that?

Mr. Struthers: What an example of backpedalling, Mr. Speaker. That member opposite and his leader have said over and over in this House to put the brakes on the development. Put the brakes on, cancel hydro development, they said it over and over.

I will listen not to members opposite. I'll listen to First Nations leadership in TCN who said, and I quote: The Keeyask provides an opportunity for us to join the mainstream Manitoba economy to build a future of hope that will sustain and provide for all citizens of the Tataskweyak Cree Nation.

I'll believe a First Nation leader any time before the Leader of the Opposition.

Red River College Financial Management Concerns

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, this new Minister of Education stood in this House and proudly stated how he brought an arm of the government, COPSE, his buffer zone, into his department.

Now we find that our largest college is experiencing a \$2-million deficit and has lost 12 senior officials in the past three years.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask this new minister: What's going on?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Mr. Speaker, I don't have enough time to explain to the new critic what's going on, but our plan focuses on providing a quality education for our young people so that they can go on and get a good job and live right here in Manitoba.

Red River College offers students high-quality education and turns out high-quality graduates who go on and get the good jobs that we want.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we expect our colleges and our universities to operate in an open, transparent and accountable matter. The public thinks that; I quite agree, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: I guess it's just that bad if he doesn't have the time, Mr. Speaker.

*(14:00)

This is a minister who has no problem taking the credit, Mr. Speaker, but can't seem to take the criticism or doesn't want to be accountable when

there's blame to hold onto. I know \$2 million seems like a spit in the ocean to this minister, based on his mishandling of the new 5-and-a-half-million-dollar Manitoba student online program, which, again, is not working and it was supposed to launch in June 2011. But within Education, \$2 million could go a long way.

Again, Manitobans can't trust or they can't even afford this minister's inability to lead this very important department.

Mr. Allum: Well, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, it is—we do require our post-secondary institutions to be accountable. The public requires and wants us to make sure that they're operating in a responsible financial manner, and that's exactly what we're trying to do.

All organizations go through in-year reviews in order to ensure that they're on track for their budget and for year-end. That's precisely, in this case, what Red River College was doing last week when it talked about that. We expect them to be on budget, and we'll hold them to that standard.

Mr. Ewasko: It's as if we rehearsed this question-and-answer period.

Instead of taking responsibility and seeking solutions, this new minister has put all of the blame on Red River College board. Not only that, but he recently said, and I quote: We expect them to follow the letter of the law. We expect them to balance the budget.

Considering that he represents a government that raised the PST illegally and has failed to balance the budget, my question for the new minister is this: Given his new-found support for following the law and balancing budgets, does he intend to sit the Premier (Mr. Selinger) down for a remedial lesson on the law and balanced budgets, or is he speaking out of both sides of his mouth?

Mr. Allum: Well, Mr. Speaker, the only person speaking out of both sides of his mouth is the member opposite, who had a chance to vote for a budget that supported schools, that supported colleges, that supported universities, that makes sure that kids are positioned to get a quality education and go on and get a good job here and live in Manitoba.

The only hypocrisy in the Legislature today is the member opposite standing up and pretending he has a plan for Education. Well, the only plan they

have is to cut \$500 million from the budget, \$50 million from the Education budget.

The only threat to a quality education in this House is the Leader of the Opposition and his critic.

Mr. Speaker: I want to caution the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet and the honourable Minister of Education. You're coming very close to the line with respect to unparliamentary language and the choice of the words that you have both used. So I'm offering a caution here to both of you, and we can talk about this after question period if you wish.

But I just want to offer that caution right now, and to other members at this point. We have a lot of folks here, members of the public who are with us this afternoon. I'm sure we want to leave a good impression with all the folks that are visiting us and for folks that may be watching. And so I'm asking for your co-operation, both keep the level down and to make sure that our language is kept within the parliamentary bounds and rules that we have in place.

Now, the honourable member for Morris.

Cottage Fee Increases Park Services

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, last night I had the opportunity to attend the Whiteshell cottage association's AGM. There were an estimated 600-plus cottagers—or, as the NDP government likes to call them, freeloaders—in attendance. To say that these taxpayers disagreed with the 250 per cent to 750 per cent increases in their service fees and increase—and rents would be a bit of an understatement.

Mr. Speaker, this government enjoys their Lotto 6/49 fairy tale of cottage McMansions.

I'm curious, Mr. Speaker: If cottagers are failing to pay for their true assessed rental value, which is the rationale for these massive hikes, then why is this minister selling waterfront cottages on his website for \$1,500? Shouldn't they be going for hundreds of thousands?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we want more and more Manitobans to enjoy the great dream of cottaging in Manitoba.

But last night, I can tell you where I was, if everyone wants to get up and tell the House, I was at the Association of Manitoba Municipalities meeting,

an organization that has been pressing very hard for fairness when it comes to the fees that cottagers pay in our parks.

And perhaps that is because, just looking at the listings today, for example, we see that a cottage worth \$345,000 at West Hawk Lake is paying about \$800 in fees in the park. But down the road in the—Lac du Bonnet, a cottage that's actually smaller and assessed at less value is paying \$2,400. That's the kind of unfairness that the members of the opposition are trying to promote, and I say that's really unfortunate.

Mr. Martin: I appreciate the minister sharing his whereabouts, though his attendance and non-attendance at a particular function wasn't the issue.

As one cottager spoke last night, he does not have fire, medical, water or sewer services. He's as close to as off the grid as you can get here in this province. Yet at Falcon Lake he will be paying \$4,800, an increase of 650 per cent, or in NDP lingo, a 650-cent-on-the-dollar tax increase.

This minister speaks of equity. Where is the equity for this cottager?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the member fails to recognize that if anyone is concerned about the impact of the fee changes in parks, they can appeal the rent with a certified appraisal and we will accept at face value the new amount. Anyone who feels aggrieved by the increases can simply ask and make an arrangement with the department to pay all of that later if—when the cottage is sold. This has all been verified by an outside, independent audit.

I will just, perhaps, conclude that the members opposite corrected me, actually, and if the member wants to retract promoting some false statements in an opinion editorial recently, we'd welcome that. But a cottager in Riding Mountain, in Stephen Harper's park, is paying \$5,000. It's \$800 at Falcon Lake. But I just found out in committee, confirmed by members, there's only seven months of service in Riding Mountain now. No reduction.

Mr. Martin: It is—and it's \$4,800 at Falcon Lake.

The NDP have publicly stated that these changes are about cost recovery. Yet his departmental staff have publicly advised that monies would go, quote, into the government coffers and that parks would, quote, get some of that money back to run the parks. The MLA for Flin Flon has also made the

observation that a portion of cottage revenues will also be going into non-park services.

Why is this minister forcing people like the Cooplands, 78 years old and retired, to not only pay for park services they don't receive but other NDP-funded projects? Why do they have to pay their bills in protest?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, there's been a freeze in park cottage fees for the last 10 years and the changes are going to be introduced over the next 10 years. That's 20 years. Meanwhile, the value of these park cottages has very significantly increased. These are sought-after properties.

But, you know, last week in Supply the Conservatives were advocating for a particular Falcon Lake cottager, and it appears from our analysis that that vacation home could be worth, oh, about half a million dollars. But they were concerned that the fees for that vacation home may after 10 years approximate what is currently being charged in Riding Mountain park.

But that's who the Conservatives are standing with rather than the Manitoba taxpayers who are paying not only toward their own home but towards someone vacation home in a park, Mr. Speaker. That's not fairness.

Business Licences for Organized Crime Legislation Enforcement

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Last week, I asked the Minister of Justice why legislation that would remove driver's licence and taxpayer support from those with outstanding warrants had an enforcement rate of 0.00006 per cent.

Yesterday in Estimates, I asked the minister how often legislation announced by this minister in 2009 that would allow the Province to revoke or not issue licences to businesses serving as fronts for gangs had been used. In 2009, they said this was a key platform in getting rid of gangs. The minister said that in five years, it had never been used, an enforcement rate of 0.0000 per cent.

Why is this minister unable to actually use laws that he passes?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Let me correct the member on his first point. I suppose it depends how you look at it. If the member's goal is to cut people off of social assistance, well, the law didn't do that because that wasn't the intention. If the goal was to have people

on social assistance deal with their warrants and take responsibility for those warrants, it's been 99.997 per cent successful.

* (14:10)

But with respect to the fight against organized crime, it is a fact that there is no province which has taken on organized crime more completely and more effectively than the province of Manitoba.

And I was quite pleased to tell the member yesterday in Supply how successful The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act has been. The same act, the member stood next to his former leader, Hugh McFadyen, and they said, this law will never do anything to take on organized crime. He's 7 million times wrong, because that's the money we've taken away from organized crime, hitting criminals in the wallet where it hurts and stopping their illegal—

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

Taman Report Recommendations Staffing for Investigation Unit

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Well, in fact, there's been two cases. I think NDP math has hit a new absurdity today.

Mr. Speaker, in April of 2009 the former minister of Justice, the now-member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), demanded that we as an opposition quickly pass The Police Services Act so they could start hiring investigators for a new independent investigation unit. He said it was critically important coming out of the Taman report.

That was five years ago. Yesterday the Minister of Justice indicated that not one investigator had yet been hired to staff that unit. That's a staffing rate of 0.0000 per cent.

If it was so critical five years ago, why has nothing happened to hire investigators in that unit?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, certainly, it's interesting to have the member talk about the implementation of The Police Services Act. As members should know, it's been a law that was 80 years old that has been replaced and is now being brought into force.

We know that it was very important coming out of the Taman Inquiry that we have independent police boards sitting in every community where there is a municipal police force. Unfortunately, the member for Steinbach and his colleagues introduced

an amendment to suggest that those police boards should be optional. Well, they were already optional and, unfortunately, no communities took advantage of having that independent oversight.

I'd like the member for Steinbach to tell this House why he opposed that important step in The Police Services Act in continuing to build the confidence of Manitobans in their police services across this province.

NDP Management Government Record

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): He's getting good at asking questions and I want him to keep practising.

We've seen today that the horses ran roughshod through the NDP Cabinet and, unfortunately, it cost millions of dollars for taxpayers. We've seen millions of dollars go to an education program, an online site, that's never been started up. Hundreds of cottage owners had to come to protest at a meeting, and this government didn't even have the respect to send a representative. Justice bills have sat there for five years as they've gathered dust on this minister's desk.

We've shown that they're bullies, they're bunglers and they're Beauchesners, and that's all they're ever going to be. Why don't you admit that?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, so good of the member for Steinbach to raise the level of debate in this House.

Let's talk a little bit about the opposition approach to public safety. Back in the '90s, they, with great fanfare, said, we're going to institute a gang hotline. And what did that gang hotline do, as the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) knew well? Well, it wasn't hot. It was barely a line.

The crowning achievement of the opposition on public safety was to have an answering machine somewhere in some government building. People would call in with concerns about the increase in gang activity as the Progressive Conservatives did nothing. It would take days, sometimes even weeks for anybody to even acknowledge the person had made the call.

That was the complete lack of attention that resulted in the Hells Angels coming to Manitoba, organized crime coming to Manitoba. And in Manitoba now we are taking every step to—

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

Paramedic Patient Transfers ER Wait Time Fines

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): In Manitoba, not only are Manitobans who are sick experiencing lengthy emergency room waits, but paramedics are far too often left waiting to transfer the patients in their care.

In April 2011 the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service began billing hospitals—fining hospitals for NDP mismanagement and lengthy delays in transferring their ambulance patients. On average, paramedics have been waiting more than 70 minutes a patient, costing taxpayers \$117 an hour in fines. Since 2012 the annual amount of fines was roughly \$1.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier (Mr. Selinger) assure Manitobans that their public, hard-earned tax dollars are not being used to pay the fines levied for bad NDP management?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): We've put a number of things in place to try to make our ERs flow more quickly. We know that there's not one silver bullet that's going to do that, but one of the things we're doing is promising everyone a family doctor by 2015.

We know that sometimes there are people coming to the emergency room who might be better served at a QuickCare clinic or an access centre, by making sure they have a family doctor that can follow that chronic condition and keep them out of the emergency room. So we're trying to provide options for people closer to home.

But at the same time, it's very important that when we have an urgent need that a person needs to be in emergency room, that we're funding emergency rooms, that we've been hiring more doctors and hiring more nurses to make sure that when people need that kind of urgent care we've got the support in place to do that.

Mr. Gerrard: The continual payment of fines for bad management instead of improving the management shows that this NDP government doesn't know how to manage health care properly.

In 2013 paramedics waited in emergency rooms to transfer patients an average of almost six hours a day. Since implementing the fine program, this government has made little progress in remedying

the root cause, reducing ER wait times and ambulatory transfer times.

When will this government actually reduce wait times and ensure proper transfer times, ensuring the proper functioning of emergency room services instead of using public taxpayer dollars to pay their fines?

Ms. Selby: We know about 50,000 Winnipeggers go into our emergency rooms every year and 75 to 80 per cent of those people go through the emergency room are dropped off by a—I'm sorry, I've—I will rephrase that—50,000 arrive in our emergency rooms by ambulance and 75 to 80 per cent of those people are transferred into the paramedic service, into the ER staff within the target time.

We know that Winnipeg has some of the best response times in North America. If someone in Winnipeg calls 911, they can count on seeing a paramedic there. They can count on seeing possibly a fire truck with a trained paramedic on it as well. We have a number of people in place for those kind of emergencies.

But I think it's really important to also note, Mr. Speaker, as much as we want to keep moving people through the ER and making sure that they get the help they need—they need, we do want to make sure that ambulances are off-loading people within our target time. That money is redirected into EMS.

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

Mr. Gerrard: It is astonishing that after 14 years of poor management, public tax dollars continue to be spent on punitive fines instead of on good health care.

Surely, Manitobans would be far better served by an effective plan to manage ER wait times. Instead, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and his government consider the payment of fines a suitable solution for making Manitobans wait in the emergency room and delaying ambulances from attending to emergency situations.

I ask: Why does the Premier and the government think it is acceptable to make Manitobans use public taxpayer dollars to pay their fines resulting from NDP mismanagement of the emergency rooms?

Ms. Selby: We have triage nurses in our emergency rooms who are trained to make sure that the person who has the most serious need gets seen first. That

person may come by ambulance, but that person may come by any other means as well.

We know that about 50,000 Winnipeggers arrive by ambulance in our ERs every year and 75 to 80 per cent are seen and moved into the ER within our target time. We want to do better, Mr. Speaker, absolutely.

But I think it's very important to recognize that we have ambulances, that we have fire paramedics, and that if people in Winnipeg call 911, they can be assured that someone's coming for them.

Sign Up For Life Website Organ and Tissue Donation

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Yesterday, I was at a great initiative with the Minister of Health where we got to hear two incredibly inspiring speakers. I think we both had a hard time keeping the tears out of our eyes, to be honest. They were amazing. It was an organ donation event, and we know organ donors save lives.

Can the Minister of Health update the House on the efforts our government is undertaking with Transplant Manitoba to make it easier for people to make their organ donation wishes known?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): Indeed, we were joined by some very inspiring people, a heart recipient and a kidney donor both there to speak about why this gift is so important.

* (14:20)

Manitobans are known for their generosity and their kindness, and almost 10,000 people have already signed up for life to donate one of their organs. It's a very simple thing to do. It only takes a few minutes. I would urge everyone in this House and across Manitoba to take the time to sign up but to also speak to your family about your wishes.

We know, unfortunately, right now in Manitoba people are six times more likely to need an organ than to donate an organ. It doesn't take a lot of time and you can be a hero. You can change someone's life. You can save someone's life by signing up for life. I've done it. It only takes a few minutes. Join the 10,000 heroes across Manitoba.

AMR Planning & Consulting Contract Metis and First Nations Consultations

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): The minister of Finance—or Family Services recently awarded a

contract to AMR Planning & Consulting for \$350,000 without tendering.

Why was a proper tendering process ignored?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, when we received the 62 recommendations from Commissioner Hughes, the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry, we needed to take action quickly. We needed to address the 31 recommendations that were not being implemented at the time and review them, to work with our stakeholders, to have a conversation across the province and to evaluate how do we move forward, how do we work with all of our partners and strengthen the child-welfare system to support all of Manitobans' children.

Mr. Briese: The minister sat on the report of the Sinclair-Phoenix Sinclair report for over two months. They could have been tendering in that process.

She also goes on to talk about consulting with the stakeholders, and they bypassed the tendering rules and then they also failed to consult with the Metis and First Nation leaders before they awarded that contract.

Why did the Minister of Family Services fail to consult with the leadership council under The Child and Family Services Amendment Act?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As we went through the Hughes inquiry, there was opportunity for people to have standing and to share their advice, their recommendations for as we move forward. Commissioner Hughes listened to that advice and he incorporated it into many of his recommendations.

Following the tabling of the Hughes inquiry, I outreached to many of the community stakeholders, to the leadership council. I continue to welcome for their support, their information. My door is open. I welcome them at any time.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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

Bill Merritt

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Today I rise to pay tribute to the life of an incredible Manitoban, musician and dear friend to many, Bill Merritt.

Last month Bill passed away after a long and brave battle with cancer. Bill's family and friends

join us in the gallery today: his wife Luci, his children, Lisa and Billy Jr., his grandchildren, siblings and many loved ones.

One of Bill's greatest passions in life was his music. He was a gifted bassist, vocalist and songwriter, leaving behind a timeless catalogue of music. For those who had the pleasure of hearing Bill play, his keen sense of rhythm and harmony was undeniable. He was a brilliant player and he developed his own unique style by choosing to play his bass with a pick. Bill played the way he lived: pure.

Bill recorded or played with many local musical legends, including Be Bop Beluga, Mood Jga Jga, Fabulous George and the Zodiacs, Rocki Rolletti and Prairie Dog to name just a few. Each record he made, performance he gave and lyric he wrote has left a lasting mark on Manitoba's music scene.

In addition to his own musical endeavors, Bill was devoted to building a vibrant music scene in Manitoba. For 17 years he worked as business manager of the Winnipeg Folk Festival, pouring his heart and soul into creating one of North America's most renowned musical events.

Bill's artistry extended far beyond his music. He was a passionate humanitarian, co-founding Winnipeg's International Children's Festival in 1983. His leadership brought this magical event to life, giving Manitoba youth a chance to explore their own imagination and love for the arts.

Mr. Speaker, Bill was one of a kind and had many friends who loved and admired him. It was because Bill was real, he had a big heart and always put life into perspective. Bill was a rock for his family and I know they miss him dearly.

Today we celebrate a life well lived and the incredible legacy Bill leaves behind. Bill's passion, strength and love for his family live on in our memory, and his gifts of music and friendship will never be forgotten.

Manitoba Curling Club Championships

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, from April 4th to 6th, the best teams from curling clubs all over Manitoba played in the 2014 Dominion Curling Club provincial championships held at the East St. Paul Curling Club in East St. Paul.

Twelve teams on the men's side and 12 teams on the women's side from clubs in Winnipeg and from

the Central, Eastman, Interlake, Parkland, and Westman areas played for the chance to be named the best teams in the province. While the Dominion may not be the Scotties or the Brier, this is truly a championship for some of the best club curlers in Manitoba.

And, Mr. Speaker, on the men's side, curling out of the Pembina Curling Club was our very own Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms Ray Gislason, joined by teammates Mark Lowdon, Ryan Lowdon and Terry Lowdon. The team played to a 3-2 record in the round robin, forcing a tiebreaker, with wins over rinks from Dauphin, Boissevain and Carman. The team forced a tiebreaker to advance to the playoff, where they were unfortunately defeated.

Manitoba's curlers are among the best in the country, and the sport is experiencing a rebirth with strong showings from Manitoba teams on the national and international stage. These 24 teams and all the teams in this province truly are the best parts of the game, showcasing their dedication, their experience and their love of the game. The curling clubs of this province are full of great volunteers and great curlers who help to keep that sport alive, and it takes dedicated people from all over Manitoba to keep our curlers among the best in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ray and his team for a great showing, and, of course, Team Kerry Fedorchuk, with third Vince Van Dorp, second Bob Fryza and lead Ian Grieve; and Team Tracy Andries, with third Crystal Kennedy, second Diane Christensen and lead April Klassen, on their capturing of the 2014 Manitoba provincial Dominion championship.

Good luck at the nationals, which will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, this coming November 24th to 29th, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, curling is a fun sport to watch and an even better sport to play, and it was truly a great season for all of Manitoba's curlers. Until next season, thank you.

Assiniboia Community Appreciation Night

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, Assiniboia is a community that thrives on a tradition of volunteerism and service. We have a fantastic network of volunteers who with admirable generosity contribute their time to projects they are passionate about. These individuals do not ask for recognition of their service, but on April 21st it was my pleasure to spend an evening celebrating their

dedication at the 14th Annual Assiniboia Community Appreciation Night.

This long-standing community tradition is an opportunity to publicly recognize and thank our community volunteers. They devote so much of their time and energy towards helping others, and this event is just one small token of appreciation they deserve. This year, over 85 volunteers, guests and myself celebrated at the Canad Inns Polo Park. Everyone received a gift to honour their work.

The volunteers we recognized have spent countless hours and even years contributing their talents to our community. They come from a diverse collection of organizations, including the Heritage Victoria Community Club, CARP, Military Family Resource Centre, the 55+ Centre Fit and Flex, as well as numerous schools, service clubs and sports organizations. Each volunteer has their own unique skill set that enriches the organizations that they serve.

I would like to extend a big thank you to the businesses and community members whose support generously allows us to continue to make this event so special. Most of us—most of all, I would like to thank the volunteers themselves. Your work touches so many lives and continues to make Assiniboia, the province, the world, a better place to live. Saying thank you and throwing a party is the least I can do to express my gratitude for everything you do.

Mr. Speaker, to close, I would ask leave to include all the members' names and the organizations that they serve to be placed in Hansard. Do I have the leave?

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Assiniboia have leave to include the names in today's Hansard? *[Agreed]*

1st Kirkfield Scout Group: John Thiessen, Kris Weggert; 55 + Fit and Flex: Evelyn Safnuk, Margaret Yuill; Assiniboia West Recreation Assoc. Inc.: Mark Dobres, Dan Henrickson, Myrna Little, Shauna Sutherland; Assiniboine Memorial Curling Club: Bruce Wilkinson; Buchanan School: Lil Atamanchuk, Tracey Broughton, Claudette Lawrence; CARP: Mabel Boehmer, Ann-Marie Howe, Claire Lacroix, Emily Williamson; CAVUNP: Murdoch Jardine, Linda Jardine; Elderobics: Colleen Gunn, Kathy Thompson; First Kirkfield Ventures: Chris Parsons, Scott Rebalin; Gold Wings—Winnipeg Airport: Peter Czayka,

Mervyn McGregor; Golden West Centennial Lodge: Judy Balabas, Denise Doty, Wilma Wiebe; Heritage Lodge: Bill Gibson, Chris Knowles, Cecile Wagner; Heritage Victoria Community Centre: Tara Davidson, Sharon Groombridge, Sharon Larouche, Lynda MacCausland, Glynis Zubec; John Taylor Collegiate: Monique Johnson, Wendy Scherger; Kiwanis-Assiniboia: Caroll Dalke, Harvey Dalke; Lions Estates: Darlene Brooks, Linda Parnell Bonnie; Manitoba School for the Deaf: Shane Boyce, Brandon Boyce; Manitoba Womens Junior Hockey League: Linda Benson, Kirk Koppers, Sonia Koppers; Mensheds: Doug Breadie; Metropolitan Kiwanis Centre: Hilda Bales, Eleanor Schroeder; Military Family Resource Centre: Amanda Rents; Ness Middle School: Tina Macleod; Oakview Place: Jo Cork, Annette Kohut; Over 55 & Retired Club-ANAF #283: Joan Glover, Norma Lavallee; Prairie Dog Central: Andrew Nelson; Rotary Club of Assiniboia: Kathy Lanthier, Lorna Law; Royal Canadian Legion #4: James F. Simm; Salvation Army Heritage Park Temple: Bill Matthews; St. James Assiniboia 55+ Centre: Jan Bissett, Gail Fear, Ruth Henry, Peter Henry; St. James Rods Football Club: Mary Little, Paul McKie, Jim McMillan, Laura Shea; Winnipeg Military Family Resource: Nathalie Dufour, Karen Hansen, Michele Lemieux, Eldren Thuen; YMCA/YWCA-West Winnipeg: Erin Brudett, Laura Friesen; Lloyd Finlay, Dallas Molloy

Frederickson Performance Centre (AED)

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, late last year, Brian Fowler went to Frederickson Performance Centre in Brandon for his regular workout with athletic therapist Elise Delorme. Little did he know the drama that would quickly unfold that day.

During the workout, Elise noticed Mr. Fowler take a misstep, look blankly at her and then collapse. Elise's emergency training immediately kicked in as she directed Jim Ferguson to get help. Al Luhowy and Elise started CPR while Jill Frederickson called 911.

Co-owners Jim and Jill Frederickson had invested in an automated external defibrillator, or AED, two or three years ago at a cost of about \$3,000 and ensured that all of their staff were trained in its use.

Elise and Al attached the AED's electrodes to Brian's chest and followed the instructions, which advised a shock. They pressed the button, delivered

the shock and then continued CPR. The AED advised another shock, and then continued CPR and then turned Brian over to the firefighter-paramedics for continued treatment. The firefighter-paramedics administered CPR and three more shocks from their own AED along with cardiac drugs before transporting Brian to the hospital in Brandon.

Firefighter-paramedic Rob Brown praised the efforts of Elise and Al. He said if it wasn't for them, the outcome could have been totally different. Brian Fowler remembers waking up in the hospital and then being flown to Winnipeg and being taken to St. Boniface General Hospital. He had experienced a cardiac arrest and now has a small defibrillator implanted in his chest. The Fowler Hyundai owner is now back to work and, not surprisingly, is a big fan of AEDs and has ordered and installed one of them for the car dealership.

Mr. Speaker, Brian Fowler calls Elise Delorme his little angel and recently said, I was in the right place at the right time with the right people and the right equipment. The quick reaction of the gym staff and the on-site defibrillator was crucial to Brian's survival. Jill Frederickson thinks every business should have an AED. She said, I think every single business should have one. You're dealing with the general public. You don't know who's going to come through those doors.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Elise Delorme, Al Luhowy, and Jill and Jim Frederickson for their foresight and their quick response to an emergency situation. I also wish Brian Fowler well in his recovery.

Punjab Cultural Centre

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's strength is in its diversity. We are a meeting place for people of all walks of life and, in the spirit of friendship, we share our traditions, our ideas and our values.

I am very pleased that we will soon officially open a new institution in north Winnipeg that celebrates a growing and vibrant culture in Manitoba: the Punjab Cultural Centre. This centre will serve the needs of the Punjabi communities in Winnipeg. It will act as a gathering place for celebrations and provide the community with opportunities to celebrate their language and culture.

The centre was the result of a tremendous partnership between our government, the federal government, the City of Winnipeg and the

community. It features a gym and playing fields, a large banquet hall, a seniors' centre, a daycare and classrooms for adult education. With such a wide array of services under one roof, the centre will bring the—Manitoba's Punjab community closer together.

On April 13th, I attended the Vaisakhi celebration with my colleagues, including the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha) and the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe). This was one of the first large events held at the new centre. More than 1,500 people joined the celebration. It was a brilliant example of Punjab culture with a vibrant array of colourful clothing, delicious food, lively entertainment and many, many families with interesting stories to share.

The event was an important reminder of the role the Punjab Cultural Centre will play. There was such a strong sense of community as people from all ages from all parts of Manitoba joined together to mark this joyous occasion.

I want to thank the Manitoba Sikh Cultural and Seniors Centre and the Punjab Foundation of Manitoba for having the vision and determination to make this project a reality. The Punjab Cultural Centre was the result of a community joining together and embarking on an incredible journey. I'm so happy that your dreams have finally become a reality.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Could you please call second reading of Bill 51 and then debate on second reading of Bill 3, Bill 10, Bill 18, Bill 33 and Bill 37.

Mr. Speaker: We'll call bills in the following order: second reading debate on Bill 51, followed by debate on second readings of bills 3, 10, 18, 33 and 37.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 51—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Starting with second readings of bills and calling Bill 51, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Housing and Community Development (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 51, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: This bill will amend The Legislative Assembly Act to extend mailing privileges for members of the Assembly in accordance with the recommendations made by the special commissioner, Michael Werier. This bill will provide that, subject to certain conditions, members of this Legislature will be allowed to have addressed and unaddressed letters to our constituents delivered by delivery companies or as inserts to local newspapers.

Mr. Speaker, we know that communication with our constituents is essential to the work of any member of the Legislative Assembly. Although MLAs have more tools than ever to reach out to those people they represent, it is still the case that one of the most important of these continues to be our ability to ensure information is delivered to our constituents' homes. The passage of this bill will make it easier to ensure that vital information is delivered to our constituents in a timely manner.

I acknowledge this matter has been around for some time, and I appreciate other MLAs for their input and their advice. I think we can all agree that it was the right thing to refer this matter to the commissioner, Michael Werier, who has served the Province very well and gives good advice. And I think we have arrived at an agreement on the conclusions of Commissioner Werier, and I do thank him for his advice.

It is certainly time to move on with this. There have been frustrations with Canada Post for some time, Mr. Speaker, and one of the biggest frustrations as an urban member is the refusal by Canada Post to guarantee delivery of MLAs' mailings within constituency boundaries. I know a lot of work has been done by the government caucus, I presume by the opposition caucus as well and the independent members, to try to resolve this and, unfortunately, it was not possible to work that out.

We didn't know at the time we referred this matter to Commissioner Werier that Canada Post, despite having operated profitably for 16 consecutive

years, would decide that a huge increase in postal rates was an appropriate thing to foist upon Canadians. We also didn't know at the time we referred this matter to Commissioner Werier that Canada Post would, again, despite 16 consecutive years of profitability and their supposed mandate for public service as a Crown corporation, would announce the end of home delivery altogether, indeed, becoming the only western country to do so, and it's been frustrating. I know that home delivery is being phased out in a number of areas, perhaps coincidentally in those areas which seem to be represented by opposition MPs, but that's another story.

We're not debating that today, although I do point out the opposition refused to pass the private members' resolution put forward by the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran). I can't believe they would support the decision of the federal Conservative government and Canada Post, but they'll have to answer to Manitobans as to why they're not standing up for Manitobans and instead are listening to their federal Conservative line. But we're not debating that today.

We're debating better ways for us to get information into the hands of our constituents. It will be, I suppose, even easier to show that can be done in a more cost-effective way to the taxpayers of Manitoba with the tremendous increases that Canada Post is now putting on Canadians for less service.

So I certainly look forward to moving this matter along to a committee and having this in effect as soon as possible.

* (14:40)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I, first of all, want to make sure that all members are aware and the public aware that this was a Liberal initiative. The first version of this bill was introduced Tuesday, June the 12th of 2012, and it was introduced then because it was quite clear that it was going to be important not only to deliver newsletters effectively, but to have them cost effectively, and the resulting delay in having this happen has meant several hundred thousand dollars extra costs to the government.

It's too bad that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) is looking at other matters, but the fact of the matter is that when you have an initiative which eventually comes out of LAMC as an all-party initiative which finally was agreed to after

considerable pushing over the last two years by the Liberal Party, that this Minister of Justice chooses to make it a partisan speech attacking other members. Now, I think that instead of trying to talk about one of the few occasions when we can work together to actually get something done that benefits taxpayers as well as makes it more convenient for members in terms of making sure that our newsletters and our communications get out well.

And so I would add, and I think the MLA for Steinbach would remember because he's been involved in some of these discussions, that not only was the initial bill rejected by the NDP, but numerous times that I raised this in the Legislative Assembly management committee, the NDP—*[interjection]* Yes, numerous times that I have raised it on other occasions it has been delayed and delayed and, finally, I'm very pleased that we have this here. There was an agreement, actually, that there would be a joint effort in putting this forward, but, of course, in the final analysis the Minister of Justice chose not to consult in the final development of the bill and to bring it forward as if it was a government initiative, not a joint initiative from all members of the House.

And I want to thank Mr. Werier for the time and effort he put in to have a look at the subject and come to a recommendation because Mr. Werier's work and recommendation was very helpful in moving this forward. Indeed, the step to get it to Mr. Werier came out of an agreement from last year after we spent months and months in the Legislature, and one of the provisos of that final agreement was that this bill would indeed be—go to Mr. Werier and so that we could finally get a resolution and we could save some money as well as make it better for MLAs.

And so I want to mention this particularly today, because earlier this morning at 11 o'clock at the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue I was at the funeral for Val Werier, the father of Mike Werier. And Mike Werier gave a very eloquent talk, a eulogy about his father. And I think it's worthwhile mentioning the incredible contributions that Mr. Val Werier, the father of Michael Werier, has made in this instance as a bit of a tribute. And that would be that, you know, the St. Amant Centre might not have been there without Val Werier, that The Forks, his columns and his writing might not have developed in the way that it did without Mr. Val Werier, that the effort to preserve the elm trees might not have been as vigorous without the passionate advocacy of

Mr. Werier and, of course, he's well known for his advocacy on behalf of Lake Winnipeg because, in part, he had a cottage at Winnipeg Beach and, in part, because he was very passionately concerned about the environment and making sure that we would be passing on a good stewardship of our environment to the next generation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, you know, let us, you know, overcome for one—a few minutes the divisions in this House. Let us support this legislation. Let us move it forward, but let us move it forward in part as a tribute to Mr. Val Werier and all the work that he has done on behalf of Manitoba citizens, because I'm sure that he would appreciate the work that his son, Michael Werier, has done in enabling this legislation. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's a pleasure to respond to this bill. As the House leader for the Progressive Conservative official opposition, I want to thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for his comments. It's a rare occasion that I find myself in agreement with the member for River Heights and perhaps even rarer that I agree with everything, I think, that he said in his speech, and there was a number of things that he touched on.

I also want to say that this is one of those times where partisanship should not be brought into the debate. I was disappointed to hear the words from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan). There are times we can have debates on politics; there are many times in this House, in fact, the majority of times. I don't think this is one of them. So I'll leave it at that, Mr. Speaker.

I do recognize that it was the member for River Heights who brought forward this issue to my attention initially and has been advocating over a couple of years for this to be brought forward and changed. I don't think at the time that he indicated to me originally we recognized that it had to be done by legislation, and there was a bit more of a process involved in getting it done than maybe was thought of at first. Some of this, we thought, could be done by other means, but it had to come through legislation, so it's just at that point now.

I also want to say, and I only learned about it now in the comments from the member for River Heights, the passing of Michael Werier's father. And I want to send along, on behalf of our caucus and, I think, all members of the House, our condolences to him and to his family.

We've all been served well by Mr. Werier in his role as commissioner, and I don't mean served well in terms of the outcomes. There were outcomes that he is responsible for bringing to us as an Assembly, some of which I agree with and some of which I don't agree with, and that's okay. I think the process for an independent commissioner to determine things like salaries and benefits and how some of the allowances work is a good process, and it's one that our party has supported. We do not believe there should be interference in those sort of things.

Whether I agree with the decisions or not, the process is right to have an independent commissioner determine those things that impact us directly. I think the public would generally say we should not be determining our own salary, our own benefits. That should be done externally. And I agree that we—I'm glad that we have the process where we are not making those decisions. And I reject those times when there's political interference in the decisions that come from Mr. Werier.

Whether I agree with them, there are certain things within the context of this decision, that I might have or would have suggested differently. I think overall it's in the right direction, but, you know, how the delivery can happen, I might have had some of my own different feelings, but that's not the point. The point is that I agree with the process because I'm—I feel much better when I speak to my own constituents about these things when I can say, well, you know, that was decided by somebody independent who took a look at it, looked at the standards across the country. It wasn't decided necessarily by me individually.

But I think that—I like the precedent that this sets in terms of trying to find—so concluding on that remark, Mr. Speaker, I do want to, again, re-emphasize we appreciate very much the fact the member for River Heights brought this issue forward and has been dogged in pursuing it and also that he's raised the issue of the passing of Mr. Werier's father, and we also join with him in our appreciation for him and the virtues and the skills that he's invested in his son.

I do want to say, though, in terms of a precedent, I think this is a good precedent, that we should be looking at ways, particularly in the environment where the cost of mailing is going up and will probably continue to go up, to look for ways where we can reduce costs. This is one method to ensure that the delivery can happen by means other than

Canada Post. I believe, personally, that there are ways that we could look to ensure that not everything has to be direct mail, that it has to go by stamped envelope. I think that there are ways that we could find other cost savings.

* (14:50)

So I simply say that in the context that we should always, as legislators, look at that balance. We have a responsibility to communicate with our constituents. We should be communicating with our constituents—that is something that's important for us to do. We have a certain amount of ability to do that, but it's a limited ability, it is not unlimited and it should not be unlimited. But I do think that we need to continue to look for ways to—within those limitations, to try to find ways in an environment of higher postage to ensure that we're doing what we can to keep those costs down while reminding ourselves that we have a responsibility as well to ensure that people know what is going on here in the Legislature and what our work is as well.

So I appreciate that this bill is been brought forward, I think it has all-party support. I don't think there'll be amendments to it because we're looking, obviously, to support the outcome that Mr. Werier has decided on this particular issue, and we look forward to this bill going forward to committee.

Of course, if there is members of the public who have questions about it and how some of these things are done, that is fair game. And members of the public can certainly come and bring their own presentations to committee if they want, but I feel more comfortable and more secure with the bill going to committee knowing that it's not something that we directed, that it's come from the commissioner and it's the right precedent to set, I think.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 51? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 51, the Legislative Assembly 'amenchment' act.

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 3—The Witness Security Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed under debate in second readings—on second readings to call Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), I believe.

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

Any further debate on this bill? No? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is debate on second reading of Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act.

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

Bill 10—The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call on debate in second readings of Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if it would be appropriate to just adjourn the House for—recess the House for a minute just so I can have discussions with the Opposition House Leader?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to recess the House for five minutes? *[Agreed]*

So we'll ring the bells for one minute when the five minutes has expired.

The House recessed at 2:53 p.m.

The House resumed at 3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The—is there leave of the House to allow the Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act, to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson)? *[Agreed]*

Any further debate?

Mr. Chomiak: On House business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Chomiak: I just wanted to thank members of the House and the House leader for the opposition in aiding me in clarifying the direction this afternoon, and I want to thank members for providing the leave to do that, and yourself as well, so that we can continue debate on these important matters, so thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable minister.

Is there further debate at this time on Bill 10?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's a pleasure just to put a few words on the record regarding this bill. There was a lot of issues, of course, regarding the substance of the bill that our critic will be able, at a future time, to speak to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, but it is an opportunity when we talk about any legislation about fire prevention or emergency response to thank all of those who are in fact involved in that kind of activity, and we have a great number, of course, many of who do it as a profession, who do it as a living, who are professional firefighters or paramedics.

But there are also many who do it on a volunteer or part-time basis. I know within many of the communities that we represent, members on both sides of the House, we have individuals who volunteer within their communities to, for example, it's only one example, but to be the firefighters in their community. My brother-in-law is involved with the volunteer fire department in New Bothwell, and, as part of that responsibility, he responds to a number of calls, not just fires but other calls that happen around the region, and as the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), he would know, in that area they can be very serious calls and very difficult calls to deal with.

Part of the difficulty often is, and I'm always—you know, I find it amazing that people step up so willingly to do this, is because they are local firefighters in sometimes relatively small areas, they often know the people who they are responding in

terms of an emergency. They have some sort of a connection, so that adds, you know, an extra level of emotion, an extra level of challenge, but also I think an extra reason to be involved in such a thing, because they see the importance of it.

When I get a chance to visit, locally, the open houses, and we have—I suspect it's the same in many different areas and certainly in the city of Winnipeg where the fire department will have an open house, and you can come and you can look at the equipment and the various things they do. Sometimes they have what's called a firehouse there, and you have the opportunity to sort of go through that, and they teach young people how they should respond in the case of a fire. And I shouldn't actually just say young people. In fact, they actually teach many of us things that we didn't know.

So I went through that firehouse a couple of times with my son who is seven years old now, and it's a great fascination to him. Many young people, of course, at that age are fascinated by anything that have the sirens and the lights and make noise and have colours, Mr. Speaker, and so we go through the house, and, of course, they teach you to check to see if doors are hot in case of a fire and the variety of different things that you can do, whether it's appropriate to be leaving through a window or those sort of things, and they teach you how to act within a kitchen, about not leaving appliances on and the danger that can happen there, how to use extinguishers and when to use extinguishers or when not to use extinguishers.

And that is certainly something that is valuable, and when you actually go and you go to these different areas, these different open houses, you find that it's the volunteer firefighters or in the cases of full time, the full-time firefighters, who are hands on in terms of doing this education and doing this knowledge, making sure that people are informed.

So that's an aspect of the job that many people don't often see. We often, of course, see the fire trucks or an ambulance racing down a street or racing down in a village, and we know that they're off to something that's important, that it's an emergency. What we don't see is that educational aspect that so many of these individuals are involved in, in training and trying to prevent the very things that they're rushing to. Because any firefighter, any paramedic would tell you that they don't want to go to more calls. They want to go to less calls. They want to see people who aren't in jeopardy, who aren't

in those dangerous situations, so they spend so much of their time training.

You know, I've had the opportunity, I think others have, to visit these stations not during open houses but when they're more—at times when they're waiting to respond to calls, and you see them doing training, ongoing training. Some of the fire houses that are built now have their own, sort of, training units on the building. You can do ascents from buildings. You can do that kind of rescue work that you'd expect during certain emergencies.

We also know that there are training facilities that are more central. So whether you're going to Brandon to do training, for example, as they often do—I think we often underestimate how much training is involved. It's an ongoing sort of thing. It isn't a matter of a firefighter or a paramedic simply getting their initial training and then going forward and doing the job. That is certainly a part of it. You have to do that initial training, but there is ongoing training. There is always that upgrading and ensuring that you're up on the latest techniques, whether it's fighting a fire, whether it is being involved as a paramedic.

And we know that they don't do it for money, though; whether it's somebody who's full time or whether it's somebody who's doing it on a part-time or a volunteer basis, the motivation is still that same. I've never had the experience where I've met a firefighter or a paramedic where they were doing it for the money. They are always doing it because they want to help somebody, because they want to, in fact, ensure that their community is safer, that their village is safer.

We had the experience—we had the opportunity to get away for a couple of weeks this winter, which was nice, but we had a situation. We were down south for two weeks where we needed some assistance, and it was a Sunday and we were in a community that was strange to us and we didn't know where to go. So what I said to—and my son, actually, said this, he said, well, we should go to a fire department because firefighters are trained to help. And I thought that was a very astute thing, so we drove to the nearest fire station. We were able to look it up on a GPS. We went into the fire station. We explained our situation, our problem, and the firefighter there did a tremendous job in terms of ensuring that we had access to things we needed. We needed a phone. We needed to make a phone call back to Canada. He helped us with that in providing

us a phone to do that. We needed Internet access that we didn't have, and he provided that Internet access. And while he was doing that so I could make the calls to deal with the emergency that I needed to deal with at that time, he took my son around the fire station and he let him go into the fire truck and was teaching him different things and gave him a fire hat and stickers. And I—when I got back, I wrote a letter to the fire department just to say, you know, thank you so much. The neat thing about it was that the first thing that my son thought of when we were sitting there going, well, we need to deal with this emergency situation but we don't have what we need to deal with it where we were, the first thing he thought of is, well, let's go to the fire department because they are there to help people. And that's great because they are.

And so no matter what the situation is we have individuals in our community who say let's stand up and let's help. And that's universal, I think, across Manitoba, across Canada and, in my experience, in the United States. So that was something that reminded me of how fortunate we are that we have individuals who are willing to do that. It's not for everybody. I mean, everybody has, I think, different skills, different abilities, different passions.

And I am always amazed how individuals can run into a situation of danger when everybody else is fleeing. Of course, our natural instinct in terms of a fire or something like that, an emergency, is to get away from the harm, is to get away from the danger. That's what our bodies are programmed to do, to flee from that which is harmful. Firefighters and paramedics, as an example of emergency responders, have to fight that instinct and they have to go against that instinct to run away and, in fact, to run to the danger and to run into those situations.

We know that there are times when those who are responding in this way where they've lost their own lives—and we've seen that in Manitoba and we've had some very moving and very poignant ceremonies for firefighters who've been lost here in Manitoba. I know members of this House, some of us have attended those funerals. And they are so difficult to go to because that sense of a loss when somebody else is trying to help someone else is as deep as, I think, the feeling of loss can be.

But what always amazes me is when you hear from the families of those individuals who, unfortunately, have lost someone who was an emergency responder is, almost uniformly, you hear

them say, well, this is what, you know, my husband or my wife or my son or my daughter, this is what they wanted to do. This was their passion. They believed in helping people and, you know, they wouldn't have it any other way.

*(15:10)

Well, the outcome, of course, they would've had a different way but that they loved to do that work so much, that they cared so much about helping other people, that they knew that there was dangers there, they knew that there were sacrifices there but, in fact, they were willing to take those sacrifices, Mr. Speaker.

So, I mean, when we talk about legislation that ever involves emergency responders, when talk about legislation that involves those who are here to help us, whether we agree with every portion of the legislation or how it's dealt with, there's always room for disagreement in that, Mr. Speaker. In fact, in a democracy that's something that we treasure. We value the ability to disagree on different issues. But there'll never be disagreement, I don't think, in this House, and I hope I never see disagreement on this issue that we value so much, those who are in our communities.

And I want to say before I conclude, Mr. Speaker, that it's not simply those individuals who are doing the job, those individuals who are riding in the fire trucks and who are rushing into homes or those individuals who are in the ambulance going to a scene and trying to help somebody who needs medical attention. It's not just those individuals who are making a contribution or who are making a sacrifice. It's also their families. It's sometimes their businesses. In situations where you have a volunteer firefighter situations, the businesses have to agree to let their employees essentially be part of that volunteer organization because they know they can be called away from the business. That can come with something of an economic cost, of more a disruption to business cost, and yet I know in the community—in the communities that I represent, that the businesses are more than willing to allow that to happen, more than willing to have individuals be part of the—of their fire brigade or work as first responders, to ensure that they have that community service, even though they might have to leave their place of work every once in a while as a result of a call.

So that's a contribution, that's a community contribution that a business makes that often isn't

recognized as much as it should be recognized. And, of course, the contributions that families make because these calls, and I know this in the fact of my own family, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the calls for an emergency come whenever the emergency is. And often they are at times which are late into the night. Sometimes those calls come when people are involved with family gatherings or together with friends and there's no option to hit the ignore button on an emergency call. Those individuals who are on call for an emergency, they go, whether there's a family wedding going on or whether there's a family gathering going on, they leave and there's an understanding, I think, within most families that that is part of the sacrifice, a part of the contribution that individuals who are involved as emergency responders are willing to make.

So we want to extend our thanks, of course, beyond those who are just doing the work in an emergency, doing the on-call scenes, which we see most readily, Mr. Speaker, and to say that there are many others who ensure that that happens, that that contribution happens. And we want to encourage individuals to continue to do it. We know that there was licence plates that were issued to recognize those who are involved with—as emergency responders, and that is something that we supported because we think it's important, in fact, to recognize individuals. It's a small way to offer recognition but we do think that it is important to find those ways, where we can, to offer that recognition for those who often don't get the recognition that they deserve.

So the bill, as it will come back before this House in second reading, we'll hear some words particularly to the nuances of the legislation from our critic, the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), at a future date, but I didn't want this opportunity to go by, Mr. Speaker, without the chance to say thank you to those who are involved as emergency responders, for those who keep our communities safe and for those who unfortunately have sometimes have to make sacrifices, small or large, to ensure that we have the protection that we deserve. So I look forward, perhaps, to other comments on this bill or to a debate at a future time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words about this legislation. I want to, first of all, compliment the firefighters around the province and the people who work on the grassroots preventing fires and dealing with

emergencies because this is something on which all of us rely, and we are, you know, very thankful that we have individuals who are as dedicated and as effective as they are in this area.

And, of course, one needs to deal with emergencies and needs to have an ability to act quickly in preventing emergencies. We need to be able to make sure that there are appropriate procedures that will ensure that preventive actions are taken, and in circumstances like this that the fines and so on for preventive action not being taken are there. I think all of us were surprised at the huge fire that occurred not all that long ago in St. Boniface and really brought to much a broader realization the extent to which flammable chemicals are to be found even in the city of Winnipeg in places and stored and that there are significant risks and we clearly need to be vigilant in preventing events related to that. And so I'm looking forward to discussion that occurs at the committee stage, input from people.

I think it has to be added that it's—it was very sad under this NDP government to have the corruption which occurred in the Fire Commissioner's office as was revealed by the Auditor General. You know, this is a pretty dark mark, a pretty black mark, you know, on this government and, of course, you know, we have to be careful that it doesn't shake the general confidence that people have in the firefighters and in the efforts that are being made at a provincial level. But it certainly shows the importance not only of making sure that our grassroots firefighters and people involved in prevention are there and are well supported, but it also needs to be emphasized in light of the corruption that occurred on the watch of this government that you need to have power being used wisely with appropriate appeals, and there is in this legislation an appeal.

But, in spite of the fact that the situation appears to be improved now in the Fire Commissioner's office, we continue to have concerns under this government with the ways that they aren't as careful as they need to be in spending of money in emergencies, and we certainly saw this in the flood of 2011. And the Auditor General had a report on how money was spent in the Lake Manitoba recovery plan and, clearly, as the Auditor General pointed out, there could've been a great deal of improvement. And there were, indeed, areas that the Auditor General didn't go into, but which, from discussions that occurred around how things were handled in Lake Manitoba, there were areas where dollars could've been spent more wisely and more

effectively to help people. And so that it is something that all of us need to be aware of that, yes, we need to act quickly, yes, we need to act vigorously to prevent fires and to do what we can. But we also need to make sure that we are spending dollars wisely and not throwing them around as this government too often has had the tendency to do.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I look forward to this legislation going to committee and on to the next step. Thank you.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I'd like the opportunity just to put a couple of words on the record with regard to Bill 10 and fire prevention, and I certainly would adhere to what other speakers before me had said.

* (15:20)

And, in fact, I'd like to pay an aroundabout compliment to the MLA for Steinbach. The MLA for Steinbach—I've talked, in my travels—being in the southeast, I've talked to firefighters in Steinbach and other communities, and the MLA for Steinbach is looked upon in a very good light, because he is very supportive of emergency workers in general but certainly firefighters. And people have told me this personally. Firefighters in Ste. Anne and firefighters in Steinbach and other communities have made comment to that. So he may not be aware of that, but I have been. When I've passed—I've given an MLA plaque—when the days where you were allowed to do this, I gave an MLA plaque to the volunteer firefighters in my constituency; it was called La Verendrye at the time. But that's where the people had made comments about the MLA for Steinbach. And I just want to make sure I put that on the record because it was passed on to me—[interjection]—in sincerity. And so I just want—and I don't think I've ever had the chance to tell him that, but they know he was very supportive of the volunteer workers in that area.

So, just on that, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about that a little bit because as was talked about earlier and mentioned earlier, was that often when people are running out of a building when it's burning, it's firefighters that are running in. And they're going in to find out who is left behind and who is in some danger with regard to either their life or safety. And it's certainly important to note, because many of these firefighters receive very good training, and they certainly—volunteer firefighters in rural Manitoba and other communities, some larger

than others—do not get compensated a great deal of money. A lot of their time is covered, but they do it because they have a real passion for contributing and giving back to their community. And that is something worthwhile for all of us in this Chamber to acknowledge.

And by taking a look at what Bill 10 says, amending The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Act to allow administrative penalties to be imposed—being imposed on people, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that are not adhering to the laws of the province with regard to fire safety. And it puts a lot of people at risk. A lot of those firefighters often will enter a building not knowing what chemicals, what explosives are inside those buildings, even though they're supposed to be noted. Often that's not done. And yet the firefighters—and every year, regrettably, you hear about a—police officers that are shot in the line of duty or injured or fatally wounded, and yet firefighters throughout North America, I believe there's more loss of life with firefighters than there are with people in the police service. It's regrettable. They're trying to help people and they're trying to do their best to make their community safe.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know when I was in the civil service, I worked for the department of workplace safety and health—it was actually called the department of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health—for four years in the mid-'80s. And at that time a lot of legislation was being brought in with regard to chemicals and the kind of chemicals that were in different businesses and different institutions. And that had a huge impact on firefighters and what the firefighters were able to do or not do, because those that were the individuals when a fire took place had to enter buildings with hazardous materials in there. So the materials were to be listed on the outside of a building, and yet we know that not many businesses did that and, regrettably, firefighters have been injured in the past as a result of the contents inside of those buildings.

So, when you have administrative penalties that can be imposed, our government really believes that the current maximum penalties do not reflect the serious health and safety risks that are created when personal or corporate responsibilities with respect to fire safety are not met. That's the key. You have many volunteers, even though the training is very good, they still put their life and their safety at risk entering a lot of buildings not knowing what's in there.

And I know that all of us in this Chamber certainly not only respect the job that firefighters do—and maybe I can just reflect back to the days where a lot of coverage with regard to different types of cancers. And I know, Mr. Speaker, the days where you were an MLA sitting in the benches—and still an MLA, but the days you were—still an MLA—but the days when you were sitting here on the benches with—you made often passionate pleas with regard to the kind of legislation that should be brought in with regard to different types of cancers for firefighters. And, indeed, many of the firefighters in Manitoba have acknowledged your approach to those issues—and I'm trying to watch my words carefully because you're an independent person.

But I want to say, though, that those days you raised a lot of issues as a safety and health critic, elected the MLA for Transcona and you raise a number of those issues. And then, when this party became government of Manitoba, we brought those into place. And those—to this day there are many firefighters and many states in the United States and cities look at Manitoba as a leader with regard to what we did and we've done with regard to firefighters with regard to carcinogens and products that would cause cancer, different types of cancer to firefighters. And you should be commended for this, because as a new MLA in 1999 when I came into this Chamber you spoke about those types of dangers that were there, and our government—Becky Barrett was the minister of Labour and then, I believe, the MLA for St. Vital came after her—and those pieces of legislation were brought into this Chamber to protect firefighters because we received medical evidence and medical evidence showed that it was really important to address these types of cancers that were directly related to firefighters. And it could be pointed out scientifically and medically that firefighters were the ones that were—because of the work that they did the cancers that they had received were as a result of that.

And so as a government we take great pride in pointing to the legislation that we put forward with regard to, regrettably, those firefighters. Many passed away as a result of their cancers and the injuries they had, but the families that were left behind, through the Workers Compensation Board and through others, people realized the importance of what we did and realized that we were standing up for firefighters and that would be whether you're a volunteer or whether or not you're a so-called professional firefighter and that's your day job and

that's what you do as your profession. And yet, you know, many rural—and firefighters around Manitoba are impacted by the same kind of carcinogens out there and they also appreciate what we've done for them.

But this particular act, Mr. Speaker—and there are many, of course, here who wish to speak on this—but I just want to say that many of us who have encountered and have worked with and stood beside our neighbours who are volunteer firefighters and others know that some of the fines were quite ridiculous. And, you know, it says currently the maximum penalties under the act for the first offence was only \$1,000 for an individual and \$5,000 for a corporation. And this bill significantly raises those fines to \$125,000 for non-compliance of an individual and \$250,000.

So, in this day and age, with taking a look at inflation and what has happened since these fines were first put into place, and it gets to be, I think, more of a deterrent, certainly for those that wish to skirt the law or those who do not wish to—and want to be in contravention of regulations. There's at least an additional tool for enforcement, taking a look at another side that maybe they'll get the message as a result. And everyone has a right to go to work and come back home safe, and this includes, of course, people who are in the profession of firefighting and people who are the ones who we really depend on to ensure that they're, you know, preventing fires or certainly responding to emergency issues.

I want to digress slightly, but with regard to what firefighters are also doing. A community I represent, Ste. Anne, Manitoba, has a volunteer fire department there, and they are right along No. 1 Highway. So often you think of firefighters as those individuals who will put fires out and help individuals when a fire occurs, but what has happened, and I believe the MLA for Steinbach commented on this, that they're often called out for many different reasons, and one of the reasons is automobile accidents. And now they have received training in the Jaws of Life and how to use that and how to cut open—many of us have seen those exhibitions where firefighters show you how they can open up a vehicle when people are trapped in them.

*(15:30)

And I know that in Ste. Anne you have a volunteer fire department that's been called out along with the RCMP to attend many accidents on

No. 1 Highway, and some fairly recently, and they've been asked to pull people out of damaged vehicles where they've been trapped and they have received great training on how to do that. So it's more than just fires that they're called out to address, and, as the member from Steinbach commented, that even they will help you if you show up and ask directions or ask for some assistance in some way, they're more than pleased to do so just by their nature of wanting to help people, which is important to note.

I know that our minister and—is—responsible for workplace safety and health has certainly wanted to move ahead on this and to ensure that all members of the Chamber would support something like this knowing that the background behind what has happened with regard to the kind of hazards and fires and fire prevention and emergencies that have happened in the province. We want to ensure that it's a deterrent, the fines with regard to not adhering to the regulations and being in contravention of the regulations, but ensure that people who want to skirt the law that they're going to pay. And our government believes the threat of penalties created by these new changes compel increased compliance and, in turn, they improve public safety overall for all of us. And we've seen far too many fires take place and individuals who get—who gets called in when you get rail cars who are tumbling and crashing off the rails and catching on fire and exploding? You have fire departments and firefighters who are asked to come and put these fires out, but also are putting their life at risk as a result.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that keeping workplace safety is a non-political issue. Quite frankly, it's one that every—each and every one of us in this Chamber support no matter what political stripe, and I know that this particular bill is one that for some probably hits a lot closer to home than others.

But many of us have known firefighters personally who have passed away as a result of work and some of the—as a result of cancer they'd contracted and so on. So I know that, whatever we can do as a Legislature, as a Chamber jointly and unanimously supporting firefighters in the different regulations and fines that come along with it, it's a total package and all of these pieces to a puzzle amount to a safer Manitoba. And I know, you know, since 1999 as a government we really wanted to embark on improving workplace safety and health, and we've doubled the number of workplace safety and health officers enforcing our safety laws. And being a former employee, an individual who worked

in the department of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health in the '80s and working with workplace safety and health committees and trying to work with WHMIS and all the legislation that was being brought in at that time with regard to chemicals and knowing how important workplace safety and health is to Manitobans to all workers, it's really important.

I'm not going to get into the politics of whether or not the opposition supported workers who are working on roadways and what do we do about improving safety for those workers. But I know that they will—and I'm hoping they will support that type of legislation, as well, where we're trying to help workers who are by the roadside working for us and trying to improve our highways. And there's going to be a lot more of it with the kind of money we're putting into highways, and I would just want the members opposite and the opposition to remember workplaces are everywhere. It's where people work, and it's not just firefighters and those individuals that may be more high profile with regard to their workplaces like police officers or firefighters who put their life at risk every day to protect us.

I know that our minister has been working closely and consulting and does consult with firefighters and others all the time, and this is something that I believe that firefighters will be very pleased with because—in fact, they believe they felt all along that, you know, the fines are so minimal that it really amounted to nothing. I mean, it was just a part of doing business. If you'd get a fine because they wouldn't adhere to some regulation, I mean, that was—it was—well, it was ridiculous.

And, you know, our minister is really wanting to ensure that this is just one more piece of the puzzle that will help—hopefully, help improve the safety of a lot of buildings in the province, because people know, then, more attention is being paid to them with regard to breaking of laws and the kinds of fines they're going to have to pay.

Mr. Speaker, in 2011, we made it mandatory for employers in specific risk industries and industry sectors with an evaluated risk potential to violence, implement violence prevention policies. These sectors—as I mentioned before, the workplaces vary in the province and these sectors include health care, security, police, corrections, crisis counselling, intervention, financial, pharmacy, education, public transit and taxicab services. I mean, in—and so what we've taken a look is, in 2010, we increased the fines

for employers who flaunt the rules that keep workplaces safe.

And what we're trying to do now is trying to improve—excuse me for that—what we're trying to do is improve workplaces overall. We've accomplished a lot, the new minister has really done her due diligence with regard to consulting with many people around the province since she's become the new minister. And this is a big file, an important one, an important department that she has, and we know that not only is she doing a great job, quite frankly, but the people out there, workers out there and employers know that she's fair. And the goal is to make all workplaces safety—or safe, and safety is paramount. And she is a very fair individual and is willing to listen to employers and to workers to make sure that safety is paramount.

And I know that this piece of legislation for our government is just another piece, again, in the puzzle that will hopefully make people think twice before they're going to break the workplace safety and health laws of this province.

And it's not the be-all, end-all. I know we've got a—we've accomplished a lot, we have more to do, and that is something that I—maybe others wish to comment with regard to this piece of legislation, but I know that—and I would hope the opposition would support this unanimously because, quite frankly, it is just another piece that will make us a lot safer no matter where we work.

And sometimes in this Chamber we don't realize the kind of work that's going on out there, and yet we should, and a lot of people work at very dangerous professions handling chemicals just in the industry that they're in, whether it's construction or other workplaces, and they need our support. They need each and every one of the MLAs in this Chamber's support to ensure that they know that they want to be able to go home safe to their families, to their children, to their grandchildren at the end of the day and be able to enjoy a great life in Manitoba.

And yet we are—as a province, I believe, we're held high with regard to where we stand on workplace safety and health; workers across the country know that we are standing up for them. People in the United States, as I mentioned before, the firefighters in the United States take a look at Manitoba and we're a beacon—a shining beacon with what can be done when a government makes up their mind to help workers, help firefighters address

cancer and other illnesses that they've contracted as a result of their work.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude by just saying you were a champion on this, you were a champion on this from day one in 1999 when we became government, you raised this as a workplace safety and health critic. I know there are a number of others who sat in opposition in the '90s and you raised this and we moved on many, many issues with regard to firefighters. We'll continue to do a lot more in the future but this is just another piece that needs to be addressed.

And I'm really pleased our Minister of Labour has brought this forward because there are too many, regrettably, out there that want to skirt the law, and the fines were so minimal that it just didn't amount to anything. And that was just really—I believe, just the lack of respect for the people who are working in those workplaces, just to flaunt workplace safety and health laws like that, you know, they need to pay.

*(15:40)

And yet, thank goodness that the vast majority of our employers are great companies, great corporations, great citizens that give back to the community, volunteer, donate of their time, donate money financially to many causes. But there are some, whether it's because—well, who knows why? There is no excuse to be skirting the law with regard to workplace safety and health and issues related to fire and fire regulations.

And so I would just say, in conclusion, I just thank you for the opportunity to speak and I just want to say thank you to a lot of the members who have spoken already with regard to this issue, because it is really important. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 10 at this time? No?

As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

**Bill 18—The Business Practices Amendment Act
(Improved Consumer Protection
and Enforcement)**

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call for debate on second readings, Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved Consumer Protection and Enforcement), standing in the name of the honourable member for Tuxedo.

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing? Bill 18?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Leave is denied? Leave is denied.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very, very pleased to speak to Bill 18 today and The Business Practices Amendment Act and talk about some of the issues in consumer affairs over the years.

And you know, it was, I believe, 1970 when the Schreyer government was—after they were elected in June 25th, 1969–1970, I think, was the largest legislative agenda ever in the history of Manitoba. And one of the laws that they brought in at that time was the Consumers' Bureau, and that was a brand new approach to Consumer Affairs at that time. And over the years, people took advantage of the Consumers' Bureau good offices to resolve consumer issues. But, within 10 years or so, there was a recognition that the Consumers' Bureau didn't have teeth, sort of like some of those Conservative opposition members here, and they—what the process was was that if a person made a complaint—a consumer complaint to the Consumers' Bureau—the Consumers' Bureau would engage in an effort to resolve the issue, and that would be very time-consuming, and at the end of the day, if the business didn't want to settle the issue, there was no way of forcing the business to settle. So what we were finding is consumers were totally frustrated getting their issues resolved, especially since the Consumers' Bureau didn't have teeth and the power to enforce.

So, in approximately two thousand and—or 1988—I think it was around that time—the NDP had on the Order Paper a bill called, I believe it was, the unfair business practices act. Members for St. Paul will probably remember those days when the NDP also introduced, I think at that same time, a bill dealing with Crocus Investment Fund legislation. And, of course, the government, unfortunately, got defeated on a vote and there we went into an election and the Filmon government was elected. And I remember the new premier standing here in the House, very proudly announcing that he was going to introduce the Crocus Fund labour legislation as something the NDP couldn't do, but he, the new premier for the Conservatives, was going to bring it in.

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Another piece of legislation that they took from that era was the—what we call the unfair business practices act, and they didn't like the name of that, so they renamed it. I think it might have been Minister Ed Connery from Portage la Prairie who renamed it The Business Practices Act, which is what it's called to this day. And there the act has survived over the last number of years. But, even at the time that he introduced it, we did have, you know, suggestions for improvement at that time. But, clearly, the bar has certainly moved over the years, where we had essentially no consumer legislation at all—no legislation with teeth, prior to the Schreyer government. And here we are some, you know, 40 years later, and we're talking about making improvements to The Business Practices Act.

And, I guess, fundamentally, what the major problem is with consumer legislation in general is if the public doesn't—isn't aware of it, if the government doesn't make an effort to advertise it and the public doesn't know of it, then, obviously, they're not going to be filing complaints.

And I'll give you a good example of how that worked with lemon law, which is very prevalent in the United States, in American states, where under lemon law the car companies have three or four attempts to repair the fault with the vehicle and if they aren't able to do it, then the car company has to buy the vehicle back. Well, what happened here in Manitoba was the Filmon government was in power when the—when we formed a practice known as CANVAP. C-A-N-V-A-P. And I ask the members if anybody has ever heard of C-A-N-V-A-P. Now, you know, in Florida and other states in the United States, when you buy a new car you get a booklet with the new vehicle indicating that you are covered for this, for lemon law. Now, in Manitoba the last two or three cars that I bought, I have waited for the car dealership here in Manitoba to give me this CANVAP book or even tell me about the 'canvan' book—CANVAP book. And guess what? Not only have they not offered the book, but I have to ask them about CANVAP, and not one has known a thing about it. Okay? So regardless of the fact that the arbitration program, you know, may work for some people, it may not work for others. Nobody in this Chamber has ever heard of it and it's been around for 20 years.

So that's the point. That's the point I'm making here, is that we can have, you know, we can have very modern legislation. But if the government doesn't advertise the existence of the legislation, if

there's not a requirement that the car dealers give you a book when you buy the new car, then, you know, what is the point of the legislation, because people are not going to be satisfied with the results.

So, certainly, on this side of the House, we have made efforts over the years to make certain that people not only that we have good legislation, but that people are aware of the legislation so that when they do try to resolve their issue that they will get satisfaction.

But there's a long way to go here, because what happens is that we can't have a police force in every—you know, watching every transaction in the province. So there's got to be a certain amount of awareness on the part of the individuals that this legislation is in effect, and, in fact, they can make a resolution.

Now, I can tell you that, historically, the Conservative Party are firm believers in the law of the jungle. I remember the fight we had years ago in committee over the lemon law legislation. And they trotted in the president of the Consumers Association with a guy by the name of Lefty Hendrickson, I believe it was. He was the head of the Used Car Association of Manitoba, and good old Lefty, he would get together with the president and he'd be in there telling us how terrible this legislation was. It was going to put the used car dealerships—put hardships on them, put them out of business. And they were working hand in glove with the Conservative government of the day.

You know, and I know some members over there; they like to pretend they're, you know, supportive of the consumers, that they're champions of the taxpayers, but, boy, you never see them standing up when their friends in the car dealers association or other business associations are being called to account for their actions.

And not only did they misrepresent what the legislation was about, but they just went right out and lied about it. They said, oh, this was going to put a big burden on the car dealers. Well, guess what? Had nothing to do with the car dealers. In fact, the car dealers would be—should have been in support of the legislation because it was all on the car companies. If I'm a dealer for Ford or General Motors, I don't want unhappy customers. I'm the shield between the car manufacturer and the customer. I want my customers to be happy. So, of course, I should support legislation that will force the

car companies to replace—or reimburse the customer if the car is a lemon vehicle.

* (15:50)

But that's not how the representatives of the industry portrayed it. They aligned themselves against the consumers. They aligned themselves and basically misrepresented. Now, why they would want to do this, I'm not really sure, but I know those car companies have very strict rules on what they can and can't do vis-à-vis the manufacturers, and a lot of them are really afraid of the manufacturers. I'll give you an example. When the Leader of the Opposition was just a brand new MLA in the House here, member—former member for Portage la Prairie, one of a long list of former members, him—he and I were out in Elie, I think it was, because the Shyack [*phonetic*] car dealership was being forced out of business by General Motors. They got a letter one day—

An Honourable Member: Isn't it actually Oakville?

Mr. Maloway: This is a dealership—in Oakville, yes—they had been in business for 40 years and because of sales or whatever the issue was, they were being arbitrarily told they had to give up their dealership. And I drove out there and spoke to them on this issue at a meeting there, and I remember the Leader of the Opposition was there as well, you know, representing, not really knowing much about the issue at the time, I must admit, but I'm sure today he could handle himself very well in that situation. But the fact of the matter is that this dealership was being treated very unfairly, and it was the NDP that came to the cause to help support this dealership. So we have a long history here in the province of not only introducing consumer legislation but also standing up for the consumer.

Let's take a look at the rent control issue. I remember back in the 1970s when, you know, we introduced rent controls. What do these guys do? What do the Conservatives do when they form the government? Eliminate the rent controls. And that's exactly what will happen in the next round, in the next election. We know in advance that we will have to protect the renters of this province by making it clear that we intend to keep rent controls because we know that if the Conservatives are elected, each and every renter in this province are going to see their rents going through the roof, because those champions over there of the taxpayers are going to be the first people that eliminate the rent controls in this province.

So I would say that this legislation is, you know, been around a long time, it's a fairly good legislation. I certainly would like to see improvements even beyond what is recommended here and hopefully we can convince the government to keep on top of this issue. I know there's going to be some changes made. The public is demanding changes to the—to cellphone contracts, the cable TV is another issue that the government has to deal with, and there is a lot of different issues out there that should be dealt with as far as the public in this province is concerned. And I do really believe that we have to pass this legislation, but not only pass the legislation but also advertise the fact that it actually exists.

So thank you very much.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): There is an essential relationship that exists between a consumer and a supplier based on trust and mutual benefit. We believe that this is generally the case, but unfortunately there are always a few bad apples who will take advantage of a consumer.

Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved Consumer Protection and Enforcement), is about minimizing the malpractice of these few businesses that choose to conduct their business in an unfair manner and add additional protection for Manitoba consumers. Bill 18 seeks to clarify and categorize what unfair business practices and taking advantage of means for both the consumer and the supplier.

Taking advantage of a consumer is considered when the supplier knew or ought to have known that the consumer could not protect themselves, or force them into a transaction. Expanding the definition of taking advantage to include undue pressure placed upon consumers as well as the responsibility of the supplier to make sure that they are not knowingly putting this consumer in a vulnerable position, is essential to the protection of consumers in this province.

It is of the utmost importance that suppliers do not abuse their position within business transactions, as they often are in a position of power as opposed to the consumer. Equally important is the redevelopment of the definition of unfair business practices to include an onus on suppliers to make sure they do not exploit someone on the basis of their cognitive ability, spoken language or age in the transaction.

Unfair business practices will also be expanded under this legislation to include suppliers who are in

possession of a consumer's property using said property as a tool to pressure the consumer or forcing the consumer into a transaction. It is important that consumers who are in a disadvantage-disadvantageous position are not unfairly victimized in transactions by suppliers, and including these measures under unfair business practices will help to mitigate this.

While the bill also proposes some modification to inspections enforcement, it isn't perfect, and improvements should be undertaken to rectify this.

And we know that with this bill and many other pieces of legislation that the NDP, while considering regulating unfair business practices for businesses but refuse to look at their own record when dealing with Manitobans of the last number of years. In fact, I point out the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), the former minister of Finance, who treated the Winnipeg Jockey Club fairly with an unreasonable approach and unfair, in fact, forcing them to fight for their survival, to go to court.

We heard today that the current Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard) indicated that the legal bills, at least the legal bills that they'll own up to, added to approximately \$160,000. So, if you want to talk about unfair business practices, there you have a government with unlimited amount of money taking on an organization and forcing them to fight for their life. The government paid \$160,000 in legal bills and then realized they hadn't—they had no case. There was not a chance that they were going to win their case and settled with the Winnipeg Jockey Club. And, in the end, it was the taxpayers who, if I could put it that way, unfairly ended up having to pay for those legal bills.

Similar to a supplier making a business commitment to a consumer, the NDP promised all Manitobans during the last election that there would be no new taxes. And not just that, every NDP candidate, all 57 of them, including every NDP MLA member, went door to door and promised to voters that not just would there be no new taxes, that there would be no PST.

And the reason why they made this commitment is because they promised all kinds of stuff to Manitobans and they were asked how they were going to pay for this, how they were going to fund all of these promises. And every NDP MLA, every NDP candidate, went door to door and said, well, one thing that's not going to happen is we're not going to raise taxes and we're not going to raise the PST. We

will pay for all these commitments and all these promises somehow, somewhere, differently, other than raising taxes.

In fact, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) went so far to say, read my lips, no new taxes. A PST increase is nonsense. It was ridiculous, he said. And that's on the record. It's public record.

I would suggest maybe we should have an amendment to this legislation and that we would also include unfair business practices by the NDP government towards its own citizens, unfair treatment towards taxation, where the NDP raised a tax and then realized that it was illegal and then went and stripped away the requirement for a referendum so that they could actually get their legislation through. I would suggest that this legislation has some need in the province, but way more important is a protection from unfair business practices by the NDP party, by this NDP government and the way that they treat their own citizens and the way that they went through an election campaign.

*(16:00)

And might I say that the NDP party lied to Manitobans. They lied at every door when they said they would not raise taxes, and I think that should be an amendment to Bill 18. I think that would be a very relevant amendment to Bill 18. That would make Bill 18 even more relevant. That's what should happen to this piece of legislation.

So it comes as a surprise that there are existing parallels between this NDP bill and their election commitment. The voter or the consumer entrusted their votes—in this case, goods—to the government or supplier. Once these goods were in the hands of the NDP, they showed their true intentions. The NDP turned on Manitobans, falsely advertising their intentions during the last election and imposing new terms on the voters of this province: first, a broadening, and then an illegal hike of the PST.

So Manitobans were given a contract. They signed off on a contract and then found out that they signed a false contract with the NDP. Perhaps the government would consider an amendment that would protect the public from the NDP and that—we certainly would love to hear from members opposite, if they would be agreeable to that, so that way they would be kept honest and above board as they move forward.

In conclusion, while Bill 18 has a number of imperfections, it implements and provides important

protections for consumers. Unfortunately, it doesn't provide protection against NDP mismanagement or NDP misleading the public. However, Manitobans and their elected officials should share a similar bond to that of a consumer and supplier, based on trust and partnership. Unfortunately, again, this isn't the case under the NDP government and Manitobans deserve better and deserve more of their elected officials. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran): Question. All those in favour of the—this Bill 8?

The question before the House: Is the House ready to adopt the motion for Bill 18? Second reading of Bill 18? *[Agreed]*

Bill 33—The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts)

The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran): Now, we move on to Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act, that's standing in the name of the member of Steinbach.

Is there leave to stand in the name of the member of Steinbach? Okay. Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Is there any other speaker?

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): It gives me great pleasure to stand up and talk about apprentices, as being someone who went through the system myself, years back. It seems like a lifetime ago, you know, and some days when we're in this building, it could be a nice thing to go back to being a welder again but, you know, I'll digress from that.

But I'd like to speak a little bit about one of the challenges that we've taken on in this mandate. And, you know, I know we hear the members opposite all the time, complaining about what we've done with the PST. But let's look at some realities around the country and let's look at what other jurisdictions have done.

We see everywhere that there's a massive infrastructure deficit across Canada. I mean, I know the members opposite don't like the facts and figures, but I think they'll agree with that one because even their federal counterparts talk about this massive deficit in infrastructure across the country.

So we put up two various different plans. Our plan addresses that infrastructure deficit—maybe it does—it starts—it's a really good chunk of it. I mean, we're—it's going to have to continue on, but we're got a five-year plan that's going to address some infrastructure. Their plan was to cut a half a billion dollars from the budget, which would've done what? Would it have seen more building? *[interjection]* I hear the member for Brandon chirping in his seat over—you know, talking about how he wants infrastructure for his area in Brandon, but, you know, last year he complained that—it was actually in one of his petitions, at the very beginning of session, saying that he wanted something done with Victoria Avenue in Brandon. Had to have it done; it was a very important thing to have it done. You know what? It's done. And you know why it's done? Because we took this on.

So, you know, we're talking about having—creating jobs and opportunity for people. Well, we are creating jobs and opportunity, and we're creating opportunity for apprentices with this bill. You know, we're going to be creating a lot of great jobs in Manitoba, over 58,000 jobs in Manitoba, and it's going to boost the economy by \$6.3 billion, which is no small number, and, you know, we're going to be having more apprentices than ever working in Manitoba. And, actually, since we've been in government, we have increased apprenticeships.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It's over double what it was than when the opposition was in government. They didn't have a vision for apprenticeship. Actually, probably, I would argue that they probably didn't understand apprenticeship. But, you know, now we have this vision that we're going to have more apprentice opportunities for people in the—and the other day, I actually got to join the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), the Minister of Education, and I joined him over at what's now Winnipeg technical centre, but it's going to become—the new name for it is now going to be the Manitoba institute for trades and technology. And that is another example of how we're moving forward to train more people in the workplace and to have more skilled trades and have more skilled workforce.

Now, I know that the members opposite don't seem to like how we work with business, you know, because, actually, a lot of business leaders were there and they were applauding the move. They were—from John from McCaine Electric was there, and he

sits on the board of the college. And he sees the value in this, because apprentices have a huge value to our economy and a huge value to companies like McCaine Electric where they use electrical apprentices and they get them into journeyman status, and those people contribute to the fabric of our society here in Manitoba.

Now, you know, it's really disappointing that the members opposite talked a big game last year, who—petition after petition about infrastructure—and then they voted it down. When we put out a plan addressing all of their concerns, I mean, they asked for about 1 per cent of—equivalent to 1 per cent of PST in spending in their own area. And we said, you know what? We're listening. We're listening to you and we're listening to Manitobans; Manitobans said that this is a big issue. Today we saw the CAA, they came out and said these are the bad roads, and you know what? We've addressed that issue right away. They addressed them today, and eight out of those 10 roads, they're on the list to be repaired in the next few months. Now, I would argue that that's a pretty quick, fast reaction.

Now, you can't have that kind of reaction and you can't have jobs and construction jobs when you're doing cuts. With half a billion dollars' worth of cuts that the Conservative Party proposes, you wouldn't be able to do that. You also wouldn't be able to do great institutions like the new MITT that is going to train up people in Manitoba and give our youth the opportunity to take an education right here in Manitoba, earn while they learn and then work here with good quality jobs because we're reinvesting.

You know, the members opposite also—they're very gloom and doom about the economy. They don't like how things are going here. But we see things like investments in New Flyer, right? New Flyer is a hub for buses. It manufactures buses for all across North America. In fact, we were voted the No. 1 midwestern city to do business in. But, of course, you don't hear that from the members opposite, you hear the gloom and doom.

You know, last year when we said we were going to give some incentives to Canadian Tire to set up their digital centre here in Manitoba, right here in Winnipeg, the members opposite were outraged, actually, that we were going to give some incentives because they said it'd be a short-term project and that no new jobs would be created. Well, it—actually, they just announced that Cloud Nine is going to be one of

the most advanced centres in North America—not just Canada, in North America—and that 50 more good jobs are going to be here, and it leveraged \$50 million worth of downtown Winnipeg investments to our province, bringing in great jobs for our children to aspire to and to take training right here in Manitoba and become some of the leading edge in the world, leading edge in technology.

* (16:10)

You know, the members opposite, they didn't like the plan that we put forward about, you know, building more roads and building bridges and building—building, building, that kind of seems to be our plan. But they would rather cut. Well, and I hear the member for Morden and Winkler chirping over in his seat, talking about spending. You know what? You have to spend if we're going to build a highway. I guess the members opposite seem to think that highways get built with buttons and lint. That's not the way it is. Governments have to have revenue to spend to build those roads.

And you know what, we created—it was tough, don't get me wrong. None of us took that decision lightly. We all had to look at that, but we knew that it was the right answer because infrastructure deficits were growing in this country. And we're the province who's addressing it, not ignoring it and cutting another half billion dollars from the budget, which would just see everything crumble even more so.

Their plan is to have no plan. They don't have a plan at all. So, you know, I hear them chirping in their seats about how our plan isn't what they would do. Well, we know what they would do. Their plan is cut, cut, cut, cut, cut.

I mean, you know, they attack our ministers all the time about education. They say, you know, that, oh, well, you know, this and that in education. The fact is that we have increased education spending every year since we've been in government. We fund it at the rate of inflation.

And Winnipeg Technical College, which is now turning into MITT, is a fantastic example of that. It's going to be a college that trains people, trains apprentices up in Manitoba and gets them ready for work. And you know what, they'll actually earn money while they're learning.

And when I was there, we heard from a wonderful young gentleman apprentice there, young guy coming out of high school who was kind of looking for some direction. And he ended up finding

this Winnipeg technical centre and taking a course there, and you know what, he ended up excelling and he ended up winning the gold medal in millwrighting for Manitoba, and now he's going on to the nationals in Canada for being a millwright.

Now, without these investments, if we would have went the way that the opposition would have asked for and we would have cut Winnipeg technical centre, we would have slashed these programs, this young gentleman wouldn't have had a future, and he wouldn't be able to be going to the national gold.

And you know what, the pride coming from him was unbelievable. I sat there and I listened to him speak, and I had the biggest smile on my face because that young man has a bright future ahead of him, not cuts and not being unemployed. This man is going to be very well employed and he will never have to worry about finding a job again, because millwrights are a very high-demand career, and he's going to find a great job. And he's going to represent Manitoba well, I know that, as far as going to the gold medal. He's going to represent Manitoba well.

And we also heard from a woman there who was a mother, and she decided to take some time out of the workforce and she took seven years off to raise her child. And during that time, she decided, you know, she was going to try to do something with her life different. She had an education from before, but she wanted to try something different, something that was more in her passion. So you know what she did, she looked at the courses that Winnipeg technical centre, now MITT, offers, and she decided to take a drafting course. And this spring she's going to be graduating from that drafting course, and she's already got job offers on the table, and she's going to work right here in Manitoba for companies that do a lot of drafting in, guess what, the construction industry.

Now, had members opposite had their hands at the wheel, first of all, that program wouldn't have been available to her. She wouldn't have been able to be trained in a career that she's going to—that she wanted to do and is going to love. Second of all, there wouldn't be a job for her, because all of their cuts would not see the construction that we're going to see.

So there's a stark difference. I mean, I—sometimes we agree in the House on some things, and I think that we'll probably agree to disagree on this one, that our difference is that we're going to be building Manitoba. They want to tear Manitoba

apart. They're very gloom and doom. They don't want to see investments. They don't want to have any building going on. They think that everything is about cuts. Well, we disagree on this side. And I'm fine with that stance, to be able to stand up on this side of the House and say that our investments are going to repair things.

We're giving the City of Winnipeg over \$50 million more in money every year, and we're going to be giving them that money towards their streets, towards infrastructure. Now, if we didn't do that, what would happen? Well, we've seen what's been happening. St. James Street was voted one of the worst streets. Well, you know what, our money, our funding is going to help them out and give them extra money so they can invest in that. And what happens when you invest in that? You have more construction. When you have more construction, what happens? You have more apprentices. You know, having more apprentices in our province is a good thing.

And I don't know if—I remember back in the times when they were in power, and, actually, the Leader of the Opposition was in Cabinet at the time, and it was really hard to find an apprenticeship. There weren't many available. There was hardly any training going on in the province, and, in fact, 33,000 people left our province to find work elsewhere. There wasn't a growing population. The south end of the city wasn't booming like it is now, because people were leaving the province.

And I know they like to argue numbers. The fact is is that our—the numbers are higher in Manitoba now than when they were in, over 100,000 more people, which has created a construction boom, which has created demand for apprentices and journeymen to do those—to do all of that work. Plumbing, framing, roofing, tiling—all of that stuff comes into an economy when economy's doing well. And you look at the building in the south Winnipeg. You look at that area of the South Pointe and Bridgwater Forest, and all of that stuff is being—it's coming up so fast, the houses are being so—built so fast, and all of that employs tradespeople and apprentices.

So, I think that, you know, our investing in apprenticeship, in more training, in education for our youth, that is the proper thing to do, not just cutting for the sake of cutting. I know it's ideologically—for them, that it's about cuts, cuts, cuts, but that doesn't help people. What it does is it helps people leave our

province, as we saw the last time they had their hands on the rudder. When all those people were leaving the province, they couldn't—you know, they were leaving so fast that I'm pretty sure that's why we had—when we came in we had to twin the highway to allow them all to come back. We were the ones that twinned the highway to Saskatchewan, and that was because all those people that had left when they were in government all of a sudden wanted to come back because there was jobs, there was opportunity. So we twinned that highway and we allowed those people to come back, and we've allowed that flow of goods coming from Manitoba, which is a manufacturing hub despite what the members opposite like to say, the doom and gloom, that we don't have a manufacturing hub and that we should have this—you know, the New West Partnership and all of that stuff.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

We trade with everybody. We have trade to all over North America, and it shows, because when the economy, in 2008, crashed—which, once again, members opposite don't believe happened, which is just mind-boggling that they don't think that that happened, that our economy actually still kept growing. Ontario lost thousands and thousands of good manufacturing jobs, but because of what we did on our side of the House, which is invest money and not cut a half a billion dollars out of the budget, our economy kept growing and people here kept working and our youth were employed.

I mean, it just—I can hear them chirping from their seats, and they don't like hearing the good-news stories. I love telling the good-news stories. When I go door-to-door, I talk about the good-news stories. You know, I look at all those people in my new area in South Pointe with those wonderful, wonderful five-, six-hundred-thousand-dollar homes, and I say, wow, you must be doing well underneath us. You've got a great, beautiful new home. You've got a 700,000, 800,000, million-dollar home, and guess who's at the till? It's the NDP in this province who are at the rudder right now, and those people are doing well.

Now, the members opposite, doom-and-gloom party, would say that those people are building those houses. They would say that those houses somehow just magically appear. You know, the—it looks like the Leader of the Opposition actually has done quite well underneath us too. I mean, he did buy the most expensive house in the city, seven-car heated garage,

12 sprinklers automatic on his lawn. You know, talking about living on the river in somebody else's constituency and being able to canoe to work, right? He was going to paddle that canoe down the river. I know sometimes we have to wait, you know, and see, you know, if he's really close by when he paddles in, right? When he's coming into the building, he's got to paddle. It's—he's—maybe he needs to invest in a motor for his canoe so he can get here a little faster, Mr. Speaker.

But, you know, investing over a million dollars for upgrades in high schools, we've invested in the shops. Last year I had the privilege of going around with the past Education minister. We were checking out some of those shops that were being renovated to help skilled trades, to help kids get apprenticeships and to get them trained up. Before they even leave high school they can finish and have a level 1 or even a level 2 of an apprenticeship program so that way they come out and they're earning money.

Now, you know, that's a stark contrast if we were to cut all those programs, because I'd like to know how they would fund—I guess it's that whole buttons and lint that they'd be filling in the potholes with, they'd be funding the new shops classes, because with their half a billion dollars in cuts you cannot have new shops classes. You cannot have those children being educated in all sorts of rural—we have investments in all of the rural schools for shop classes. We have investments all over. In every single riding, there's investments going on.

* (16:20)

And, you know, underneath the opposition we know what would what happen; those investments would—they would slam on the brakes, just like they do with Hydro. They would slam on the brakes and all of those jobs that are created when we do those types of investments to build—because when you build a new shop, well, guess what has to happen? You have to employ people to do that, so those people are being employed to build those shops. Then, afterwards, the next spinoff is that those students get to use these wonderful facilities and get trained up.

So it's quite the stark contrast for us. Like I was saying earlier, about Ontario with manufacturing losing jobs, Manitoba actually saw an increase of 1.1 per cent. Meanwhile, Canada—the rest of the country—lost 2.9 per cent. So the members opposite, the gloom-and-doom party, like to talk about how they think it's bad here, but the reality and the

numbers speak different. Stats Canada is saying that we actually gained 1.1 per cent in manufacturing while the rest of the country lost 2.9 per cent of their manufacturing sector.

Now, when you lose that manufacturing sector, what happens? You lose good jobs, you lose skilled tradesmen and you lose the ability for your children to be an apprentice; you're taking away the opportunity of our children, that is what those massive cuts proposed by the other side of the House would do—take away opportunities in Manitoba for our children. And I know as long as they're—all of us are around, we're going to fight hard to make sure that doesn't happen because we believe that our children are the future of this province and educating them is the key to that. Apprenticeship is one the keys to that.

So, you know, they like to try to say that, you know, Manitoba isn't great. Why are we the leader in aerospace industry? Why are they—why are we the leader in bus manufacturing if things are so bad here, as the members opposite would like to say? You know, why are we—how come when they were in power, they had cut bursaries to education?

We can see where their priorities were. They didn't have bursaries for education; they cut funding to schools. We saw the science building at the U of W was leaking, the roof was leaking because they didn't have the money to fix the building. Well, we have a different vision, where we actually fund it, so that way we can have great facilities to train up our youth and give them opportunities right here in at home.

We also made grants available to employers for matching—for apprenticeship. So that way we give them a grant if they have an apprentice, so it gives them another incentive to employ a young person in our province and have an apprentice here.

I don't understand what the members opposite have against education and our youth and this province, to be quite frankly, because all we ever hear from them is how bad things are. Now I know that that's their job, is to disagree sometimes, but they could really—they could tone it down and actually recognize that there are some great things going on here. Just a couple weeks ago there was a great article about all the cranes that we have in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, building—all the cranes in the skyline, never been so many and how investors' confidence is at an all-time high. You don't hear that from the members opposite. All you hear is the doom

and gloom, that they don't think that it's going well. Well, I think other people are disagreeing with them, like, you know, important people, like Stats Canada and the Conference Board of Canada, you know, just people that are very well knowledgeable on the economy happen to agree with the—or disagree with the members opposite and agree with our side.

It's very interesting that we have that—the facts and the figures are on our side but that's never been a strong suit for the members opposite. I mean, we've seen it lately with their federal cousins. You know, they're going to allow the whales to be hunted again because, you know, they don't want go with the facts and the figures, you know, they don't want to protect the environment, you know, they've cut all that legislation out to gut the environment. We know that's exactly where they would go if they—if the members opposite here had their hands at the till. We wouldn't see great things like protecting our parks. We wouldn't see all the great initiatives, the green initiatives coming forward; they would allow industry to dictate and run 'ruckshot' over top of our province and there would be no future here for our children or for Manitobans because there would be nothing left. It would become an open-pit mine is what Manitoba would be, to the lowest bidder. That's exactly what the members opposite vision is.

You know, the member—the Leader of the Opposition was in power during the '90s and it's been—often been called—not just by us, I mean, okay, if it was by us, it's—it might be political rhetoric. But it's been called, by a lot of people, the no-growth '90s. Well, why do you think that was? That's because of the policies put in place where they cut, cut, cut, cut. *[interjection]*

Oh, I hear the member for Morden and Winkler talking about how the Liberal government cut transfer payments to them in the '90s when they were in government.

Gee, I wonder where that's happening now, where the federal Conservative government is now saying that we have 18,000 less people, and they have cut \$100 million. So it's nice when they were in power that they could complain about how the Liberals were so bad to them.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we say, hey, you know what, we're standing up for Manitobans; there's 18,000 more people here than there actually is; give us the transfer payments that we're owed to provide those people with a good education and health care, the members opposite chirp and chime in because

they wouldn't dare want to go against their federal counterparts and say to them, you know what? You know what, Mr. Harper? We're going to stand up for Manitobans. We're not going to sit down. We're going to stand up, and we're going to talk about Manitoba. We're going to say that Manitoba actually has 18,000 more people than what's officially recognized. But they don't want to talk about that.

We hear—we just heard the member for Morden and Winkler talking about how, you know, oh, in the '90s, the Liberals cut for them. Well, what's happening right now? How about the ELA? How about the fact that the Province of Manitoba had to kick in money to save a federal program because it's such a valuable program, that we believe in the environment, so we actually had to kick in money to save a federal program that was going to cost them 10 times more to dismantle than it would to operate it for 50 years. That is shameful, Mr. Speaker.

And the members opposite would vote along with them every single time. We would have a Harper government just being 'extensioned' here with the Leader of the Opposition being in power. And that's not going to happen underneath us because we believe in a better Manitoba, and we're not going to let that happen. We're going to fight back every single time.

We're not going to allow tuitions to skyrocket 132 per cent like when they were in power. It's no wonder the youth were leaving our province underneath them. They couldn't afford to be here, and there were no jobs for them when they did get out of school because of the cuts given by the Conservative government of the day. They want to talk about—*[interjection]* Oh, we can talk all day long about all the great things that are going on in Manitoba.

You know, when—we're talking about enough of the population to fill our brand new stadium left this province. *[interjection]* And I hear the member opposite saying it's leaking. You know what, there's going to be problems with all new construction. Is he going to slag the construction company? You know what, they're going to fix it. Are you going to go after—I think it's EllisDon who built it—are you saying that they did a poor job? You know what, they're addressing the issue and they're going to fix it.

The point is that underneath them you wouldn't have that facility. We would be sitting in that old crumbling building because they wouldn't have

invested in things that are actually bringing in money to Manitoba.

We're going to get the Grey Cup. That's going to be over \$100 million to our economy. We're getting the NHL classic game on New Year's Eve. There's another almost \$100 million of infusion to our economy of people coming here. Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce happens to agree with the \$100 million that's going to happen with the Grey Cup. I see the member opposites, you know, chiming in that they don't think that there's going to be an infusion of money. Well, that's not what happened when Regina hosted it last year. There was a big infusion of money, over \$100 million. And we're going to see that infusion here because of investments that we've helped build, like our new stadium.

And the Jets are back with the new arena. If it was underneath them, we wouldn't have an arena. They wouldn't want to build an arena. We wouldn't have any iceplexes because all of the municipal governments would be starved for cash underneath their \$550 million worth of cuts. So you wouldn't have a hockey program at any arena in this province because every municipality would be starving.

We've increased funding to municipalities last year, and we did it again this year. We're giving them more under this infrastructure grant program to free up money for sewer and water and building and all of that stuff and lets them operate things like the arenas so children can have hockey or they can have soccer. If they had to take all of that money and invest it into the infrastructure that's crumbling, that—what wouldn't be addressed underneath their \$550 million worth of cuts—you wouldn't see those soccer and hockey programs because they couldn't afford to run the facilities to do so.

The money has to come from somewhere, Mr. Speaker. And we took on a challenge, and, you know what, yes, it wasn't a popular decision. And it was a hard decision. But we took on a challenge because we saw the need. We saw the need to invest in Manitoba. We saw the need to invest in jobs. To have people come here, come to Manitoba, raise a family, have a great job, let your children have the ability to do apprenticeship and have a great job and stay right here in Manitoba.

We don't want to see a mass exodus of 33,000 people like it was underneath them. We are attracting more people here, over 100,000 more people here since we've been in power.

Now, I think I'm going to have to end it at that. I'm going to give a chance—let some of my other colleagues speak. [*interjection*] I hear the members opposite chirping over there that, you know, they want me to sit down because they hate it when you talk about all the good things that are happening here. All they want to talk about is all the gloom and doom and how terrible it is here.

* (16:30)

But, you know what, Mr. Speaker, I'll give one of them a chance to get up and put some words on the record and maybe actually talk about apprentices in a positive light and talk about how all these jobs are going to do great things for people in Manitoba, investing in our future, investing in our children, investing in flood protection for our province, so we don't have to go through disasters. Let's hear what they have to say about it, Mr. Speaker, because I'm sure it's not going to be nearly as positive as my speech was.

Thank you very much.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Steinbach, on House business.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I think the member's left over from the 4-20 rally.

House business, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce that the private members' resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on establishing a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba, brought forward by the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private members' resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on establishing a dedicated stroke unit in Manitoba, sponsored by the honourable member for Charleswood.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now is there any further debate—oh, the honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, it's truly a great pleasure to be, for the record, having a commentary to this great Bill 33, The Apprenticeship

Employment Opportunities Act, that's being brought forward by Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald), and I—for the record, I really want to emphasize the importance of this. And today is a special day for a neighbour's son of mine who is in Winnipeg, drove out from Brandon because he was one of the great stories that we have to brag about, the apprenticeship program that's been brought forward.

And the individual's name is Jesse Chute. Here's the individual that was born and raised on a family farm, continues to be involved in the family farm and took the opportunity of graduating grade 12 and pursuing his career in agriculture, diesel mechanic apprenticeship program, which was at the ACC in Brandon, and he continues to work there. And today is a day of celebration for him being recognized as probably one of the outstanding students and showing an indication of the importance of a program that has been brought forward through Bill 33.

And it truly is a blessing that we have young individuals such as him that sees the importance and appreciates the opportunity that the government has provided financial support in addressing this issues and continues to be involved in the family farm.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the importance of agriculture in the province of Manitoba and we know the importance of the number of people employed in agriculture in the province of Manitoba. We can say 62,000 jobs directly or indirectly are linked to agriculture in the province of Manitoba, and it's continuing to grow, and it will continue to grow, in the province of Manitoba.

But also, Mr. Speaker, we have to indicate the importance of the economy that is brought forward when we talk about an industry that generates 9 per cent to 10 per cent of our GDP in the province of Manitoba. Agriculture definitely is a true, true contributor to the economy of the province of Manitoba.

Manitoba businesses have told us by about 2020 we'll need about 900 more carpenters, almost 900 more welders and about 700 more heavy duty equipment operators and about 400 aircraft mechanics, and this is an example today as my neighbour's son, Jesse Chute, is graduating, and he could quite easily fall into three of those categories, as I mentioned today. And it's truly an opportunity that I want to get up and recognize the importance

that we've brought forward in this opportunity for the event.

And today I'm going to shortly leave here, hopefully, and join him in the celebration that's taking place today at 111 Lombard Avenue where we've set up a great facility that's going to—where we've invested over \$1 million in equipment upgrading for high school technical training in classrooms, and over the last 10 years we've invested over \$10 million in technical training for classroom equipment and upgrades.

Administrators also have the incentive today of \$1,000 bonus for employees who would take apprenticeships for the first time and providing \$1,000. Manufacturers like Boeing, New Flyer, Canada Goose are expanding operations, are creating new jobs, simply because of they've taken the time to appreciate the apprenticeship program that's being provided. And also, Mr. Speaker, it provides a social benefit to the apprenticeship and the people hiring them, giving them the guarantee that they feel comfortable in the workplace once they leave the school and working with someone that has an interest to work with these young apprenticeship because it definitely is a necessity.

And I'm not going to take any more time as I know there's other speakers that wish to speak to this, but I definitely want to show my appreciation to the bill that's being presented. But more so thanks to the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald). Definitely, this is going to be a major staple to our economy in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you so much for having an opportunity to speak to this. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on this bill?

Is the House ready for the question? *[interjection]* Oh, pardon me, yes, right, it is—was previously agreed it's—shall remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). Thank you for the reminder.

**Bill 37—The Public Schools Amendment Act
(Connecting Schools to the Internet)**

Mr. Speaker: Now we'll proceed on to calling Bill 37, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Connecting Schools to the Internet), standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen).

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland? *[Agreed]*

Okay, it shall remain standing in the name. Further debate?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): You know, when I came here and saw this bill I got really excited about it, Bill 37, the public schools amendment, connecting schools to the Internet. And, you know, this is an issue that's been around for quite a long time, because what we're seeing in the—in not only Manitoba but in the rest of the country is that we're seeing a big digital divide. We're seeing the cities moving ahead with high-speed connectivity, and we're seeing the rural areas in many parts, even in United States, western United States, falling behind in terms of economic development and education and hospitals.

So a number of years ago now when Mr. Manley was the—I know the member for Lakeside's (Mr. Eichler) paying a lot of attention to this one—when Mr. Manley was the Liberal minister of—in the government of Jean Chrétien he was the industry minister and, at that time, the federal government made a lot of money available for fibre builds across the country. And Manitoba was involved to a certain extent in that, but, of course, there's no amount of money that could solve this problem overnight. It just takes—it's a huge, huge job and the costs were fairly high. So we did get some progress during that period of time, but for a number of years now there's been talk about having dark-fibre builds in rural areas.

And I'll give you an example, and this is a number of years ago now, but there was a school board—school division, I believe, in one of the United States' states, and what it did was they took—they went and laid their own dark fibre, and what they did was not only solve their own needs, right, they were able to sell off the excess capacity to local business and the municipalities. So the fact of the matter is here: even though the background and the notes on this particular bill are peculiar in particular to schools, the fact of the matter is that there is a much bigger picture here that we have to look at. I believe the concept was called MUSH—maybe the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) can bear this out—but was called MUSH, which was the M was municipalities; the U, universities; the S, schools; and the H were hospitals.

Now, for example, in the hospital sector, when the new hospital was completed in Brandon, there was a hospital maybe 60 miles from there in one of the rural towns. And because there was no, you know, high—there was no large bandwidth in the small town hospital, what they had to do when they did a MRI test or one of these tests in the hospital, they had to—if you were in the Brandon hospital you could get the results right away, but if you were in the—it may have been Minnedosa hospital, I'm not really sure—but if you were in that hospital, you had to wait for the Brandon technician to put the film in a case and put it on the bus and send it off to your hospital. And you can see the delays that you would—it would have there. Now, if you could somehow get the—have the bandwidth in those small towns, you could have the transfer of the images from the Brandon hospital to the smaller hospital, and you could achieve that right away.

*(16:40)

Also, in the hospital environment, you have a lot of Telehealth. You have procedures that can be done under the supervision of a specialist in a larger area like Winnipeg. You can perform procedures up north in the rural areas if you have the bandwidth to do it. But if you—if all you've got is dial-up capacity, then you're going to be very, very limited in how far can you go. And so I'm really surprised that we haven't had, for example, a dark-fibre build in Churchill or in Thompson. There's lots of abilities. We're not—I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that we're talking about huge amounts of money here.

And, as a matter of fact, if you want to talk about, you know, how you would go about this, the fact of the matter is there's a couple ways of laying the cable—of laying the dark fibre. The very best way is to trench it, but it's also the most expensive. But you can just simply let the stuff lie on the ground, I mean, if you want to. That's the cheapest possible way of doing it. Trenching it would be better.

But, if you can imagine for a moment a school division—any school division—the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) is paying attention to this—if you've got a school division out there—I mean, if the school division—*[interjection]*—he claims he's the only member listening. I'm not so sure about that.

But the fact of the matter is it's—that if you were to get the school division in Lac du Bonnet or another rural area to, you know, make its own dark-fibre build—do its own dark-fibre build, it could do, as was done in the United States situation where

they would have their—enough capacity for the school division, but they could sell off the excess to businesses, to the municipality and to the university in the—whatever happens to be in the area.

So I really am at a loss to know why we haven't moved quicker on this whole issue, and it may be—there may be a number of reasons why—maybe legislative reasons. Obviously, the fact that we're introducing a bill—we're passing a bill, Bill 37, dealing with the school—Public Schools Amendment Act to allow school boards to do this, clearly there's been some restriction in that. Now, we're going to loosen that up here, and what—all I'm saying to you is that there's a more—there's a bigger capacity here than just the school board, that we can leverage the capacity into these other areas.

Now, the members should be aware, especially the opposition members should be aware, that when they sold the telephone system for its cut-rate price to their buddies back—after they said they wouldn't do it in 1995—when they did that, they cut out a lot of the groundwork that was already in place. The telephone system had cable capacity, had fibre capacity in its inventory, and what did they do? They simply sold off this valuable resource to the private sector. And now, how is a school division, how is a municipality, you know—going to have to pay through the nose—pay through the nose—to MTS for their capacity?

The other issue that we were dealing with on this committee a number of years ago was the whole idea of the right of way. I mean, you have to know that the MTS had lots of right of way, and the government does have the capabilities that have access to the rights of way. We have the roadways; we have underground. There's the sewer connections all over Winnipeg. There's lots of public, you know, ditches and so on that we can cross to get this—to get the dark fibre laid.

But, once the Crown corporation, the MTS, was sold off to the private sector, all of a sudden, it was, whoa, we can't—we got—you have to negotiate with us because you are now going to have to pay us to use the right of way. You're going to have to pay us for the capacity that we install. You know, we'll let you go ahead and install it, but we're going to want a piece of the action.

So this is the kind of situation that these Conservatives, when they were in government, left us in, by virtue of selling off the telephone system to their buddies. And they don't recognize that because

they send—stand up routinely in the Legislature complaining.

The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) complains that he can't get his calls. Now I don't know who all is calling him in the first place, but he can't get service. But he's been around long enough that he should know the reason he can't get service is because of himself. You know, his MLA, his previous MLA and other members of their caucus turned around and took the quick route to keep their friends happy and sell off the telephone system for half its value, and they finance that, by the way. And then they wonder why there's not self-service and why there's not capacity and why—why—why—the rural areas are under-served in terms of not having the bandwidth and the economic opportunities that the city does.

Well, there was the option. You had the telephone system. They could have been ordered by the government to do these things. They could've even done the dark-fibre builds themselves, but, no, you didn't allow that to happen. And now we are stuck having to deal with another alternative, another way around it, so this, Mr. Speaker, is one way of facilitating the development of the dark-fibre development in this province through the school division angle.

And, while I say it worked in the United States—why it worked in the United States, perhaps we should be working on a program with the federal government to somehow build the municipalities into this as well and the health-care system into this as well, because I've indicated before if you can connect—you know, we were dealing a number of years ago, Mr. Speaker, with the electronic health record. And, you know, there was privacy issues and so on that were discussed at the time. But I firmly believe that the patient wants to be able to have his records or her records centrally available for every first responder, every hospital in the province.

It make no sense to me to have to go and be involved in a road accident somewhere on the way to Thompson and have the first responders not know what your medical history is and have to go and test your blood, do all these tests. And just the reduction in duplicated tests if we could connect all of the doctors' offices with the hospitals, have an electronic record, what you would see is your—millions and millions of dollars you would save every year in just having—reducing the number of tests because a doctor can simply go in and check and see that you

had your blood checked three or four days before and what the records were on that.

And so that never made sense to me that we wouldn't try to encourage an electronic health record as quickly as possible, that we would not try to connect up the doctors' offices and, you know what's being done now to the—and to the hospitals, connect it up so that what we would do is we could have instant access to these records. And you want to talk about saving lives; this is one way you do that: by having this electronic health record in place so that it will help people.

So, if you—and also, you know, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) last year was talking about how many people actually die in the hospital due to medical mistakes—medical mistakes—which, by and large, are caused by not having proper health records. You know, the nursing staff may give you the wrong medication because it can't read the writing, you know. And all you need to do is have a proper health record typed out so there can be no question about what dosage should be given to the patient and; therefore, you save money in terms of malpractice.

And you can see why in the United States when we go to these conferences—we're going to another conference in a few months, the Midwest conference—you'll find the Americans very interested in the whole 'helectronic' health record and the whole issue there. And the reason for that is because of the lawsuits in the United States. We don't see them here in Canada, but we see them in the States. And so you see, it was the almighty dollar—it was the almighty dollar—in the United States where doctors were practically being put out of business by the huge malpractice insurance bills they had to pay every year to deal with all these lawsuits.

* (16:50)

And, all of a sudden, bingo, we have a big drive towards the electronic health record, okay. And, once again, Mr. Speaker, it didn't happen here because you don't have the abilities, as you do there, to sue at will. And that's another topic, another story for another day, and I don't want to go into advocating that we in any way adopt the legal system of the United States where at least we have some responsibility here that if you sue somebody you have to be careful before you do because they can come back at you.

So the hospitals were only one part, Mr. Speaker, in this whole issue. The other one was the municipalities. Did you know that we converted the government a number of years ago? And I think it was the Filmon government that did it. It's one of the things they actually probably did right, but they went with an ERP system called SAP. It was borrowed from—it's from Germany and it's used in, you know, plants, pulp plants and stuff like that and had never been used in government, any government before, and Manitoba was—became the first government to adopt the SAP.

But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that—for example, in Nova Scotia, when they found they could aggregate the City of Halifax, the largest hospital and the provincial government, they could save huge amounts of money operating these systems because they had one central platform. They were all on SAP. But what we have here is the City of Winnipeg operates a different system, right? We as a government—they could've negotiated a central contract with SAP to do government in Manitoba, City of Winnipeg, you know, the whole works, and everything would have to be on the same platform. But that isn't what happened, so the City of Winnipeg went on its own. And you have this crazy situation where the economic development department of the Manitoba government was giving out grants to develop software programs.

So we were at this meeting, and this guy proudly told us that he was very thankful that the Manitoba government had seen some value in his program to develop—and given him a grant. We had given him a grant through an industry, trade and commerce, and we asked him, well, how're you going to sell this program? It was like an accounts receivable program for hospitals. You know what he's going to do? He's going to sell it to all the hospitals so that taxpayers of Manitoba not only got to contribute in developing the software program but then got the privilege of paying for it 14 times over, 14 times over selling it to the individual hospitals, and I never heard that champion of the taxpayer, you know, the champions of the taxpayers over there get up and say, well, there's got to be a better way, that we should have one central program that could talk to all of the different components.

It doesn't make any sense to me. You take a hospital, and I'm just—you know, I don't want to pick on hospitals, but, because all entities are the same you—they can't talk to one another. They can't even talk to one another within the hospital because one

department is on a different system than another, and so this is where we could save ourselves a lot of money if we were prepared to buy centrally, and, by the way, that was all—that was the whole reason behind having the regional health authorities in the first place was so you didn't have every hospital being run independently and having their own departments and multiple computer programs. *[interjection]* No, it was you, it was the member for Lakeside, his own government that brought in the regional health-care system that we had, and it was the NDP that cut the bureaucracy in half.

And, you know, maybe we should be cutting it some more. Maybe we should be cutting it some more. But the idea was solid. The idea was sensible. The Filmon government did what was—what it borrowed from, I think, Australia, New Zealand, other jurisdictions. You know, it was the fad of the decade and, you know, they brought it in. But that was the whole idea that we would get efficiencies. We'd be able to buy centrally. We could have one computer system program developed for all of the hospital system.

So we have to think ahead that we could somehow make—develop a system where we could connect the municipalities as well to this—to a central system and to the hospitals as well, and to the—all of the different sectors of Manitoba, and also leverage the capacity to develop industry in Manitoba, because that's where the economics of this all come about, is that you—is that if you—you know, we've been at different meetings with American politicians. And, in the Midwestern United States, the biggest issue they have there, and the Conservatives know this, too, is bandwidth—the fact that you can't develop industry in some jurisdictions because you don't have the capacity. You're on dial-up, sort of like the Conservative caucus. You know, you have to listen to them, you know, during question period; I'm convinced they're still on dial-up. You know, but we have to build the infrastructure, and, you know, it connects to other types of infrastructure too. But there's a whole infrastructure here that revolves around the bandwidth; the federal government recognizes that is something that has to be dealt with.

Now, when the government changed, and the Liberals passed on, you know, they—you know what happened, you know, the Conservatives laugh, they think it's funny. But the reality is that everything shut down in Ottawa in IT, because the Conservatives decided they want to outsource everything. You know, the Liberals spend a gazillion dollars with

John Manley trying to develop broadband across the country, and then all of a sudden, Stephen Harper came in in 2006, all of a sudden the system is shut down. Nothing's happening any more in IT, because now the new directive, the new direction is that, well, now we're going to let the private sector get involved. You know, let their buddies get in and try to make a buck and privatize it.

So, you know, they can put on all the masks they want, and pretend that they're not privatizers, that they're not going to go out and support their friends. But we know better than that because we know, at the end of the day, they can make all the speeches they want right now. But, at the end of the day, it's not—they can make all the speeches they want about how they're—how flexible they're going to be, but everybody knows, at the end of the day, when the election's over, the Chamber of Commerce is going to get involved, and they're going to give the orders. They're going to say, no, guys, all those speeches you made, just throw them out. Throw them out. That isn't the way it's going to be. You're going to take orders from us. And the matter of fact, that's what the Premier and his—the—you know, he would be doing because that's the history of Conservatives. Doesn't matter whether it's Manitoba, Saskatchewan, anywhere in the country—they follow that agenda and, basically, you know, simply work to get elected and then follow this agenda of privatizing all under the guise of, well, we're going to lower taxes; you know, we're going to lower taxes and we've got to have freedom, you know, freedom to—freedom for millionaires. I guess that's the—that should be the motto of the Conservative Party, you know, on all their election signs, you know, Freedom for Millionaires.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that we are getting probably somewhere near the closing hour here.

But, you know, I really have to say that this bill has a lot of ramifications. You know, we can pretend that somehow it's a very minor change to some legislation that's going to facilitate some dark-fibre bandwidth production across the province. But it's way more, way more than just that. This has to be encouraged by the government. It has to be supported by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). It has to be supported by the whole—all the members of this Chamber to promote not only an—you know, efficient economy but an improving economy, better business opportunities. How do you expect rural areas to grow and develop when you've got that disparity, where you've got high-speed Internet in the city of Winnipeg and outside you have dial-up? And the members know that. And the members should support that.

So, Mr. Speaker—

An Honourable Member: No, keep going.

Mr. Maloway: Oh, you want me to speak longer on this issue. Well, I—so I will. I was saying, you know, the fact of the matter is that this government, this—the Conservatives, when they were in power, they cut education—1993, and our member for the Gimli, I've heard him many times make this—

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), and when this matter is again before the House—and that the hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 24, 2014

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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