

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

**Official Report**  
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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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
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MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
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WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 15, 2014

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader):** Yes, on a point of order.

I understand this weekend the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), as well as Michael Kelly, who's political staff, will be heading to Ukraine to serve as observers in the election, as well as other Manitobans.

So on behalf of everybody in this Chamber, I want to wish them a very productive time in Ukraine as we work together to hopefully allow the people of Ukraine to truly exercise their democratic rights. On behalf of all members of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, to wish them the utmost in safety and a safe return to Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** Official Opposition House Leader, on the same order—point of order?

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** The same point of order.

While I didn't hear a rule of transgression, Mr. Speaker, clearly that was an acceptable and well-appreciated point of order by the Government House Leader. We appreciate his comments, and we, of course, join in wishing our colleague the member for St. Paul a safe journey.

We know that he takes this responsibility seriously with passion and he's looking forward not simply to an adventure, though it's something of that, he's looking forward to making a difference for people. And all of us in our life here, I think, came to this Legislature to make a difference in the lives of people, whether that's in Manitoba or more globally, which the member for St. Paul and also Mr. Kelly, who is going as well to the Ukraine, are doing it with that purpose.

So we wish them, of course, safe travels. We wish them well, and, of course, we wish the people

of Ukraine well, peace and freedom in the days ahead. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank honourable members for their advice on the point of order. Since I did not hear a breach of any particular rule, I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order.

But at the same time, I'd like to wish our colleagues well in their future endeavours as they represent us in observing the elections to take place in Ukraine. And I'm not sure if honourable members know this, it is our—also, indeed, our honour to have our Chief Electoral Officer participating in that process, so we wish her well as she participates with our colleagues from this Chamber as well.

And I'm sure that—I hope that they will come back safe and that they will do the tasks necessary to ensure that democracy is appreciated in those areas.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, we'll move on to routine proceedings. Introduction of bills? No bills.

### PETITIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll move on to petitions.

#### Tabor Home—Construction Delays

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Morden's population has grown nearly 20 per cent in five years.

(2) Twenty-three per cent of Morden's population is over the age of 65.

(3) The community worked for years to get the provincial government's commitment to build a new personal-care home and, as a result, construction on the new Tabor Home was finally promised in 2010.

(4) The Minister of Health initially indicated that construction of the new Tabor Home would commence in 2013.

(5) The Minister of Health subsequently broke her promise and delayed construction until spring 2014.

(6) The Minister of Health broke that promise as well, delaying construction again until fall 2014.

(7) In March of 2014, the Minister of Health broke her promise yet again, once more delaying construction of Tabor Home until 2015.

(8) Too many seniors continue to live out their final days and months in facilities far from home and family because of a shortfall of personal-care home beds in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to stop breaking their promises, stop the delays and keep their commitment to proceed with the construction of Tabor Home in 2014.

And this petition is signed by I. Friesen, J. Friesen, N. Woods and many other fine community members.

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

#### **Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of B. Montour, J. Morrison, E. Davies and many other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

##### **George Taylor Richardson**

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to mourn the loss of a Manitoba icon, George Richardson.

George was an incredible leader in the business community. For nearly three decades, he was the president and CEO of James Richardson & Sons. His vision helped grow what was once a small family business into one of Manitoba's most successful international companies and one of the oldest privately owned companies in Canada. George was a savvy entrepreneur who took a hands-on approach to building his family's business. As a civilian pilot, he flew all over North America to oversee company operations for himself.

George gave many gifts to the province. At the corner of Portage and Main, one of his greatest construction accomplishments, the Richardson Building, stands as a shining reminder of the incredible impact he had on our jurisdiction.

During his time as governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, he moved their corporate headquarters to Winnipeg and installed the Nonsuch in the Manitoba Museum. He was also influential in the decision to transfer the company's extensive archival collections to the Archives of Manitoba. Those records are a national and, indeed, an international treasure. They not only document 300 years of Hudson Bay company's history, but they tell the story of Canada's development and the birth of modern-day Manitoba. George had the generosity and foresight to ensure that this wealth of knowledge will forever be preserved here at home.

Mr. Speaker, outside of his successful career and philanthropy, George was an avid outdoorsman. He was a founding trustee of the Fort Whyte Nature Centre and a member of the Lakewood Country Club.

In recognition of his exemplary community service, George received an-honorary doctorates from the University of Manitoba and the University

of Winnipeg, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. He was also inducted into the Order of Manitoba in 2000 and the Order of Canada in 2003.

I extend my deepest condolences to George's family, including his wife, Tannis, two children, David and Hartley, and nine grandchildren. He was predeceased by his daughters, Pamela and Karen.

Mr. Speaker, George Richardson was a great man. He was humble, down-to-earth and fully committed to all aspects of his life. Whether it was his business, his family or his philanthropy, George put his heart into it all. Today let us honour his memory and the tremendous contributions he made to our province.

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Thank you to the Premier for those words.

We were lucky to have had George Richardson. This province mourns the loss of a great man but at the same time should celebrate the life of a great man.

I first had the opportunity to meet Mr. Richardson when he was—when he consented to act as my fundraising chair when I left here to try to bring the two Conservative factions together across the country in what some would consider a Don Quixote-like exercise. Mr. Richardson saw something in me, I guess, and something in the cause that he was a believer in, and he believed in accountability. He believed in responsibility and he lived his life that way. He consented to do that job for me, and in bringing—you know, one of his great qualities was his willingness to support, you know, noble Manitoba causes, I guess. Sometimes they were winners, sometimes they were losers, but certainly they were things that he saw as important for our province, and it was wonderful to have the chance to get to know George and his family better through that process.

My colleague from Tuxedo will share some of her perspectives later and she'll talk more about George's great business contributions to our province. I'll just share a personal perspective here now and say that not everything that the Richardson family touched turned to gold. George's grandpa was a successful man in Ontario, but he made a purchase in Manitoba of some land, sight unseen, and came here thinking, being told that it was top-notch, fertile

agricultural property. Ventured out to Portage la Prairie and asked the local people where he could go and view his new farm the next spring, and they said, what exactly is the location? He gave them the section, township, range, and until after the—he was told that it was prime marshland, wonderful piece of reeds.

And as is typical of the Richardson family, they turned that lemon into lemonade and they built a lodge out there. Some of you know of it, and perhaps in some way it got George involved in conservation and he attests to that. And his, you know, we know of—many people know of his great business contributions, his great charitable works, but he supported many, many causes without celebrity, without desiring attention to be brought on him, as the Premier said, a humble man, honourable man.

And that lodge, of course, was the site of many helicopter landings. George was—loved his helicopter rides. In fact, he challenged the practice in those days when he wanted to become a helicopter pilot. He did not want to become a pilot of a plane, but up 'til that time the requirements had been that you had to have the pilot's licence. He had never understood that. He didn't understand why you had to have a pilot's licence for a plane to fly a helicopter, and he challenged it. He did the research and he found out that, in fact, it wasn't actually, though it was a practice, a real requirement, and he was able to get his pilot's licence for his copter and explored all over the province.

In fact, many times we would see a copter going over late in the night as I was a boy growing up and Dad would say that's probably George Richardson, and it may well have been because he certainly loved to get out and explore the province.

He loved this province. He gave much to it. The Fort Whyte work that he did, of course, the nature centre has been valuable. His membership in the Lakewood Country Club in my home turf area, of course, near Delta Marsh, is something that our local people celebrate. We're pleased and proud to have the association with the Richardson family, and all Manitobans are pleased and proud to have had that association with George.

I would really highly recommend, if you haven't had the chance to read it, the book that George did. It's been out about four or five years now. It's excellent reading and it's a testament to a life well lived, the life of an inventor, of a giver, of a creative

problem solver and a person who this province was blessed to have.

Our condolences, of course, go to Tannis. They've had a wonderful life together. I know she'll miss him. We all will.

Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, we have all lost a great Manitoban, and George Richardson has contributed so much to our province over so many years. He was a phenomenal entrepreneur, built up a variety of businesses, had an extraordinary talent for getting things done and seeing what needed to be done.

He also had an extraordinary talent for being able to relate to people who worked for him. He was not only a pilot and operated a helicopter, but he was intimately familiar with quite a variety of construction equipment. And, at times, when there was concerns among the workers, and he was able to go out there and not just talk to them but show that he could operate the Caterpillar or the other machinery that was there and create a relationship that solved problems in a way that would not have been possible had he been just a, sort of, an imperial head of the business. He was really hands-on. He knew the businesses that he ran inside and out, and I think that's part of the reason that he did so well.

He was also an incredible fundraiser and did many things for many good causes, and I think for that we owe him a great debt of gratitude and for—to his family, who have, you know, allowed him to contribute and who continue to contribute.

So I extend condolences on behalf of the Liberal Party and members of the Liberal Party and just want to say thank you to the whole Richardson family and remember the tremendous contribution that George Richardson has made.

Thank you.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** May I ask leave of the House to have a moment of silence and reflection in respect for Mr. Richardson?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to observe a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### **95th Anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Labour, with a ministerial statement?

**Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Yes, please. Ninety-fifth anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike.

**Mr. Speaker:** Give us a moment, we'll distribute it.

**Ms. Braun:** Ninety-five years ago today, one of the most influential strikes in Canadian history began. Over the course of five weeks, the Winnipeg General Strike brought labour issues and the importance of workers' rights into the social consciousness of Canada. As the largest strike in Canadian history, the strike paved the way for social justice, becoming the platform for future labour reforms across the country.

\* (13:50)

Following the First World War, Canadians were faced with massive unemployment, rampant inflation and terrible working conditions. What began as a small-scale conflict between the city's building trade and metal shop workers became a seminal moment in Canadian history.

Mr. Speaker, within the course of a few hours, 24,000 workers took to the streets of Winnipeg, ostensibly shutting down the city and much of the province's economic activity. With workers off the job, banks, streetcars, mail, telephone, food delivery, water and power supply, police and fire services were all cut off. City services were at a standstill.

Soon more than 30,000 people were in the streets, in a city of only 175,000, demanding the right to collective bargaining, a living wage, an eight-hour workday and improved working conditions. While those picketing viewed the strike as a legitimate, peaceful effort to demand the recognition of the right to organize and establish a living wage, many within the government and business communities did not. After five weeks, the strike ended following a violent clash between national police and protesters resulting in two deaths and dozens of injuries. Though the strike ended, the labour movement continued to grow, largely thanks

to the strike's legacy that promoted workers' rights and the role of labour in politics.

At the core of the Winnipeg General Strike was a demand for fair wages and safe work, and our government is committed to upholding this legacy. We have raised the minimum wage every year since forming government. We also strongly believe that every worker deserves to come home safe at the end of the day, and we want Manitoba to be the safest place to work in North America. We have introduced new construction safety legislation to make sure highway workers are protected while on the job. Staying safe at work also means having the ability to reject and report unsafe working conditions. We have also introduced new legislation that takes aim at claim suppression to make sure injury or incident is reported to WCB.

The Winnipeg General Strike's legacy lives on in our safe work legislation, our commitment to fair wages and in the value so many of us place in social justice. Even 95 years later, it still resonates in the hearts of Canadians.

Thank you.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a historic Canadian event, the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. This event has become etched in our province's landscape and one that paved the way to labour reform not only here in Manitoba but across Canada.

The Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 occurred because of hard-working labourers who made a valiant and a successful effort to improve worker rights for all. The strike saw at least 30,000 workers leave their jobs to revolt against poor working conditions and call for fair living wages and to bring forward like never before the influence of collective voices.

After five weeks, the strike ended, even though two people lost their lives in the conflict. The strike revolutionized the deep social, economic and political divisions that evolved as Winnipeg evolved as a city.

Mr. Speaker, 95 years ago, people in the city of Winnipeg joined together to call for better protection of their rights as labourers and in their work environments. Employees have the right to safety, fairness and protection in their workplaces. We must work together in this House to provide a safe workplace for all workers.

As we reflect on the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, I also urge all members in this House to remember that we cannot be complacent when it comes to safety, fairness and protection of workers in Manitoba today.

Thank you.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that the strike, Winnipeg strike of 1919, was an important point in Manitoba history, an important, progressive point in the history of our province. It was—as has been mentioned, right after the First World War there was a large number of people who had returned from the war and who were seeking employment and not able to get it readily. It was also at a time when there had been the beginnings of very significant changes over the previous several years under the Norris government with The Fair Wage Act, the Workers Compensation Board established, the right to vote for women and the establishment of the Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council to enforce things like The Minimum Wage Act, which had been passed just the year before in 1918.

But it was into this progressive time that the surge of unemployment happened, and it was a time when it was very clear that workers were standing up. They were not going to be satisfied for measures which only went part of the way.

And I think that we can recognize the important role that people who have worked in Manitoba have played in building our province, and we need to continue to recognize the important role that workers in labour have played.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further ministerial statements?

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing none, I have some guests to introduce.

Seated in the public gallery, from the Community School we have 10 students, ages 13 to 18, under the direction of Cole Dreher, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### STARS Helicopter Services Contract Costs

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have a well-deserved reputation as smart shoppers. They work very hard at stretching their dollars, and they deserve a government that does the same. But what they have instead is a government that shrinks their dollars.

And Manitobans work hard for their money, and when money is taken off their kitchen table in higher taxes, many of them taxes that were promised by this government not to be imposed, they deserve to expect the money would be well spent.

But the STARS contract highlights the problem with a government that can't get its spending smart. When we pay, according to the Auditor General, six times as much per mission as other provinces, that's a serious problem. When Manitobans are shut out of the bidding process, that, too, is a serious problem. And when a project is untendered, that lack of tendering and that lack of competition means that we pay too much.

Can the Premier verify that, in the case of the STARS contract, the actual amount of overspending by this government was around \$100 million?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, in 2009 we had a flood and we brought in the STARS helicopter service at a time of great need in rural Manitoba, and they served us very well during that period of time.

In 2011 we had the flood of the century in Manitoba and we again engaged the non-profit organization known as STARS to come to Manitoba to provide relief to people that were trapped on the land and not otherwise accessible by roads because those roads were flooded out, Mr. Speaker. Again, they served us very well.

And as we were recovering from that 2011 flood and many people—and still, unfortunately, too many people—were not back home, we decided to continue that service because it had an exemplary record, not only in Manitoba but also in the province of Alberta. So we decided to continue that service. We continued that service by putting the lives of

Manitobans as the top priority, and they flew many missions that saved many lives, Mr. Speaker.

And now when we've encountered issues with respect to that service, we've put an oversight committee in place under the dean of the faculty of medicine, Brian Postl, Dr. Brian Postl. And we are ensuring that that service meets all the standards that we have in Manitoba for patient safety to ensure that they get the best possible service in this province, and we will continue to do so.

#### Untendered Contracts Fair Market Competition

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the government agreed to a 10-year untendered contract, which broke all their purchasing rules, for \$159 million. And the Premier has no idea whether that was fair market price or not because, of course, he didn't shop around. Manitobans shop around. Manitobans deserved a chance to bid on the job. They didn't get that chance.

Now, the Auditor General is very clear in her comments, and she says, we cannot conclude on whether departments and special operating agencies ensured fair market value because we don't know, because the way to obtain competitive value is to do competitive shopping. This STARS contract's just the tip of the iceberg.

\*(14:00)

The Auditor General goes on to say in her audit, and this would be something that it might be wise for members opposite to read, that for the vast majority of the 80 contracts we examined there was no documentation to show that the price quoted represented fair market value.

That's not smart shopping. When you take money away from Manitobans, from their homes, from their small businesses, when you take it away from them, they have to stretch their dollar harder.

Why doesn't this government stretch the dollars of Manitobans rather than shrink them?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the paramedics that serve us on land—and of which we have hundreds more now in Manitoba, and we've trained many more—the paramedic service that flies through the STARS helicopter is fundamentally important to the safety and well-being of Manitobans, particularly when their lives are at risk during major events like floods or other natural disasters. And we believe that service needed to be



provided in Manitoba on a continuous basis, particularly when we were recovering from the worst flood of the century in the province.

And there are provisions in the policies that we have, policies that the members opposite have themselves supported, for the public interest to take precedence at times of critical need. And that's what we did. We provided the service. We didn't go shopping. We went to look after people and to make sure they were safe.

#### **Accessibility of Information**

**Mr. Pallister:** And they blew \$100 million which can't be used to help people in this province, Mr. Speaker, and it was the flood of the century, not the excuse of the century. And the Auditor General says right in her report that there was no legitimate reason for giving that untendered contract. That's what the Auditor General says, and we agree with her observations.

Now, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, with these dollar shrinkers in charge, there's a serious problem as well, because with untendered contracts, the only way to really get to the bottom of whether you get value is to know about them. And the only place you can get the information on untendered contracts with this government is at a single computer terminal in the Legislative Library. Have they not heard of the Internet? The fact of the matter is Manitobans can't even get the data.

So what the Auditor General says is that in 87 per cent of over \$200 million of untendered contracts, the information isn't even available on that single computer terminal. Now, how are we going to be able to determine, as a people, that we're getting value for the dollars taken from us if we can't even get information on the contracts that are awarded in an untendered manner?

I ask the Premier again: Will he change his approach and finally abide by the policies and laws of this government in respect of The Financial Administration Act and post the information so it's accessible to all Manitobans?

**Mr. Selinger:** I need to remind the member opposite that this was the government that changed The Auditor General Act to do value-for-the-money audits. They weren't allowed to do that when the members opposite were in government. They had to 'strick'—they had to stick to very narrow accounting reviews of things, and they—only thing they could comment on was the two sets of books that the

members opposite used to keep where they would hide their deficits.

We brought in value-for-the-money auditing, which allows for the auditor to go in and review programs for their efficacy, for their efficiency, for their ability to deliver good public services. And when they give us their recommendations, we take them seriously.

But in the case of STARS and in the case of many other untendered contracts, during that 2011 people—public safety was No. 1. Keeping communities from going under water was No. 1. When we needed to build a dike, we built it. When we needed an ambulance to protect people, we flew the ambulance with a full paramedic team. The members opposite would have been out shopping while we were saving lives.

#### **Nursing in Manitoba Provincial Numbers**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General told this government they had no excuse not to tender that contract. I would remind the Premier of that.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday a government news release said that there are more nurses at the bedside. In fact, there is a critical shortage of nurses at the bedside.

Manitoba's nursing shortage in the public health-care system has hit a record high of 13 per cent, according to the Minister of Health yesterday. That is a shortage of almost 1,800 nurses at the bedside.

Can the Minister of Health tell Manitobans why she didn't include that in her news release yesterday?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for the question.

We all know the great work that nurses do and how important they are at the bedside of our loved ones, and we also know there's more work to do in terms of tackling their workload issues and that is why we're working with nurses to take on those challenges. Yesterday, during concurrence, the member for Charleswood brought up comments by the MNU about those challenges.

Now, when they were in government, they ignored nurses. They ignored and refused to work with them. Mr. Speaker, in April of 1998 the Manitoba Nurses' Union issued a report entitled Health Care in Manitoba: A Report from the Front

Lines, and I will table that report right now. That report, on page 34, says, 1,000 nurses have been laid off by government. That's according to the Manitoba Nurses' Union. Up to this day, opposition is still denying that that happened.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask them, maybe they should talk to the Nurses' Union.

#### **Private-Duty Nurse Costs**

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP know perfectly well what happened to those 1,000 nurses and know—and their source of information is the MNU, not their own data in their own system. So shame on them.

Mr. Speaker, about 6,100 nurses who work in Manitoba right now work in the private system. Many will be private-duty nurses, or agency nurses as they are now called. Many of them are hired to fill in for the nursing shortage in the public system.

So I would like to ask the Minister of Health to tell Manitobans: How much money do RHAs spend on private-duty nurses to fill in for the chronic nursing shortage in the public health-care system?

**Ms. Selby:** So she doesn't like the numbers or the quotes provided by the Manitoba Nurses' Union and she doesn't like the numbers that we use that are from the independent colleges of nurses.

I'd just like to ask, if she's got a problem with those numbers, perhaps she needs to talk to the union. Maybe she needs to talk to the independent colleges, because we believe them when they tell us that 1,000 nurses were fired under them.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, she knows full well that those nurses were transferred within the system just like they are now. That's right.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I'm having difficulty hearing the question posed by the honourable member for Charleswood. I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members.

**Mrs. Driedger:** And if they want to go down that line, they just fired 18 nurses at Grace Hospital, then. Same theory, Mr. Speaker, same thing—same thing.

Mr. Speaker, I have freedom of information documents that show almost \$20 million was spent over the last three years paying private-duty nurses to fill in for the nursing shortages in hospitals and

personal-care homes. Without these nurses our public health-care system would crash and burn.

I would like to ask this Minister of Health: Why didn't she put that in her news release yesterday?

**Ms. Selby:** On this side of the House we respect the work of all nurses in this province.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how they want to slice and dice it, when they came into office, when the Tories took over government there were more nurses. By the time they left there were 1,500 less nurses, and now under us there are a record number of nurses practising in Manitoba.

#### **Tabor Home Construction Update**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that this Minister of Health wants to talk about her health-care record.

Mr. Speaker, in November of 2010 this NDP government made a commitment to the community of Morden to build a new Tabor Home, but the Health Minister pledged that construction would start in March 2013, but it didn't. Two years later, in December 2012 the NDP government announced the project a second time, saying construction would now get under way in spring 2014, but it didn't. There is no construction under way on the new Tabor Home.

Why does this NDP government keep breaking its promise to build Tabor Home?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** I was very pleased, not long after I became Minister of Health, to visit Morden. I got a chance to visit the Boundary Trails hospital as well as meet with the Tabor Home board because I wanted to personally pass along my support for this project.

\* (14:10)

Mr. Speaker, rather than freezing health capital like they did when they were in government, we're continuing to build, and one of those projects, of course, is the Tabor personal-care home. I look forward to it being built.

It did take longer so far than we would've anticipated. There were some redesigns that were needed at the end. That has taken a little more time than we want, but we did want to make sure that it came in on budget and that was why we had to look at some of those redesigns.

I agree that we'd like to see it happening soon, and I do hope to be turning the sod very soon. We expect to release the tender by the end of the summer. That should allow us to give the construction contract by the end of 2014, 2015 at the very latest, and construction can take point right after that. And we expect the construction to continue 'til about mid-2016.

**Mr. Friesen:** What the Health Minister isn't saying is that when she visited Morden on March the 10th, the local papers ran the headline Health Minister confirms Tabor Home project delay again.

Mr. Speaker, this Health Minister has pushed back the construction of Tabor Home yet again now to the end of 2014 and beyond. This is unacceptable. The announcement for Tabor Home was in 2010. Construction was to start in 2013, then spring of 2014, then fall of 2014.

Why is the government breaking its promise to proceed with the construction of Tabor Home in spring of 2014, breaking its promise to community, stakeholders and seniors?

**Ms. Selby:** Yes, I did tell the folks on the board that it is taking longer than we would have wanted, but we're committed to the project and it's moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what we aren't going to do, though. We're not going to cancel all health capital like they did when they were in government. We're not going to cut \$37 million from rural health like they did when they were in government. We're not going to introduce home-care fees like they did—were in government. And we're also not going to do what they promised to do when they're in government next time, and that's cut a half a billion dollars from the budget.

**Mr. Friesen:** It's unbelievable that the minister stands up today and uses the opportunity to open the door to even further delays on Tabor Home into 2015, as she says today.

In the gallery today are 50 community members from Morden, community members, seniors, board members, community leaders. And I proudly table, on their behalf, 200 petitions bearing the signatures of 3,000 community members, on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Morden has a message for this NDP government: Proceed to the Tabor Home construction now. No more press

releases, no more delays, no more excuses, no more ribbon cuttings, no more broken promises.

Will the Health Minister make that commitment right now?

**Ms. Selby:** As I told the people when I was visiting there, and as I say again today, we are absolutely committed to moving this project forward, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly, it's taken longer than we would like it to, and we're going to do what we can to move it a little faster, but we do expect to be able to release that tender by the end of summer. That means we'll have that construction contract by the end of this year or early next year, and we should see shovels in the ground very soon after that.

We've shown that we're committed to this by one particular way, and that's because we've put it in the budget to build this. And I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, did he vote for that?

#### **Dominion City Home-Care Services**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** It's hard to believe this minister after she went door to door saying she wouldn't raise the PST. This government's record in rural Manitoba is simple as three: cut, cut, cut.

The home-care office in Dominion City is being closed by this government. This affects programs and employees such as the home-care resource co-ordinator—co-ordinator, public health nurse, service to seniors co-ordinator and many others. Seniors will now have these services cut completely and will have to drive over 30 kilometres to access these services.

Mr. Speaker, why is it that this minister is cutting front-line services in Dominion City and all of rural Manitoba?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** That's just not true. We are not cutting services. We're actually taking money from administration areas and putting it into front-line services.

We're celebrating 40 years of home care in this province, home care that is seen across this country as the best model in the country.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, there's only one threat to home care and they sit right over there. They tried to privatize it before, and they'll do it again if they're in government.

**Mr. Graydon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, she is cutting the services and celebrating 40 years of cutting services.

The government promised that seniors wouldn't pay more PST; they lied. The government promised that they would take 100 per cent of the school tax off seniors' tax bills; they lied. The government promised not to cut front-line services; they lied.

Seniors deserve access to services close to home. What they're getting, however, are programs that are being cut. Services are being moved 30 kilometres away.

Mr. Speaker, why did this government make their promise to the seniors? Why did they break their promise?

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Speaker, not only we are expanding our home care, but we're also hiring more nurses, more doctors, more nurse practitioners. We're opening clinics closer to people and we're bringing in mobile clinics to people who don't have a clinic nearby them.

Mr. Speaker, we know that tens of thousands of seniors rely on home care in this province every day, allowing them to stay at home for as long as they can, to have dignity in the home, to have the help they need to be there. We have seen that it is one of the—it is known as the best home-care system in the country, and we work every day to make it even stronger.

We're increasing the budget to health care. We're taking it from administration costs and putting it in the front line. They keep voting against it.

**Mr. Graydon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, they've closed 19 ERs in the province of Manitoba. Those are front-line services.

They've closed a home-care co-ordinator and the public health nurse and the service to seniors co-ordinator in the city of Dominion City—in the town of Dominion City. The RHA and the Manitoba Health has told the municipality that the reasons for the cuts is because the RHA and Manitoba Health will not provide a dedicated Internet line into offices that are not in hospitals or care homes. This means that dedicated home-care offices across Manitoba will be closed.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government cutting access to home-care offices around Manitoba, and how many other front-line services does this minister plan to cut in the future?

**Ms. Selby:** Well, none, Mr. Speaker. We're hiring more front-care workers.

And let's be really clear, Mr. Speaker. The funding for rural ERs is on the table. We are actively recruiting. In the last couple of months we've seen 18 new doctors recruited to rural Manitoba. That's on top of the 120 we've recruited to rural Manitoba since we've come into office and the 560 that we've recruited to Manitoba since we've come into office.

There is one government that closed ERs when they were here. It was the Tory government. They closed an ER permanently at the Misericordia hospital and four more overnight. It's not us who closed ERs. That's their record.

### **Vita & District Health Centre ER Reopening Timeline**

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Twenty ERs closed and counting more.

The Vita hospital emergency room has been closed for 574 days. The Minister of Health has been asked the question time and time again. I will ask it one more time.

Will the people of southeast Manitoba see the doors to their ER reopen?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Well, Mr. Speaker, and we believe that families deserve quality care and they deserve it close to home, and that is why we're always working to bring health care closer to families.

As I've told this member before, the funding for staffing has not been removed from the Vita ER. The money for staffing is still on the table.

But we do have to worry about patient safety, and we know now that there's not enough doctors to provide 24-hour coverage there. We do know that the vital health centre is still able to offer clinical and hospital support, but patient safety is No. 1.

As I said, we have in the last couple of months just recruited 18 new doctors to rural Manitoba, and we're going to keep doing that. The staffing money is on the table and we're going to keep working to get that ER open.

### **Collaborative Emergency Centre**

**Mr. Smook:** The Minister of Health promised that Vita would be a pilot site for a collaborative emergency centre. Instead of keeping her word, Vita has been without an ER for over a year and a half

and this is looking more and more like another broken promise from this government.

When will this minister be opening a collaborative emergency centre in Vita, or is this just another broken promise?

\* (14:20)

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Speaker, it takes 10 years to grow a doctor. It is a large investment for the Province. It's a large investment for the student who's going through it.

When you cut medical spaces, as they did when they were in government, they cut down to 70 medical spaces. They need to look in the mirror and wonder why there aren't doctors in some areas.

But today, Mr. Speaker, we've turned that around. Today we graduated the largest medical doctor class in the history of this province.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

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

**Mr. Smook:** Mr. Speaker, the provinces of Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have successfully created collaborative emergency centres over the last few years.

The Minister of Health promised that Vita would be a pilot site. It has been a year and a half, and the minister and the current—the Minister of Health have one thing in common, they broke their promise.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Minister of Health break her promise to the people of southeastern Manitoba?

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

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

**Ms. Selby:** Mr. Speaker, when we came into office not only did we add back the 15 medical spots to train doctors that they cut, we added 25 more. And that's why today we graduated 109 graduates, the largest doctor class ever to come out of the University of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, 90 of those new grads are staying in Manitoba to complete their residency, 34 are going into family medicine and 19 of those are doing a residency in rural Manitoba.

### University of Manitoba Graduate Student Fee Increase

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, in yesterday's Free Press the Minister of Education adviser said, and I quote, it is not appropriate for the minister to comment until COPSE has completed its review of the current application, end quote, in regard to the University of Manitoba's request to raise graduate student fees by 327 per cent.

Today, Mr. Speaker, they stated in the Winnipeg Free Press, the minister has asked the university to go back and further consult with students and he has advised them to withdraw this proposal to COPSE, end quote.

So I ask, Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Which is it?

**Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning):** As you know, our government continues to invest in our educational system in order to create quality education so that we can have good jobs and our young people stay right here in Manitoba. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we have among the lowest tuition rates here in Canada and that's why we fund education, whether in the post-secondary system or in the K-to-12 system, quite across—all across the educational spectrum.

We made it clear to the University of Manitoba yesterday that our government is about a quality, accessible and affordable education. It was like that when we were first elected and, Mr. Speaker, that's not going to change.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Mr. Speaker, this minister—this new Minister of Education has not yet passed Bill 63, which would bring COPSE under his management into the department, yet he believes that he is once again way above the law. He feels that he could be making the decisions for them even before the bill has passed.

Isn't this typical of this—of today's NDP government, Mr. Speaker? First the illegal 15 per cent PST increase and now a lack of respect for his very own COPSE department.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a pattern before us. What's next?

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the pattern on this side of the House is continue to invest in education to make sure our kids get a quality, accessible and affordable education.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in classrooms across this universe—across this province. We want to make sure that our kids are well positioned to get a quality education, to go on and get a good job and stay and live right here in Manitoba. That's why on this side of the House we invest in education.

But on that side of the House, when the Leader of the Opposition was at the Cabinet table, they cut funding to schools, universities and colleges.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Mr. Speaker, on that side of the House they break the law and they skirt their own policy and procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has created a mess of the post-secondary education system. He has forced the University of Manitoba to propose a 327 per cent student fee increase. He is off-loading his problems onto the University of Manitoba and its students, and he is disrespecting his own process for overriding the authority of COPSE.

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister stand up for post-secondary institutions and students of this wonderful province of ours?

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that's one of the most tortured narratives I've ever heard in my short time here in the House.

But on this side of the House we're concerned with ensuring that students get a quality, accessible and affordable education. That's been the priority of this government when we were first elected, that's still the priority today, and that will be the priority going forward.

But I don't need to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that when the Leader of the Opposition was at the Cabinet table, tuition rates skyrocketed by 132 per cent. At the same time, enrolment declined by 8 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know who stands for a quality, affordable, accessible education, and that's on this side of the House. On that side of the House, they cut—make cuts to education, and as a result, our—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The first—the minister's time has elapsed.

### **Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Compact Line Technology**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, among the many flaws of the NFAT review designed by the Premier is the glaring and intentional omission of Bipole III.

At last week's independent review of Manitoba Hydro there were discussions of compact line technology, a diagram of which I table now. Compact line technology is developed here in Manitoba and uses poles slightly larger than telephone poles currently along highways to pass the 500-kilovolt, 2,300-megawatt direct-current line over these lines.

I ask the Premier: Why is he avoiding these less intrusive, environmentally more sensitive compact lines over the large hydro poles currently planned for Bipole III?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite because he knows full well the history of the bipole story is that 70 per cent of the energy comes down two transmission lines, which are very close to each other, through the Interlake, and in 1996 we lost that system for a brief period of time, which put the entire economy at risk. This is a \$62-billion economy. To have the hydro lines, which are very close to each other, go down would cost the Manitoba economy over a billion and a half dollars a week.

So, with the recommendation of Hydro, we've built additional transmission capacity called Bipole III. That will increase the reliability for our domestic economy dramatically. The lights will stay on in Manitoba. People will be able to have electricity in their homes, in their communities and in their businesses.

We're proceeding with that, when the members opposite did nothing. They ignored the problem, did nothing about it. We now need to proceed, with a growing population and a growing economy, to provide more electrical reliability in Manitoba.

And if there's a new technology that the member opposite thinks would serve us well, I'd be happy to submit it to Hydro for their consideration.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it's been submitted to Hydro. Furthermore, the compact lines, because they're lower, are less susceptible to windstorms and such outages.

Mr. Speaker, for farmers, having the traditional very large and high hydro lines running through their fields hinders their ability to seed or to spray their fields using aerial spraying or, in fact, using on-the-ground, innovative, automated equipment. Now, with compact line technology and the line running along the road, this just isn't an issue.

Why is the Premier not going to use compact line technology in farm areas to avoid intruding into farmers' fields and making farming difficult for farmers in Manitoba?

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, Hydro has gone out and consulted with the communities where the transmission line is proposed. In many cases—they've gone out and consulted those communities. In many cases, those transmission lines have been changed in terms of the exact path they follow in order to accommodate the concerns of producers and farmers in that area.

And they have also, in Manitoba, under this government, received the same rate for their hydro-electricity the people in Winnipeg get. There was a time, when the members opposite were in office, that they paid a higher rate in rural Manitoba. We made that rate uniform for all Manitobans, the lowest rates in North America, and now, with additional reliability, we can ensure that the economy stays strong and the lights stay on.

If there's a new technology—the member from River Heights says it's been submitted to Hydro. We can look forward to the response on the appropriateness of that technology to address the reliability issues for high-voltage direct current in Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier seems to believe too often—mistakenly, by the way—that people and companies outside the province are better than Manitobans, and this is why he gave untendered contracts to an Alberta company recently and sold our property registry, without a call for proposals, to Ontario company. It also explains the intentional exclusion of Bipole III from the NFAT review to ignore the less environmentally intrusive technologies, as is explained in this report I table from Dennis Woodford.

I ask the Premier: Is he going to continue to reject technologies designed and developed in Manitoba like this compact line technology?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we—not only do we not reject new technology, Manitoba had virtually no geothermal electricity and heating and cooling in Manitoba when we came into office. We now have 40 per cent—we have now 40 per cent of this technology—40 per cent of this technology is now in Manitoba when we're 4 per cent of the population.

Manitoba Hydro is always required to stay open to new ideas and new technologies. They are the world leader on high-voltage direct-current technology. Manitoba is the world leader on transmitting electricity as efficiently as possible over long distances to serve the people of Manitoba. They will continue to do that. We expect them to take a look at any new technology which is presented and make a judgment and give an opinion on whether that is a better way to go.

In the meantime, instead of stalling, which members opposite wish to do, we need to build it. We're running out of power in 10 to 12 years. We do not want to have to be an exporter—an importer of power; we want to be an exporter of power. We want to keep the lowest rates in North America.

The members opposite want to turtle, not build it and put the economy at risk.

### **Medical Students Graduation Numbers**

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, we know that doctors and nurses are the backbone of health care in this province, and yesterday the Minister of Health announced that we have more nurses practising in Manitoba than ever before, reaching an all-time high of 17,795, a net gain of 3,702 from 1999.

Now, we know what their plan is. Despite all their posturing today, they cut 70 medical spaces and over 1,000 nurses were lost and fired in Manitoba.

So I'd like to have the Minister of Health please tell us the exciting news that she announced yesterday of all—how many doctors have graduated in Manitoba.

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, what a week it's been. Yesterday, record numbers of practising nurses, and today we broke another record. We graduated the largest class of medical doctors in the history of Manitoba today, 109 new doctors. Ninety of them are taking residencies in Manitoba, 19 in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I should correct something I said earlier. I was talking about international recruits that we brought here to be doctors in rural Manitoba. I said there was 18; actually, there are 19 new doctors brought here.

And I know the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) always wants to know where they are, so I'll be happy to share that with him. Those 19 new

doctors who've just come here internationally in the last couple of months are now practising in Flin Flon, Thompson, Swan River, Minnedosa, Deloraine, Killarney, Eriksdale, Ashern, Pine Falls, Gimli, Lac du Bonnet, Whitemouth, Carman, Somerset and Niverville.

**Public Health Nurse  
Office Closure (Sanford)**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** It's always interesting comparing the NDP's proclamations of fiscal restraint and reality to the reality that Manitobans encounter every day.

I'm not sure what the NDP have against my community of Sanford, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture is determined to close the local ag office, and now the Minister of Health is following suit, closing the public health nurse office on Main Street.

Can the minister confirm that not only has the office of the public health nurse been closed in Main Street in Sanford but, in classic NDP ineptitude, they continue to pay rent on the vacant space until December 31st, 2015?

**Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, we're taking a balanced approach on this side of the House. We're looking at ways to reduce spending but to make sure we're protecting front-line services.

We know that that's not always been done in Manitoba, that when they were in office they said they had no choice but to freeze capital spending. They had to fire 1,000 nurses to look for efficiencies, and all that while they created 13 regional health authorities.

Well, we're not doing it that way. We reduced the number of regional health authorities from 13 to five, and we've redirected those administration costs into front-line services. We've eliminated more than 100 board and executive positions.

We said we'd save \$10 million over three years, Mr. Speaker, but we were wrong. We surpassed that in the first year. Those savings are going right back into front-line services because we believe that we need more nurses and more doctors in Manitoba. We don't believe in firing them like they did.

**Member for Elmwood  
Newspaper Advertisement**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, over the past few months we have asked if the

member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) used Manitoba legislative resources in the photo used in the local paper where he masquerades as an MP and neglects to mention that he's, in fact, an MLA.

Two simple questions, Mr. Speaker: Who paid for the ad, and were legislative resources used to produce it?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, Mr. Speaker, once again we have members opposite that are very upset that an MLA is out in the community meeting with people and talking about things.

We saw that as they tried to skate away from their failure to stand up for new Canadians, for their failure to stand up for immigration in Manitoba, this same party that does not treat for their questions someone who comes here from Philippines or Germany the same way as somebody who comes here from Alberta or New Brunswick. Shameful.

**Mr. Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

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

**Dr. Catherine Taylor**

**Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital):** As we approach the International Day Against Homophobia on May 17th, I'd like to recognize an incredible LGBTQ advocate and professor at the University of Winnipeg, Dr. Catherine Taylor.

I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Taylor on Bill 18, our government's leading-edge legislation allowing all students to initiate gay-straight alliances in their schools. Her nationally recognized research into how to improve the school climate for sexual and gender minorities was invaluable to our efforts to make Manitoba schools safer and more inclusive.

Dr. Taylor served as the principal investigator in partnership with Egale Canada for the first national climate survey of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Canadian schools. Her in-every-classroom-in-every-school study, funded by Egale Canada, surveyed 3,700 Canadian students and has helped legislators and educators across the country gain a deeper understanding of bullying.

Today, Dr. Taylor's research continues to transform our schools. She is working with Egale Canada on a groundbreaking new study, the Every Teacher Project, which will build a collective



knowledge of how Canadian teachers can promote LGBTQ-inclusive education. Every provincial, territorial and national teacher organization in Canada, including our own Manitoba Teachers' Society, has signed on to the project.

Dr. Taylor is also working with the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents to help identify initiatives that combat discrimination, improve school environment for LGBT students. Her work—she has also been nominated for the University of Winnipeg's Erica and Arnold Rogers Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship.

Catherine, I am honoured to have worked with you, and I want to thank you for everything that you have done for the LGBT community and for our students.

\*(14:40)

#### **Construction of Tabor Home**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, as the MLA representing Morden-Winkler constituency, I proudly draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery and welcome representatives of the city of Morden, the Tabor Home board, Tabor Home fundraising committee, the petition committee and many community members, all of whom have taken time out of their busy schedules, away from their jobs, their responsibilities, their activities, in order to witness today's proceedings, to hear the responses offered by this Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) and to serve as a visual demonstration to the NDP government that a community received a promise in 2010 and that same community is still waiting for this government to do the right thing and keep its word.

This NDP government first promised to build a new personal-care home in Morden in 2010. As the NDP government failed over and over to proceed according to its own targets that it set out, community members began to ask what they could do. Pat Gibson, Pat Neuman, Kathie Ritchie and Ruth Olafson were four such individuals who asked what they could do, people committed to the community, people not afraid to take on a task, people who wanted to send a message.

And this spring, after the local paper ran a headline, Minister delays construction of Tabor Home again, I drafted a petition and began to work with Kathie, Ruth, Pat and Pat. No one could have seen how enormous this effort would become or how

successful this petition campaign would prove to be. The petition was placed in my constituency office, in grocery stores, in convenience stores, churches and community centres. Volunteers set up tables in business places to intercept shoppers. People read the petition. People signed the petition.

Mr. Speaker, today I had the honour to proudly table nearly 200 petitions containing the signatures and demonstrating the support of over 3,000 community members. With this petition the community sends the following message to the NDP government: Now is the time for the minister to make the commitment to end the delays on Tabor Home and commit to push this project to the construction phase before the end of 2014. No more delays, no more announcements, no more excuses.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

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

Yesterday I thought it was the full moon; today I think it must have been something on the lunch menu. Members are getting out of control again. The volume is starting to escalate. I'm having a great deal of difficulty. We have a lot of guests with us here this afternoon, and I'm sure we want to set a good impression. So I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members, please, keep the level down a little bit. Let us proceed with our proceedings here this afternoon.

Now, members' statements.

#### **Physician Graduates**

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, the number of doctors practising in Manitoba is about to jump up again. Today 109 medical school graduates from the University of Manitoba received their diplomas.

This is the largest graduating medical school class in Manitoba's history. Each year, more and more doctors graduate from the University of Manitoba. Since 1999 our government has increased the number of medical school spaces from 70 to 110. With so many new physicians, we are well on our way to ensuring that all Manitobans have access to a family doctor by 2015.

What makes this year's class truly special is that 90 graduates have chosen to stay right here in Manitoba to complete their residency. Of that, 19 will be working in rural Manitoba. Our province provides boundless opportunities for new graduates.

We are one of the most affordable places to live in Canada, and with our 60 per cent tuition rebate it is no wonder so many graduates are choosing to stay here at home.

Of course, the biggest incentive to stay right here in Manitoba is the prospect of a good job. Our government has hired 562 doctors since 1999, and we continue to add new medical residency positions so that graduates can get the experience they need.

It is not just the University of Manitoba graduates choosing to practise medicine in Manitoba. Recently, 19 international medical grads successfully completed the one-year medical licensure program for international graduates. They are all now working in rural and northern Manitoba. I'm from rural Manitoba and my mom still lives on a farm in the southwest, so rural doctors are close to my heart.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba continues to boast some of the brightest medical professionals in the country, and this year's graduating class is no different. These students will go on to lead fulfilling careers and make a real difference providing quality care to Manitoba families.

Congratulations, graduates.

### **George Taylor Richardson**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to remember the life and legacy of Mr. George T. Richardson. A business icon, successful entrepreneur and family man, Mr. Richardson led a full and meaningful life and made an outstanding contribution to the city of Winnipeg and to the province of Manitoba.

He started his long career at his family's company, Richardson & Sons, in 1946 after graduating from the University of Manitoba. Mr. Richardson was appointed president of the company in 1966, a position he served for nearly three decades.

During his time as president, Mr. Richardson diversified the firm and made it successful in the fields of real estate, agriculture, energy and finance. He also expanded pioneer grain and helped grow Richardson Securities of Canada into an international brokerage firm.

Richardson's completion of the Richardson Building at Portage and Main kick-started other downtown Winnipeg projects in the 1960s, creating the Winnipeg skyline we know today.

Mr. Richardson served as Canadian governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1970 to 1982, during which time he helped move the corporate headquarters to Winnipeg, transferred an extensive archival collection of the company to the Archives of Manitoba and installed the replica sailing ship, the Nonsuch, in the Manitoba Museum.

George and his wife, Tannis, were friends of my parents, Hugh and Diane MacDonald. I can recall many times when the Richardsons came to our home for dinner over the years. As a young child, I learned so much from their conversations. Whether a healthy political debate or discussions of how to make Manitoba stronger for future generations, George always had the best interests of the—our province in mind.

On behalf of my husband, Jason, and the McDonald and Stefanson families, I want to offer my deepest condolences to George's family, in particular his wife, Tannis, his son, Hartley, and his wife, Heather, and their children, Aidan, Thor and Celine, and also his other son, David, and his family and George's many grandchildren.

Manitoba has lost a truly remarkable man, a Manitoba icon who will be missed by so many in our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **2014 Women of Distinction Awards Gala**

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I would like to congratulate this year's Women of Distinction recipients and nominees. These women were honoured at the 2014 Women of Distinction awards gala on May 7th at the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

This annual ceremony hosted by the YMCA-YWCA of Manitoba recognizes Manitoba women who have made unique contributions to our communities. What makes the Women of Distinction awards even more special is that they are some of the most prestigious awards for women in Canada.

This year marked the 38th anniversary of the awards, a tradition that started right here in Winnipeg and now has spread across Canada. What makes this event more special is that the proceeds from the awards gala are donated to community programs that empower women, children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, each of these women has had a remarkable journey to receive their nomination. These women are leaders in their fields. Nominees included mentors, teachers, coaches and volunteers.

They are role models to both the men and women around them, and many inspire other women to enter fields traditionally dominated by men. With commitment, determination and courage, these Manitoba women have contributed immensely to the advancement of women and society as a whole, and I'm really sorry that I missed the gala night because I was not feeling well.

And thank you, Mr. Speaker. *[interjection]* Does that answer that?

\* (14:50)

### House Business

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** On House business, Mr. Speaker, in accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on balanced budget promise broken, brought forward by the honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that, in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on balanced budget broken promise, brought forward by the honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

### GRIEVANCES

**Mr. Speaker:** Now, grievances.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a grievance?

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a grievance.

Tabor Home is a well-known phrase here in the Manitoba Legislature. For years now, the community of Morden has worked to secure a commitment from this NDP government for the construction of the Tabor Home. My colleagues in this Chamber on both sides of the aisle will recall that my predecessor, Mr. Peter George Dyck, called on this NDP government for years and years to build a new Tabor Home, and this current facility served the community well at one time, but it is clearly past the point of any reasonable prospect of rehabilitation.

Tabor Home was founded in 1951 by a group led by Reverend Frank H. Friesen of the Morden Mennonite Brethren Church, currently known as

the Westside Community Church. The 32-bed personal-care home officially opened in 1952, and 16 years later a 60-bed personal-care home officially opened in 1969.

Mr. Speaker, the southern Manitoba region has grown enormously in the years since. That growth has been driven by immigration, the promise of jobs, local government that worked hard to attract growth and the beautiful surroundings, including the Pembina Escarpment, the Dead Horse Creek, the foliage of our beautiful oak and elm trees, and the stately stone mansions which still grace our streets.

When Tabor Home was built in 1969 Morden's population was approximately 2,800. The city of Morden now boasts a population of over 9,000. The latest StatsCan data reveals that the population in the area has increased 22 per cent in just five years. Mr. Speaker, if a 60-bed personal-care home was adequate for a community of 2,800, it is decidedly inadequate for a community that has almost quadrupled in size.

Consider also that the 2011 StatsCan report shows that 23 per cent of Morden's population is over the age of 65 compared to the national average of 15 per cent. This is due in part to the fact that many people from smaller surrounding communities move to Morden in retirement because of shopping, amenities, health services and expanded housing options.

These factors: population growth, demographic considerations, the current Tabor Home's limited capacity, have resulted in a situation where too many aging residents are panelled for placement in a personal-care home but cannot remain in their own community. They cannot stay in the community where they grew up, where they worked, where they made friends, where they played sports, where they got married, raised a family, went to church, buried their parents, volunteered for local causes. Instead, at the very moment when our seniors are most vulnerable and most in need of accommodation, they are denied accommodation and are forced to spend their final months and days living in remote communities far from home, causing tremendous hardship and stress for them and their families.

Mr. Speaker, in 2010, after years of community activity and effort, dialogue and debate, this NDP government consented to build a new Tabor Home. I was there at that announcement, and the news release from November 15, 2010, quotes the then-minister of

Health as saying, and I quote: "Families want to know that our seniors will have access to high-quality housing and care if and when they need it." End quote. On that point, I assure you, there is agreement.

At that time construction of the new Tabor Home was indicated as 2013. But the NDP government did not proceed to construction in 2013. In fact, for a period of almost a year, there was little perceptible movement forward on this capital project. Stakeholders were puzzled and increasingly concerned, but the Tabor Home board of directors, the City of Morden and the fundraising committee remained optimistic. They tried to continue to engage this government in dialogue and conversation while seeking some explanation for the delays.

In the Legislature I continue to ask the minister questions in question period. I raised the issue both in the context of Estimates and concurrence. And then two years later the NDP government issues a new press release. They just reannounce the original project. And along with that new media release came a new construction date, now indicated as spring 2014, this despite the fact that just 12 months earlier in response to an emergency meeting request on Tabor Home that I made with the Health Minister, the minister instead sent a senior assistant into the room with me to deliver a message that construction was not behind schedule and that it was still on track for 2014.

Mr. Speaker, this March, the headline in the local newspapers read Health Minister confirms Tabor Home project delay. The article quoted the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) as saying the personal-care home would not start after all in spring 2014 as promised. The minister spoke about trying to get under way in the fall of 2014, but it was clear that what this new Minister of Health was actually doing was opening the door to the possibility of even further project postponements, possibly until 2015. And this Minister of Health did exactly that today just earlier in question period.

Mr. Speaker, this community has done its part. The fundraising committee has gone to businesses, residents and industry, and the response has been overwhelming. In fact, just last week, I attended another media event where the City of Morden handed over another \$500,000 cheque to the Tabor Home fundraising committee. The board of directors has fought the good fight to maintain the relationship and build a positive conversation even with shifting

Health ministers. The City of Morden mayor and council have stuck their necks out and risked criticism by ratepayers in order to proceed with the \$1.5 million of infrastructure work necessary to service the site. It has been a monumental effort for the local community to get their part of the Tabor Home project to this point. But they have done it, and I congratulate them.

Mr. Speaker, in 2010, the Minister of Health and the NDP government made a commitment to the community of Morden. They made a pledge, and the community has proceeded with determination and action and results on the basis of the commitment that they received. The community did not push back when the NDP required them to raise a community contribution of \$3.9 million, even though, in fairness, they should not have had to do it.

Eight years ago, the communities of Winkler and Morden fought and won from this NDP government consent to place an MRI at Boundary Trails regional hospital, and the communities raised 50 per cent of that \$7-million capital requirement to get it done, even while this government was stubbornly insisting that the communities did not, in fact, need an MRI. Now, of course, we know they never miss an opportunity to take credit for that same MRI that they stubbornly resisted for so long.

I say this only to remind my colleagues that, in 2011, the NDP government announced three more MRIs for Manitoba communities but they waived the community contribution requirement for capital projects: no money required by those communities to go to capital construction costs. It is not fair, and I wrote the minister and I made that point and I argued it in the Legislature. But, Mr. Speaker, the community did not protest. They did not stage a march on the Legislature. They did not go to the media. They did not commence legal action. My constituents are people with fierce determination, resilience, independence, community spirit and pride. They got to work and they got it done.

The most recent written response I have from this new Minister of Health is dated March the 26th, 2014. In this letter the minister does not even provide a definite start date for the construction of Tabor Home. The letter simply states, and I quote, I reaffirm our government's commitment to advance construction on the new facility as soon as possible, end quote.

\* (15:00)

Mr. Speaker, today in the Legislature, we are joined by almost 50 people from Morden who have taken the time to be here, to be in our province's seat of government to witness the tabling of these 200 petitions and 3,000 signatures, to hear the minister's responses to the questions by their member of the Legislative Assembly, to hear a private members' statement and this grievance, all of which are intended to demonstrate to the minister the extent of my community's dissatisfaction, to remind the minister that a promise is a promise, to convey to the minister that saying she will build Tabor Home as soon as possible is just not acceptable, and to secure from this minister a commitment, a date, a definite date by which she will ensure that this project advances to tendering and to construction in 2014, not 2015, not 2016. Now is the time for action. No more press releases, no more delays, no more ribbon cuttings, no more excuses, no more broken promises.

In the original brochure, distributed by Tabor Home fundraising committee, it reads, elders have given us their yesterdays—let us give them our tomorrows.

We call on this NDP government today to give the seniors of Morden their tomorrows in a new Tabor Home. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Are there any further grievances?

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing none, we'll move on with orders of the day, government business.

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you please call for second reading bills 23, 50, 54, 65, 53, 55, 58, 62 and 68.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will now call bills in the following order. Bills for second reading include Bill 23, Bill 50, followed by bills 54, 65, 53, 55, 58, 62 and Bill 68.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 23—The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act

**Mr. Speaker:** And we'll start first by calling Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act.

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Housing and Community Development):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act; Loi

sur la stratégie en matière d'habitation coopérative, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Bjornson:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be bringing this legislation forward for a second reading.

Canada's first family housing co-operative was a 174-unit Willow Park complex in Winnipeg and it's opened its doors in 1966 and it was one of a set of seven federally sponsored pilot projects. And with their success confirmed by 1973, Canada's National Housing Act was amended to create the first national program for co-op housing development. And from 1973 to 1978, about 7,700 co-op homes were created under this program.

Co-op housing is a very important and very vital part of the Manitoba Housing initiative, Mr. Speaker, and I'd also like to provide some quotes from previous parliamentarians and current parliamentarians who speak to the importance of housing and co-op housing.

Bill Knight was the Housing minister in 1985. He said that housing co-ops do more than just create affordable shelter. Along with new households, they create a genuine community with all the benefits of the contact, support and friendship that we look for in the best rural and urban neighbourhoods.

Paul Martin and Joe Fontana, members of Parliament and national Liberal task force on housing—and I'm quoting a Liberal, yes, indeed—in 1990 said that the co-operative housing movement is a vital component in the quest to ensure decent, affordable housing with the security of tenure for all Canadians.

Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General, in 2004 said, as Canadians, we accept that citizens bring with citizenship brings with it certain duties and responsibilities to others. Co-operative living is the ultimate expression of this philosophy.

And Libby Davies, Member of Parliament in Vancouver East, 2007, said, Canadian housing co-ops are a huge success story. They have provided a model for community-based, non-for-profit housing, based on the principle of mixed-income communities, community control and healthy neighbourhoods.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the annual report, in 2006, Nicholas Gazzard, the chief executive director of

CHF Canada, co-operative housing foundation of Canada, said: What will the vision be for co-operative housing in Canada? What will—or will we be able to maintain strong, stable communities without government support? How will we continue to provide affordable homes for lower income members? Can we continue to grow as a movement, adding new units of co-op housing, restoring our older homes and adapting others to meet the changing needs of its members? This is the challenge facing Canada's co-op housing.

He went on to say that while today it is assumed the provinces and territories will play a key role in delivery of affordable housing programs, this should not absolve the federal government from financial responsibility for housing those 4 million Canadians whose shelter needs are not served by the market. Every federal budget needs to include additional funding so this urgent need can be addressed. Spending on housing cannot be an on-again, off-again proposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do believe that housing is something that all levels of government should be participating in and, thankfully, we do have a number of levels of government participating in various forms of housing, but it was co-op housing as part of that solution. As I said before, that is the reason we brought forward this legislation. In November of last year, this legislation was introduced to establish a legal mandate for the government to develop, implement and monitor a co-operative housing strategy to promote, stimulate and sustain co-operative housing in Manitoba.

So by introducing The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act, Manitoba's the first province in Canada to develop a legislated requirement for a co-operative housing strategy. Many Manitobans are exploring different options for housing. There's a growing interest in co-op housing models at the community level. And this is really exciting, Mr. Speaker, because housing co-operatives offer a unique set of advantages to their members such as increased resident participation and control—relative to conventional rental, life lease or condo realities—affordable ownership opportunities, opportunities to serve on a board or a volunteer committee.

Housing co-ops are also a growing part of a thriving, active, co-operative network that we are fortunate to have here in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, this means that there is an opportunity for co-op housing members to have access or—pardon me—to have to

access personal skill development and training, and this helps to build the capacity of the sector as a whole.

Now, we believe that there's an untapped potential in a variety of types of housing co-operatives appealing to individuals and families in Manitoba. There are for-profit or equity housing co-ops, limited or shared-equity versions that can be found in other jurisdictions, and we are now seeing these models starting to emerge here. Bill 23 will and the subsequent strategy will help to promote and build diversity within the co-op housing sector.

Bill 23 builds on our government's 2011 amendments to The Cooperatives Act where we modernized that legislation to allow for a new flexible, multi-stakeholder model to what is known as a supporting class of membership. In terms of housing co-ops, this change provides the opportunity for non-residents to become shareholders of multi-stakeholder housing co-operatives in addition to the people that live there.

Since I've become minister I've had several productive meetings with the volunteers and leaders who are working to establish housing co-operatives in their community. It is an inspiration to see people come together under the co-operative banner in order to make positive change in their communities in the face of the challenging housing market realities facing many Canadians today. The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act recognizes the participatory nature of the co-operative sector, which is why consultation about the strategy with the housing co-operative members, co-operative sector representatives and others is required under the act.

Bill 23 is intended to commit the government to supporting strategies that will promote growth and diversity in the co-operative housing sector and build upon existing comprehensive structure for co-operatives that we have helped to develop here in Manitoba. The act will not change existing legislative requirements for establishing a housing co-operative corporation. As mandated by the act, the government of Manitoba will develop a strategy in consultation with the sector to be released within one year.

Bill 23 strengthens other legislative and policy supports the Province has developed in recognition of the growing interest in the co-operative housing model, and this bill is welcomed by the co-operative housing sector as it is seen as a positive way to enhance opportunities for establishing a range of

co-operative housing types in Manitoba. And this will better serve the individuals and families who wish to live co-operatively and improve housing choices in Manitoba communities.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have brought Bill 23 to the Legislative Assembly today for second reading, and I thank you.

\*(15:10)

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** I rise to put a few words on the record today on Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act that's been introduced, and I guess my first question to the government would be where have they been for the last 14 and a half years, Mr. Speaker? Why after 14 and a half years have they woken up and decided that co-operative housing is an important component of our housing strategy for those that need support to find affordable housing and determined now that they have to legislate it?

Mr. Speaker, they've had 14 and a half years to implement a co-operative housing strategy. Legislation isn't required. Co-operative housing has been around for decades. Now, all of a sudden, government has opened its eyes and are saying they need to legislate this because they haven't taken action and they haven't taken responsibility for the last 14 and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, this is just fluff. There's no need for a piece of legislation for government to consult with the community. As a matter of fact, we haven't seen this government consult. Where was the consultation before they raised the PST? Where was the consultation and the vote through referendum that was already enshrined in law? What have they done to consult with Manitobans on many, many other initiatives? There's been no consultation, and now they have to legislate themselves to consult with the community around a co-operative housing strategy.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no need for a piece of legislation. They were free to go out and consult over the last 14 and a half years if they so chose, but they chose not to move in that direction and, all of a sudden, now they've decided that co-operative housing is important. I don't see anything in this legislation, although I do see a reporting structure where they do have to report to the Legislature every year, but what checks and balances, what measurements of outcome are going to be enshrined in that legislation so we know whether in fact

anything that they're doing or anything that they're moving forward with has measure outcomes and that Manitobans as a result are going to be the beneficiaries of any co-operative housing strategy?

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that in a time when we've seen all kinds of waste and mismanagement of tax dollars, where we've had to increase the PST from 7 per cent to 8 per cent because government doesn't seem to have enough money to feed their spending addiction, we're seeing dollars spent on implementing and bringing forward legislation that requires significant resources. There's resources that are involved with getting lawyers involved in drafting the legislation, the bureaucracy working to put the legislation in place, committees that have to listen to public presentations on a piece of legislation that really isn't necessary.

If they were doing their work, if they'd had any vision 14 and a half years ago, they would have done the public consultation that they're legislating themselves to do right now, Mr. Speaker, and they would have had a co-operative housing strategy that we could have been proud of and that we could have been working on. There's no need for government to be spending resources, precious resources, on bringing in legislation. They could have taken those dollars and put them into co-operative housing. They could have been building housing units for those in our community that are in need.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put those few comments on the record and indicate that, you know, this government has absolutely no credibility. Why didn't they consult before they raised the PST? Why didn't they listen to those that came forward in committee that were opposed to raising the PST? Why didn't they give Manitobans the right that they had under law to vote in a referendum before they increased the PST?

Mr. Speaker, legislation isn't even worth the paper that it's written on unless it's followed by a government, and this government has proven time and time again that they're above the law, that no law is important enough to follow, that they can just pick and choose when they want to follow the law and when they want to break the law.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no question in my mind, there's no question in the minds of Manitobans that this government doesn't know how to manage and this is just one more example of legislation that isn't necessary. Legislation that this government has brought in, they keep thinking of creative ways to try

to give lip service to initiatives. Go ahead and consult; you don't need a law to consult. Go ahead and implement a strategy; you don't need a piece of legislation to implement that strategy. If they did their job there'd be no requirement for this piece of legislation. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to speak about co-operative housing and the importance of co-operative housing in Manitoba.

Co-operative housing is something that I've been a very strong supporter of for many, many years, and the fact is that over the last 14 and a half years we should have been doing much more in terms of co-operative housing that has happened at the moment. In fact, it's rather astonishing that after 14 and a half years that we haven't had a co-operative housing strategy. This is a real puzzle. For a government to come in and flash around a piece of legislation suggesting that they're putting a priority on co-operative housing and then not to have had a strategy for 14 and a half years; it's left most of us kind of scratching our heads.

But that being said, Mr. Speaker, let me at least talk a little bit about co-operative housing. You know, it's important that we are investing in co-operative housing because co-operative housing has been shown to be a better option for people than other approaches to rental and public housing. And the evidence for this comes from a whole variety of places, but including is a study about women need safe, stable, affordable housing—a study of social, private and co-op housing in Winnipeg. And there was a clear comparison between co-operative housing and other rental and public housing under, for example, Manitoba Housing.

And what's really important and fundamental when you're looking at housing for, you know, people who've got low incomes often, that we're providing an option in which they have an input, they have some control as they have in co-operative housing. And when you give this kind of a situation, then what happens is that people are much more stable and that families with children are not moving around as much. This is far better for children, provides the kind of stable environment in which they can grow and learn and develop and do well.

But if you don't have co-operative housing, what happens is that the situation for too many is much less stable; 44 per cent of women living in rental and public housing were found to have moved over the

last two years—that was just when this study was done and this is fairly recently. And compare that to virtually half of women in general rental and public housing having moved within the last two years, in other words, being in unstable housing situations. Those women living in co-operative housing, not one had moved in the last two years. Imagine what a difference this is for children growing up in these two environments.

\* (15:20)

In the co-operative housing model, family is stable in terms of housing and location. Children can be stable in terms of going to school, where they're going to school. They can be stable in terms of their friends. They can have greater security. This doesn't go into the incidents of break-ins and other problems in co-operative housing versus, you know, non-co-operative housing, rental and public housing other than co-operative housing. But, you know, in my experience there have been a lot more problems with break-ins, crimes and various other activities in rental of public housing which is not co-operative.

In fact, I would say that over the time I've been an MLA, there've been many, many calls for concerns about uncomfortable, dangerous, difficult situations in Manitoba Housing units. But compare that to co-operative housing, I don't believe that I've had one single call. And it shows that the difference right off between co-operative housing model and the other approaches to rental and public housing.

And, of course, that's one of the reasons why, you know, I've been a very strong supporter of co-operative housing, because they are better than the other options for children and for families. And being a very strong supporter of children and families, I happen to believe that that's better not only for children and families, but for society in general.

This study concluded that women living in co-operative houses told us that the stable, adequate and affordable housing helped them improve their health, economic status and gain skills—all those important. And think about it in another way; because of that stability, because they're able to improve their economic status, because they have fewer health problems and more skills, the result is that, you know, there's not as much drain on the provincial Treasury for health-care costs and, you know, social-assistance costs, for other costs that you might expect under circumstances where the environment is less stable.



And, given all this, it is therefore remarkably surprising that this government took 14 and a half years to come to the realization that, you know, maybe there is actually something to co-operative housing and maybe we should actually have a strategy, and maybe in order to get us a strategy we've got to have legislation. Well, most other governments would just go ahead and do a strategy without having a bill first and so on, but this government wants to make sure that they announce things kind of multiple times that they are—you know, they have a piece of legislation that gives them a little more time to delay their projects in co-operative housing and whatever else they're doing.

So I think that, you know, the concern here is that the focus should have been on having a strategy in year 1 instead of in year 15, that the focus should have been on, you know, acting instead of delaying, and the focus should have been on, you know, getting to work instead of, you know, worrying about legislation like this.

But, nevertheless, that being said, you know, I'm a strong supporter of co-operative housing. I'm ready to support this legislation if it's the only way that they will get to build a strategy. And, you know, so I hope the government will be pleased to have that kind of support and I hope that they will get on with the job of building the strategy and building the co-operative housing, because those are pretty important things that we should have plenty of here in Manitoba.

And I would draw the attention of the government to the fact that there is a rather sizable discrepancy in the number of 'co-opering' housing units outside the Perimeter compared to inside the Perimeter. And maybe it's time that this government could actually look a little bit outside the Perimeter and not just inside the Perimeter. And one of the things that should be addressed here is to a better balance in terms of the co-operative housing units outside the Perimeter compared with inside the Perimeter. And if we had a better balance in, you know, support for rural Manitoba, I think that would benefit all Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there any further debate on Bill 23? Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Question before the House is second reading of Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act.

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

**Bill 50—The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Now we'll proceed to call Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended).

**Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended); Loi sur la protection des travailleurs temporaires (modification de la Loi sur le recrutement et la protection des travailleurs et du Code des normes d'emploi), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Braun:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak for a second reading of Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act. The goal of this bill is to help ensure that workers employed by temporary help agencies are not hindered from obtaining permanent employment, and to provide them with entitlement to notice or wages in lieu of notice when an agency terminates their employment.

Amendments to The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act will require temporary help agencies to be licensed and will prohibit them from taking certain actions that could act as a barrier to their workers being hired directly by another employer, such as charging workers fees for taking a job with a client of the agency, contractually restricting workers and clients from entering into direct employment relationships, and preventing clients from providing references for temporary help workers.

While temporary help agencies certainly play a positive role in our economy that benefits both workers and employers, the aspiration of many temporary workers is to obtain direct employment with a single employer, and we want to make sure that they can take such an opportunity when it arises.

Amendments to the Employment Standards Code will remove a provision currently in the legislation that excludes temporary help workers from being entitled to termination notice. Manitoba is one of a minority of provinces that currently excludes these workers from termination notice, and this change will bring us into the mainstream by giving temporary help workers access to the same entitlement to notice that other workers have.

This bill also includes an amendment to The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act to exempt foreign worker recruiters from the need to have a licence if the position being recruited is for a high-income job. This is to accommodate the use of boutique recruiters for high-end jobs, such as executive positions, professors, lawyers or other jobs where the worker being recruited is not in a vulnerable position.

Our government has set its sights on creating jobs and strengthening the Manitoban economy. We have set a goal to have 75,000 new jobs, and this bill opens the door for temporary workers to access permanent employment, which means that Manitoba businesses have access to a ready and skilled workforce.

In 2013, 2 million Canadians worked as temporary workers in industries such as processing, manufacturing, clerical and information technology. Protecting the rights to labour mobility and in the event of termination is an important step, ensuring healthy and productive businesses and workforce in our province.

These amendments reflect consensus recommendations made by the Labour Management Review Committee, which is comprised of representatives of major labour and employer organizations and consultations with stakeholders from the temporary help agency industry were also undertaken.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put a few words on record regarding Bill 50, the protection for temporary help workers, workers recruitment and protection act, and the Employment Standards Code amended.

Mr. Speaker, this bill introduces many drastic amendments which will deeply impact the work of temporary help agencies across this province. The first part of the bill introduces amendments to The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act to require

temporary help agencies to be licensed. Licensing these agents to keep track of who is operating them is fine as long as the fees are not so high that it is a money grab rather than a licensing fee.

\* (15:30)

I recently heard that the Manitoba liquor commission is charge—all of a sudden, out of the clear blue sky—charging \$1,000 as a changeover fee for somebody taking over a new liquor store. So I think those are important things we need to note, that we cannot have these kind of things happening, to have money grabs like this.

Mr. Speaker, one key provision of Bill 50 is to add provisions to The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act that could prevent temporary agencies from charging a conversion fee after six months. And I would dictate that the conversion fee could not be greater than 20 per cent of the employee's annual service. Temporary help agencies incur significant costs in advertising, recruitment, background screening, risk and overhead costs which they cover with the fees they charge their clients. Temporary help agencies help a lot of employees find work that they may not be able to find on their own. Bill 50 seriously entices agencies to seek to do their business elsewhere in Canada. This means the potential loss of thousands of jobs. These agencies already meet the obligations under the Employment Standards Code, and it does not take—that—it does not make much sense to introduce stricter provisions around their services, especially when they are a tremendous contributor to the provincial economy and employ thousands of people. Bill 50 will cause much harm to the temporary help agency and their ability to provide services to their clients. There are more and more companies across North America using temporary help agencies. Companies are having more demands put on them during busy seasons and are looking for extra workers for short periods of time. Temporary help agencies are able to provide these companies with the workers they need and provide workers with jobs. Even the provincial government uses temporary help agencies. They use them in different areas. How many agency nurses does this province employ?

We live in an ever-changing world. In the last few years we have seen great changes in technology and changes in our economy. We have gone from local economies to global economies. Companies need to change the way they do business in order to survive in a global economy. If they do not change,

they will not be in business. These added pressures have seen the need for companies to add extra workers when needed; temporary help agencies provide this service.

Mr. Speaker, if this government thought there was a need to revise The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended, they should have reached out and talked to everyone involved.

One such group is the Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services. ACSESS is a well-respected national association representing members in the staffing industry. They have a combined membership of 320 corporate entities and represent over 1,000 branches across Canada. ACSESS's purpose is to foster the growth of the industry by promoting quality services, dignity and respect among workers, adhere to all relevant legislation and employee rights, as well as ongoing liaison with governments and the public to ensure full understanding of the industry and its practices.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister, what groups had input into Bill 50? Were groups given proper amounts of time to input—provide input into Bill 50? Did groups have meaningful consultation with the minister and her staff, or was this a bill where groups were told what was in the bill and their concerns were not addressed?

Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Labour is so concerned about the temporary help services, why was she a part of destroying the taxpayer protection act? The taxpayer protection act affects all Manitobans. I would support the minister in bringing back that legislation.

I strongly believe in workplace safety. I will support bills that will make workplaces safer for all.

Bill 50 has the potential to hurt as many workers as help. I do not see urgency to rush and pass this bill without giving all people involved the opportunity to provide input into it. Temporary employment does provide a bridge to permanent employment and we need to be careful that we are not taking a step backwards instead of forwards.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this NDP government feels that everyone should work for the government. The NDP feel that they should be spending Manitobans' money at the Cabinet table, but the right answer is that government should work for the people and the money should be spent at the kitchen table and not the Cabinet table.

The NDP have failed in their accountability to taxpayers. There are several examples of this, one that is right in this department: the failure to see what happened in the Office of the Fire Commissioner for a period of four years. After promising no tax increases during the election of 2011, the NDP broke their promise not just once, but twice. The budgets of 2012 and 2013 both contained record tax increases, the highest in decades. These tax increases hurt business. When business hurts, so do jobs and the economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is the government's job to protect workers in their workplace and to make sure their workplace is safe, but it does not just end there. Protecting workers also means protecting job availability and workers' ability to get these jobs. Government needs to help business and industry to help understand how to best protect workers but also help them remain competitive and viable as they work to form the basis of our economy and create the jobs that Manitobans rely on.

In the last few months, I've had businesses call me with concerns that the NDP government has moved to an enforcement model and not one of helping business to meet compliance. Inspectors walk in, write a compliance order and leave. Government should be more focused on prevention and working with these businesses to reach compliance. Mr. Speaker, if you have a healthy business climate, you have a good economy.

On this side of the House, ours is an approach of openness, of working with employees and ensuring a reasonable balance between taking steps to ensure workers are protected and maintaining business competitiveness. In contrast, this NDP government has failed to protect Manitoba workers and Manitoba families with their high tax, high spending. We cannot be competitive with our neighbours when PST is 8 per cent and Saskatchewan's is at 5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, the PST—the PS—the PC caucus believes in promoting training, investment and innovation for Manitoba businesses while also supporting and promoting the rights of Manitoba workers.

In the last number of years, Manitoba has lost some 35,000 people to other jurisdictions. That number represents a city the size of Brandon. We are losing our youngest and brightest and best trained to other provinces. This has to stop. Government should create an economy that is capable of creating long-term, well-paying jobs for young Manitobans so that they can work and raise their families in

Manitoba. A PC government will bring balance and democracy back to labour legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in order to address some of the concerns that were raised during our consultations on this bill, we will be introducing a number of amendments aimed at addressing the concerns of the stakeholders we met with. Our amendments will be to best protect some of the most vulnerable individuals in society by ensuring they have jobs available when they need them most. If this government is truly interested in best protecting temporary help workers and ensuring that they are available to find work when they need it most, we look forward to the NDP government supporting our amendments.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity to put some words on record in regarding to Bill 50.

\* (15:40)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk briefly on Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act. Temporary workers fall into essentially two categories: those who are domestic temporary workers and those who are domestic—or foreign temporary workers. And, you know, both play an important role in our economy. There's been a lot of discussion in the last number of years about temporary foreign workers, and particularly as the program has been operated by the federal government that the federal government got very excited about it and expanded the—*[interjection]* The program was expanded and expanded. *[interjection]* Well I, you know, that's not a subject I would know much about, but maybe the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) does.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to temporary foreign workers then one of the things that we know is that the program has been, you know, not treated very well. First of all, it was put on the accelerator pedal by the Conservatives and then more recently they slammed a moratorium on bringing foreign workers in for the restaurant industry. And, you know, for example, this putting the brakes on the restaurant industry has meant—I understand that a restaurant in Toronto which relies on getting a chef from India because there's not a Canadian chef that they can bring in, and because there's no chef from India the future of the 60 Canadian workers who are working there is at risk. And that obviously doesn't make any sense at all.

And so, you know, let's have a temporary foreign workers approach which works, which uses it in appropriate ways and helps people out. And I think I've heard some more productive suggestions in recent days, including allowing a better track for people who are temporary foreign workers to become immigrants and long-term contributors to our Canadian economy as, in fact, some have done in the past and hopefully more will continue to do in the future.

There are a variety of details in this particular version of the Bill 50. I'm not going to go into details, but I will wait for committee stage when I'm sure we will hear lots of presentations with regard to many of the details in this bill. And I think it's important we have a discussion about these issues and that we get the best advice that we can from people who come forward at committee stage, and I look forward to that. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is any further debate on Bill 50?

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Question before the House is Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended).

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a no.

**Voice Vote**

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** On division.

**Bill 54—The Labour Relations  
Amendment Act (Time Lines for  
Labour Board Decisions and Hearings)**

**Mr. Speaker:** So we'll now proceed to call Bill 54, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Time Lines for Labour Board Decisions and Hearings).

**Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I move, seconded by the minister of multicultural and literacy, that Bill 54, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Time Lines for Labour Board Decisions and Hearings); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail (délais relatifs aux décisions et aux audiences de la Commission du travail), now be read a second time and referred to the committee of this House.

***Motion presented.***

**Ms. Braun:** I am pleased to speak again on Bill 54, The Labour Relations Amendment Act.

The purpose of this bill is to help ensure that decisions in hearings of the Manitoba Labour Board are undertaken in a timely manner and that the rights of parties to hearings or decisions of the board are not negatively affected by unnecessary delays.

The board has been making positive steps recently in bringing new policies to improve efficiency, such as the scheduling of pre-hearing conferences, expanded use of mediation, improvements in the use of vice-chairpersons' time and the establishment of a new executive director position whose responsibilities will include reviewing and improving board policies and procedures.

*Mr. Ted Marcelino, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

To build on these changes and to ensure that timelines of hearings and decisions remains a high priority of the board, Bill 54 will require the board to set out in regulation maximum time frames for the issuance of decisions following the conclusion of a hearing as well as for the scheduling of hearings on applications for certification or decertification of a union which are particularly time-sensitive. Recognizing that every case is unique and that proceedings before the board can be very complex, the regulations required by this legislation will allow for the chairperson of the board to extend time frames in exceptional circumstances. This flexibility will ensure that a person's right to a fair hearing and decision is not hampered by overly rigid time frames.

In addition, this bill will also require that the board review all its regulations, which include the

Manitoba Labour Board rules of procedure, within two years and at least every six years thereafter. This will ensure not only that the time frames for decisions and hearings are reviewed regularly, but that all administrative functions of the board are modernized. These changes implement consensus recommendations made by the Labour Management Review Committee which consists of representatives of major labour and employer organizations in Manitoba.

I would like to thank the committee for the input in this important issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk on this bill which deals with workers compensation, and talk briefly. This is dealing with time regulations, and I think that—you know, that this is a reasonable approach, but it needs to go to committee stage, it needs to be looked at very carefully, and I will wait 'til we get to committee stage and we'll look at it carefully then. Thank you.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), that debate now be adjourned.

***Motion agreed to.***

\* (15:50)

**Bill 65—The Workers Compensation  
Amendment Act**

**The Acting Speaker (Ted Marcelino):** We now proceed with Bill 65, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act.

**Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection (Mr. Lemieux), that Bill 65, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail, now be read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

***Motion presented.***

**Ms. Braun:** I'm honoured to have the opportunity to speak to and explain the purpose and details of this important piece of legislation. The amendments to The Workers Compensation Act proposed in Bill 65 represent significant improvements in the compliance and prevention provisions of the act and further implement the priorities identified in Manitoba's five-year plan for workplace injury,

illness and injury prevention, which was released in April of 2013.

Like other aspects of the new prevention plan, these proposed amendments reflect extensive stakeholder consultations. Especially significant in this regard are the reviews conducted during 2012-2013 by Manitoba's Chief Prevention Officer and by Paul Petrie, a British Columbia-based expert on workers compensation.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable input provided by the many dozens of stakeholders consulted during these processes, including employer organizations, individual employers in the private and public sectors, labour organizations, industry safety associations and various community groups.

Two themes came through clearly over the course of these consultations. First, that while the vast majority of employers willingly comply with the legislation, we need to do more to ensure a level of—to ensure a level playing field and protect vulnerable workers by promoting compliance and raising awareness of rights and obligations under the act. Second, we need to build upon our past success in preventing workplace injuries and illnesses by enhancing the WCB's prevention mandate and taking a more streamlined, strategic approach to prevention.

Under the WCB's current rate-setting system, the assessments that employers pay are determined in part by the number and duration of workers compensation claims on their record. By linking the employers' assessment rates to their claims cost, this experience rating model is designed to ensure fairness and equity in the financing of the system. It is also intended to encourage employers to engage in injury prevention and return-to-work initiatives in order to control their assessment rates.

Unfortunately, there is evidence that, in some cases, experience rating can motivate employers to discourage or prevent workers from reporting injuries or filing WCB claims. That such practices take place was made evident through the Petrie review and a recent study commissioned by the WCB.

This bill, as well as the current review by stakeholders of the rate model, begin to address this issue. Towards this goal, Bill 65 enhances the compliance aspects of the act in a number of ways. The amendments clarify what constitutes claim suppression and what constitutes discriminatory action against a worker who files a claim. In

addition, in an instance of possible discrimination, the onus is on the employer to prove that any action taken against a worker is not related to the filing of a claim.

Recognizing that awareness and education are often the key to preventing problems before they arise, the improved compliance measures are complemented by a provision under which the WCB can require that information about workers compensation rights and responsibilities be prominently posted in workplaces and other premises, including information with respect to reporting injuries and filing claims.

To properly do its job in ensuring and promoting compliance with the act, the WCB requires the right tools and information. The amendments therefore include a requirement for employers to provide the WCB with employer records upon request, as well as a provision allowing the WCB to inspect workplaces in connection with concerns about return-to-work practices or other compliance matters.

While clarifying rights and responsibilities, raising awareness and providing authorities with the right proactive intervention tools are all crucial to promoting compliance. It is also important that appropriate penalties—pardon me—penalty provisions are in place. These not only deter potential violators, but also underscore the high priority we place on having people fulfill their legislative rights and responsibilities.

The proposed amendments, therefore, increase maximum fines and penalties for those convicted of violations of the act. These fines will be set at a maximum of \$50,000 for a corporation and \$5,000 for an individual. The amendments also expand the violations that warrant an administrative penalty to include failure by an employer to produce documents required to determine compliance with the act. To safeguard the rights of those who may be assessed an administrative penalty, a clear appeal process is set out. As a further deterrent and in the interest of providing important public information, these amendments permit the WCB to publicize information regarding administrative penalties issued for violations such as claim suppression and discriminatory action.

Bill 65 also contains important provisions to assist the WCB in fulfilling its prevention mandate. These include a requirement for the WCB board of directors to establish a prevention committee which will include external members from both Labour and

employers, along with the Chief Prevention Officer. This committee's mandate will include establishing policies for injury and illness prevention, developing budgets for prevention activities, providing reviews and advice to the board of directors about prevention activities, ensuring appropriate processes are in place for co-ordinating the prevention activities of the WSB and the Workplace Safety and Health branch and evaluating strategic plans for preventive-prevention initiatives.

The bill also significantly expands the WCB's prevention mandate. This aligns with changes that WCB in terms of the consolidation and expansion of resources dedicated to prevention. Funding and accounting for prevention activities will be separate from the compensation mandate.

Finally, the amendments provide for a new-for new incentives for employers to undertake genuine prevention activities. In conjunction with recent amendments made to The Workplace Safety and Health Act, the amendments proposed in Bill 65 further implement the vision put forth in Manitoba's new prevention plan. These amendments will help ensure that workers are aware of their rights and obligations under The Workers Compensation Act and are free to exercise those rights. This is crucial not only for protecting vulnerable workers, but also for ensuring a level playing field for employers and a WCB funding system defined by fairness and integrity. Furthermore, these amendments build upon our past success in injury and illness prevention by putting in place the structure and tools required to pursue strategic co-ordinated prevention activities toward our goal of making Manitoba the safest place to work in North America.

I would like to once again thank the many stakeholders whose input help shape Manitoba's new prevention plan and the important provisions contained in this bill. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise to talk a little bit about this legislation.

I think, you know, I can understand why the government is trying to bring in legislation which would add prevention committees and so on, and this may turn out to be a good thing. But the reason is that our time-loss-to-injury rate in Manitoba is far higher than other provinces, that we have more injuries on the job, more time lost than other provinces because this government has not been doing its job in terms of decreasing the number of

injuries, and this is a problem. And the answers are not always, you know, straightforward.

\* (16:00)

Let me give you an example. I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you're from the North End of Winnipeg, and one of the, you know, important institutions in your part of Winnipeg is the Seven Oaks hospital, and associated with the Seven Oaks hospital is a wellness centre. And the history of that wellness centre is that when Rey Pagtakhan was elected a Member of Parliament and when he came down as—in 1993, there was a Liberal government, and Dr. Pagtakhan was very concerned about the health of people in the north part of Winnipeg, and so he managed to work with the federal government, and it may have been part of the infrastructure or another program, but he managed to get the funding to ensure that there was a wellness centre built at Seven Oaks hospital.

And the interesting thing about the wellness centre is that when I visited Seven Oaks hospital—it would've been two or three or four years after the wellness centre was completed and was in operation and it was going well—the senior people at the hospital were telling me that one of the wonderful things that had resulted from the construction of this wellness centre, which was being heavily used, was that the—their time off work, their injury rate had gone down quite dramatically, and the positive result was that their bill for workers' compensation had also gone down very significantly. And, I mean, this is clearly a win-win situation because what's happening is that the wellness centre is helping to lower the injury rate because it's keeping people more fit and better able to deal with the stresses and strains of their health-care related activities when they're working in the health-care system, and, secondly, what was found was that the people who were injured at work were getting back to work much faster because of this wellness centre at the Seven Oaks hospital. And so it had a double effect; it prevented injuries and it also decreased the time off work that people had because they were able to get back much faster because of the wellness centre, the fitness activities and the coaching and so on, the mentoring that was done there. It was a very positive circumstance.

And I give this as an example because what we're trying to do, ultimately, in Manitoba, is decrease our time-lost-to-injury rate, which currently is very high, and it's been stable for the last few

years, and it's time we got in line with what the other provinces are in terms of the amount of injuries we've got in the workplace. And it's relevant because setting up a prevention committee might not have led to a building a wellness centre. The prevention committees need to have the good information based on where the claims and where the accidents are occurring, and they need to have good information about how to decrease the accident rate or the injury rate for people who are working.

And it's relevant, particularly because I understand that one of the industries in Manitoba where we have a relatively higher rate than we would like of injuries in the workplace is actually in the health-care area. And this is rather surprising given that the government is, in Manitoba, responsible for the large majority of health care. And so this is the government as employer, as managing the health-care system. Clearly, there is a problem with this government not managing the health-care system well enough and in a way that we're getting too many people working within the health-care system having injuries and having time lost to injury.

So we need to do something about it, and surely part of this should start with the Minister of Health and the way that the system is run, and part of it should have the Minister of Health running the health-care system in our province, ensuring that there are, oh, whether it's wellness centres or other interventions that we can make that will decrease the time-lost-to-injury rate for people who are working in health care.

And so the prevention committees, you know, may be effective, but they need to have, you know, the background work done by Workers Compensation and by the Minister of Health to figure out how to make sure that people can stay healthy, that we can have health-care workplaces which are healthy and keep the workers healthy, because that's pretty smart. You don't have to have as much time off for sickness. You don't have to have as much hiring of extra workers because you've got people who've had time off for sickness. It can be healthier for the industry. It can be healthier in terms of our time-loss-for-injury rate and it can decrease health-care costs—a win-win-win situation. But that's not what we've got so far after fourteen and a half years.

I looked quite recently in this and I—in fact, I asked a question about it recently. Why is the time-lost-to-injury rate in Manitoba up here and most

other provinces it's down here? And clearly it needs thorough investigation, and this government should be investigated for a lot of other things as well as that. But, certainly, you know, one of the problems here is that some of the background work is not being done. Some of the running of the health-care industry is not being done as well as it should be, and so there clearly is examples here of some things that need to be looked at better.

I also want to comment with respect to this legislation. Mr. Graham Lane talked about the Workers Compensation Board model and he had some involvement some years ago, and he talks about this. Manitoba employers will be hit with higher payroll costs under a plan that will boost premiums for workers compensation, besides adding staff and functions to the government's workers advisory office funded by employers through Workers Compensation Board assessments and massively raising the maximum fine for claim suppression. The government plans to change how employers' annual Workers Compensation Board assessments are calculated.

Now, while I do believe it's important to, you know, make sure that claims are not being suppressed, that things are being brought out into the open, that the fundamental aspect of creating a culture of safety, it's not clear that the model that the government is proposing is the optimum one. Indeed, as Mr. Graham says, and I quote: The proposed change to setting employer assessments is highly dubious and suggests the government is moving backward instead of forward in managing the operations of Workers Compensation.

And Mr. Graham Lane then takes us back 26 years ago, when he was appointed to reform Workers Compensation Board, and at that time the Workers Compensation Board was a mess. After a period of NDP government stewardship, he comments: The Workers Compensation Board had a large, unfunded liability and when the books were updated, it amounted to accumulated deficit of \$232 million. That's huge NDP mismanagement.

I quote again: Mr. Graham says the average annual Workers Compensation Board assessment on employers was approximately \$2.40 per \$100 of insured wages, far higher than today's \$1.61 average. There was no mathematically supported assessment model, employers' assessment rates were not aligned to claims experience, et cetera.

\* (16:10)



Mr. Lane says the approach was so unscientific that firms might as well have thrown darts at balloons with random rates inside. As for service to injured workers, time to first payment could easily stretch out to months, and most rehabilitation was ineffectual. The benefit schedule provided a disincentive to return to work, with wage-loss payments in excess of after-tax pre-injury outcomes.

Mr. Graham goes on to say, and I quote: With an actuary, we developed a proper assessment model. It sets assessment rates taking into account accident experience, duration and severity. Employers responded positively and more attention was paid to keeping workplaces safe. We also fixed service to claimants and upgraded the Workers Compensation Board legislation. The result was an agency with a more appropriate governance, benefit and administrative structure. The accumulated deficit was conquered and the average assessment rate fell dramatically. Workers Compensation Board was no longer at risk of bankruptcy.

And Mr. Lane continues: In fixing the Workers Compensation Board, we discovered a number of problems that now, again, under NDP stewardship, are problematic. The average duration of a wage loss claim for all categories of injuries was far in excess of the experience of private insurers. And, with respect to long-term claimants, a test of 100 files found that 98 or 99 of the once-injured workers could have returned to work. Slow or inept claims management had led to swollen and unjustifiable claims payments.

I continue quoting Mr. Lane: When the economy slows, history suggests the duration of claims increases. And for injured workers with a tentative attachment to their employer, the duration of claim stretches out. The vast majority of claims injuries are soft tissue in nature. And yet if their return to work extended past six months, it was difficult to get them off Workers Compensation Board. The assessment model provided employers not only a real incentive to create and sustain safe workplaces but, also, an incentive to assist their employees to return to work. Any effort by an employer to pressure an injured worker not to report a workplace injury was properly seen as illegal.

Mr. Lane continues: Since those days there have been many changes which have occurred in the situation for injured workers. And he goes on to make some additional comments, which I hope will be taken into account as this bill proceeds through

committee stage and on to have amendments and other things considered.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

But I think it is important that we keep centred on the goal of reducing the time off, time lost to injury, keeping workers healthy and shortening the amount and the number of claims, which will benefit both workers and will also benefit employers. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that there's considerable work to be done here on this bill, and I look forward to further discussion at the committee stage.

Thank you.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I move, seconded by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), that debate now adjourn.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### **Bill 53—The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution)**

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll now proceed to call Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution).

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** I'll move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing, that Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution), be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

And the message from his Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been tabled.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, this bill introduces a law requiring the payment of restitution by poachers, and it's the first provincial law of its kind.

Mr. Speaker, many fish and wildlife populations are under stress. We know of many of them. And, indeed, in the paper today we see about the effect of two very harsh winters on our white-tailed deer population. That's just one example.

Fines alone often do not send a strong enough deterrent message, and fines alone, of course, do not compensate for the loss.

Mr. Speaker, when I was Attorney General, I saw the benefit of offenders making good through the victim fine surcharge that this province has in place. That helps to repair some of the damage. Many people, perhaps, don't think about what damage there is, that poachers can cause, but poachers undermine sustainable wildlife and fish management practices. It can result in a loss of commercial tourism potential. It certainly detracts from the dedicated and costly efforts of our natural resource officers.

I think that one of the purposes of the bill is actually to help ensure the continued great hunting and fishing opportunities for Manitoba families.

The message here is that poachers must pay the price, Mr. Speaker; that poachers can't rob Manitoba of its bounty.

So, in terms of what the bill proposes, it will allow Manitoba to set specific restitution consequences under regulation for offenders who illegally catch fish and kill wild animals. The bill will hold offenders accountable and require them to pay for the loss of these animals that are taken illegally, over and above the fines that are now in place.

The bill sets out that a person who is convicted of catching or possessing fish or killing, transporting or possessing wild animals, in contravention of established laws, will be liable for the value of those animals. In cases where there may be one or more people involved in the offence, there will be a joint and several restitution owed by all convicted of that offence.

With continued consultation with stakeholders, monetary values for fish and wild animals will soon be completed and set out under regulations once this bill is proclaimed.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that while this is the first of its kind in Canada, legislation of this kind is found south of the border, and the department has been looking at what the restitution values are that the American states have put in place, and it certainly is informing our effort to conclude the regulations.

The bill sets out that upon conviction, restitution is owing, in addition to any fine, forfeiture, or other

consequences as a result of the conviction. So it means that the restitution value of the animal must be paid over and above any fines for the offence, and restitution payment cannot be reduced.

At the time a person is being charged for an offence, they will be informed in writing by the officer that they'll be liable for the value of the animal if they are found guilty of the offence. Upon a guilty plea, or if the person is found guilty of that offence through a subsequent trial, a written notice will then be sent to the offender, sending out the owed restitution value of the animal or animals involved in the offence. They're provided a time frame of 60 days to pay the restitution, but if the offender fails to pay, the department may seek enforcement of this debt by action in the Court of Queen's Bench.

The bill also sets—states that the—that if an offender fails to pay restitution for any fish, any fishing licence they possess is cancelled and their privilege to purchase another fishing licence is suspended until they pay the value for the fish. The bill also states that, if an offender fails to pay restitution for wild animals, any hunting licence they possess is cancelled and the privilege of purchasing another hunting licence is suspended until they pay the value for the wild animal.

The bill provides for all restitution received to be focused into funding fish and wildlife enhancement initiatives by directing the funds into the new Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund. That is a trust fund, Mr. Speaker. This will ultimately strengthen our efforts to protect and conserve our resources.

So this is a precedent-setting bill that I'm pleased to introduce, and I thank the staff for all the effort they put into making sure that this came to fruition for this session. It demonstrates our commitment to long-term sustainability of our precious natural resources and it reflects the severity of poaching infractions on our fish and wildlife by acting as a greater deterrent to would-be offenders.

Finally, it lets everyone know in Manitoba, and it lets people know outside of Manitoba, that we are bound and determined to remain at the forefront in continuing to invest in the protection of conservation of Mother Nature's bounty.

I look forward to the support of all members for this legislation and hearing any insights at committee, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

\* (16:20)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I want to comment briefly on Bill 53, the bill which involves addressing or reducing the amount of poaching and protecting wildlife better. Certainly, these are laudable goals.

The only question that I would have for the minister, and perhaps he will, at some point, clarify this, has the minister consulted with First Nation and Metis people on this legislation, and, you know, how it will work in all areas of the province.

With those comments, I wait for the committee meetings and look forward to them.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I move, seconded by the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that debate now be adjourned.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### **Bill 55—The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Now proceed to call Bill 55, The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure).

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 55, The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, Bill 53 represented a Canadian first, Mr. Speaker. This bill actually joins a number of other provinces and jurisdictions at the municipal level that have protected its most vulnerable citizens, notably children, as well protecting pets from unnecessary, potentially harmful exposure to synthetic chemical pesticides.

Manitoba's bill that's come before the House goes beyond just restricting the use of a proscribed pesticide on a lawn and provides for safe zones from synthetic chemical pesticide use on properties around schools, daycares and hospitals. So that aspect of the legislation is leading edge.

What this means that no matter where our children are, whether at school, home or at child care, they will be able to play on grass that's free from potentially harmful chemical pesticides.

Mr. Speaker, a growing number of health-care professionals and organizations, including scientists,

academics, environmentalists, parents and women's organizations are increasingly advocating for action to reduce exposure to non-essential or synthetic chemical pesticides used for cosmetic purposes. Research is providing more and more information on the risks, particularly to children. Infants and young children may be more vulnerable, given their relative body weight, their rapid body and brain development, ability to detoxify chemicals and given their behaviour: crawling on lawns or on floors, putting their hands in their mouths and their proximity to the ground.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to quote from one of the more recent publications about this issue. This was published in *Pediatrics*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, published online November 26, 2012. It states the following: This statement presents the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics on pesticides. Pesticides are a collective term for chemicals intended to kill unwanted insects, plants, moulds, and rodents. Children encounter pesticides daily and have unique susceptibilities to their potential toxicity. Acute poisoning risks are clear. An understanding of chronic health implications from both acute and chronic exposure are emerging.

And this is the key conclusion here, Mr. Speaker. Epidemiologic evidence demonstrates associations between early life exposure to pesticides and pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function and behavioural problems.

Mr. Speaker, we've often heard public debate about what Health Canada says about pesticides, and we want to just put it on the record to make it clear what, indeed, Health Canada itself says about pesticides. It says that we should reduce exposure to these products where they aren't really needed. That is clear throughout its publications.

Health Canada, indeed, is a big promoter of reducing and avoiding pesticides for lawns. Health Canada warns that pesticides should only be applied when no children, elderly persons, pets or animals are present. And, in fact, it says that pregnant women should stay away for a full day.

Accordingly, not surprisingly then, Health Canada more recently developed a unique process to expedite the approval of lower risk products. With this approach that is being introduced by way of the bill, Manitoba actually is then approving these products. It's a precautionary approach; it's especially

compelling when it comes to children's health, Mr. Speaker.

The bill follows up on the commitment made in 2009 to review current pesticide policies in this province. In April 2011, the Manitoba round table on sustainable development issued a report recommending a ban on both the sale and use of lawn pesticides. Then, in the spring of 2012, Conservation and Water Stewardship released a consultation paper called Play it SAFE. We received more than 2,000 responses to that, and approximately 64 per cent were supportive of restrictions on the sale or use of cosmetic pesticides in Manitoba.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, will allow the Province to restrict the use of certain synthetic chemical pesticides, while encouraging the use of only federally approved lower risk alternatives, such as biopesticides or alternative products on lawns, adjoining walkways, driveways and patios, school grounds, playgrounds and playing fields and the grounds of hospitals and child-care centres.

The bill, of course, does not ban the use of all chemical pesticides for weed control but does require the use of lower risk pesticides for non-essential or cosmetic weed control on lawns, and it certainly does not mean, as some want to promote in the industry, no weed control at all. In addition to lower risk products, there are, of course, lawn-care practices that can be used in co-operation to effectively control weeds.

This bill focuses on the non-essential use of pesticides to control weeds on lawns and will not affect the use of pesticides in agriculture or forestry. The agriculture sector, Mr. Speaker, has, in fact, reduced pesticide use considerably over the years, and in our view it's time for urban dwellers to do the same. The rate of application of pesticides on lawns is about 10 times the rate I'm advised of the rate per acre on farms now. There are also exemptions for golf courses, gardens and for uses to address high-risk noxious weeds, poisonous or invasive plants and for the protection of human health and safety where there are no effective alternatives. So the bill provides a balanced approach to reduce risks to human and animal health and to the environment.

The bill will also allow Manitoba to regulate the sale of proscribed pesticides at the retail levels. Placing restrictions on the sale of certain proscribed pesticides will encourage retailers to provide lower risk options on their shelves and make it easier for

the homeowner to make a safer choice when choosing a pesticide for weed control on their lawns.

Many Manitoba retail stores have already voluntarily moved away from the sale of synthetic chemical pesticides and offer federally approved lower risk products. And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years most of the products that Manitobans are bringing home, whether it's from Home Depot or from RONA or from Costco or even my neighbourhood hardware store, Pollock's, is the lower risk product that has been out there and been proven effective.

So, since Manitoba is not the first province to implement regulatory restrictions, national retailers have, of course, adapted in the other jurisdictions as well. So the Province intends to follow the lead of other jurisdictions and work with retailers in implementing any restrictions in the sale of the proscribed pesticides.

So Manitoba joins many other provinces and over what I have been told amounts to about 170 Canadian municipalities that have taken action in reducing exposure of synthetic chemical pesticides based on concerns about risks to human and animal health and to the environment.

\* (16:30)

Quebec, I understand, was the first province to implement a province-wide cosmetic pesticide ban in 2006; since then, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island have adopted laws to restrict pesticides, and I understand that currently in British Columbia there is an option before the province to restrict who can apply pesticides in that province. Of course, in British Columbia, I think there were over 40 municipalities already, though, that have restrictions in place. I visited one of them, the municipality or the city of Richmond, that has one of the strictest pesticide laws in all of Canada.

Cities and towns in the other provinces, of course, have not become overrun with weeds. That's because there are these alternatives to conventional chemical pesticides. Whether it's natural weed-control products as well as the lower risk pesticides and biopesticides or whether it's lawn-care practices that use organic practices to build the strength of the soil and turf, those practices are available for Manitobans. And whether it's overseeding, top-dressing and mowing high, we can see perfect

lawns all across Manitoba in—or all across Canada where there are restrictions in place.

As part of the implementation of this bill, we will undertake an education or awareness campaign. A website will help ensure that relevant and timely information is made available. A grace period will be provided to allow Manitoba homeowners to become familiar with the new rules and time to adjust. This time will also provide retailers the opportunity to make adjustments and add lower risk products to their shelves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this legislation.

Let me start by recognizing, first of all, that there have been major changes which have occurred in the design and the development of pesticides over the last several decades, particularly since the raising of concerns about the impact of DDT and early pesticides, often which persisted in the environment and, indeed, had a tendency to have increased concentrations as one went up the food chain. And, of course, with humans being at the equivalent of the top of the food chain, this meant that there were high residues of DDT in breast milk and so on, and this, of course, has created over the years a lot of concern about pesticides.

And it needs to be mentioned that current pesticides are being designed in a way that they will break down rapidly and that there is, from what we know, considerably less problem with them for the environment and in terms of human health. But this may not be negligible, and certainly we need to be using, particularly when it comes to children, the precautionary principle to make sure that, you know, our children grow up healthy and don't have adverse effects including, for example, cancer, because of exposures to pesticides.

It also needs to be mentioned that while current pesticides, generally speaking, break down rapidly, I have recently read some reports which suggest that certain neonicotinoids may, in fact, persist in the environment under some circumstances for some time. So this is—of course, as we develop new pesticides, we need to be evaluating them carefully, but certainly we need to have some caution, and I think this bill, which focuses on children and on areas where children play, including lawns, is a reasonable start at this particular point in time.

I want to comment that the concerns in terms of children's health and adult health—some of those concerns have related specifically to different forms of cancer. And in this respect, that the—there have been, indeed, many studies of pesticides and childhood cancer. A lot of these are reviewed by a paper which was published several years ago by Dr. Zahm and Mary Ward, and this review, at that time, and my understanding that the information is still accumulating—but for example, it showed that it depended, you know, on the type of cancer, that neuroblastoma, a common type of cancer among children, there's little evidence for any relationship between pesticides and the cause of this type of cancer.

Now, in contrast, in terms of leukemia, this review looks at 17 case-control studies and the—would show a possible role for pesticides in causing childhood cancer. For example, parental use of pesticides in the home or garden during pregnancy or nursing for mothers was associated with a three- to nine-fold increase in childhood leukemia. In a careful what's called a case-control study in Los Angeles, in California, maternal employment in agricultural occupations reported exposures to pesticides during pregnancy were both associated in the increased likelihood of acute lymphocytic leukemia.

So these evidence is significant. It doesn't prove causation, but, in the nature of the kinds of studies that one is able to do under this circumstance, you may not get direct causative evidence because nobody would ever want to give pesticides to children. And so these kinds of studies provide us a pretty important level of information on whether there should be a concern or not, and they show that there should be a healthy concern.

With regard to brain cancer, significant elevations in brain cancer risk related to at least one measure of pesticide exposure were observed in nine studies. And, in this, the largest risk estimates were based on parent-reported use of pesticides in the home or garden or on pets. And these are the sorts of things that we're actually dealing with here in this legislation.

With regard to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, there are six case-control studies and 'non'—one cohort study, the notable findings here in terms of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma were found a risk that increased with level of pesticide expenditures among a cohort of children of Norwegian farmers. And

those risks were significantly greater than non-exposed children. There was an excess of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma observed among children whose homes had been exterminated or had pest strips. There was a garden insecticide space and home extermination were also associated with excess childhood non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

With Wilms' tumour, which is a tumour of the kidney, children whose homes had been exterminated had twice the risk of Wilms' tumour than children in untreated homes. Children whose fathers or mothers had agricultural pesticides were more likely, threefold more likely, to have Wilms' tumour.

And so these are, you know, significant and important findings. Parental employment as a farmer and other agricultural occupations was associated with an approximately ninefold significantly increased risk of Ewing sarcoma in children.

\*(16:40)

And so, as a result of these studies and of known health effects of commonly used lawn pesticides, that it is reasonable to proceed with this legislation, and I'm certainly ready to support the government with this bill. I look forward to the discussion at the committee stage. And I think that because there is a continuing evolution in the development of pesticides that this is an area where we need to be continually watchful and understanding and continually learning about the science and knowledge as things progress. Thank you.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to stand and put a few comments on the record in relation to Bill 55, The Environment Amendment Act, also known as the Reducing Pesticide Exposure act.

I appreciated the member for River Heights' (Mr. Gerrard) comments. I mean, the member for River Heights is a learned gentleman and has a few more letters at the end of his name than I do and I imagine I will. I always find it interesting that we as legislatures, when we start making decisions and ignore—the decisions that we make should be on the basis of the best information that we have available to us.

And, again, as I noted, Mr. Speaker, I don't have—I'm not a medical doctor. I'm not a 'toxologist'. I don't have the knowledge base to make that determination, so I need to rely on those that do, and here in Canada we do have the pest management

review agency whose function is to study pesticides and make those determinations as to their applicability in terms of their use, any cautions that may exist. I understand that it's an ongoing review process.

So what we have, Mr. Speaker, is a situation in which Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the PMRA, is indicating that these products, again, as with any products when used appropriately, don't pose any significant issue in our communities, and yet now we have a government suggesting that we're going to dismiss what they have to say and we think otherwise.

Now, I recognize, obviously, when we're dealing with products like these and many other products, I mean, caution is something that we need to look at and look at seriously, and there is the old saying, it's better to err on the side of caution. And, obviously, as an individual with young children and pets, I understand what the minister is saying as he and his cohorts wrap themselves in the idea that somehow they're protecting children with these bans.

In fact, I noticed just on my drive to work this morning these new billboards that are up, put up by CAPE, which is the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. So CAPE.ca has these lovely billboards around featuring young children and pets and green grass and obviously speaking out against the use of pesticides in our communities. And so I went to their website because, I mean, you should learn information from, obviously, a variety of sources, and what I found in particular of interest, Mr. Speaker, is a lot of their focus in what I reviewed was on the use of pesticides in our food chain, and that seemed to be more of a primary concern, again, for the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment.

And yet this government has—is putting forward a piece of legislation that says that we can't use, or I as a homeowner can't use this product on my lawn, but I'm more than welcome to use it in my garden, so that my 5-year-old is not allowed to walk across a lawn that may have had a few dandelions or quack grass dealt with that had been sprayed, but she can go into the garden to get a cucumber or tomato or whatnot that the minister is saying, you know, by all means use the product.

And I'm not suggesting the minister is suggesting that these products are to be used in excess. I mean, there are—as with any products, there are labels. There's directions and there are cautions to

be used. I mean, so whether we're talking about pesticides—and pesticides are used, Mr. Speaker, as well, and the minister doesn't really touch on it in his comments, throughout all aspects of our life. I mean, pesticides are used in our public waterways and in our pools and that to protect our health. Pesticides are used in the health-care system, again, to protect our lives and our well-being. And without pesticides, our ability to feed the world would be significantly, significantly diminished.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's not surprising, then, that you have organizations like the Manitoba Beef Producers having concerns about what they consider to be the artificial distinction being made between so-called cosmetic use of pesticides and agricultural use. In a letter to the correspondents they wrote, quote, we do not believe that products can be considered safe in one environment and toxic in another. It is our view that this distinction between different uses of products sends an unfortunate and ultimately dangerous mixed message to the public at large, end quote.

So this is the business the government gets into when they start making these kinds of distinctions, when they start saying, you know, it's bad; these products are bad in terms of the health consequences or potential health consequences of use of these products, but they're perfectly safe to use just a mere feet away in your own personal garden or on the fields. And yet in my own community as well—I mean, La Salle, we are literally, we're a community carved out of farm fields, and we continue, actually, to expand into those farm fields. So those same farmers that the minister is suggesting that can use—continue to use pesticides, and I can't in my yard, will be spraying the products all around homeowners whose property just happens to border agricultural fields.

I myself don't take issue with them, Mr. Speaker. I believe that farmers, just like lawn-care agencies in this province and lawn-care associations, use these products, again, as directed through the pest management review agency, and they are, indeed, properly trained, which brings me to another interesting aspect of the legislation, and this is the grace period that the government will be offering homeowners, such as myself and my neighbours, that I will be allowed a one-year grace period that I can continue to legally purchase and utilize this product, and yet organizations represented by Landscape Manitoba can't.

The same organizations, through Landscape Manitoba, are licensed; they're trained; they're—they fall under Manitoba Conservation. And yet these individuals that, quite honestly, probably have—well, not honestly, probably—absolutely have more experience in handling—and safely handling—and utilizing these products aren't able, have no equivalent grace period so that I can, you know, me and my neighbours can continue, I guess, to wear sandals and shorts and spray these products, apparently, on our back lawn, and yet, again, the landscape companies, again, who are trained and licensed to do this aren't able to do that, Mr. Speaker. So it's really about awareness and education, and I do appreciate the fact that the minister finally uttered the word education because, initially, when the discussion came up about the potential, and now we're moving, obviously, from potential to implemented ban on pesticides and synthetic pesticides here in the province of Manitoba, there wasn't a lot of discussion about education.

But, once again, typical of the government, they're saying, you know, well, we're going to ban it, but then we're going to educate people about the ban and about the, you know, the apparent dangers.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, the minister made reference, and I'd have to look at Hansard as to the exact numbers, but he indicated there is information or statistics out there that suggest that homeowners use, on, I guess, a proportional basis, far more in excess to the required need of these products than, say, an agricultural producer would. But, again, the solution from the government's point of view is to simply ban the product as opposed to, you know, why wouldn't we start with an educational component, working with realtors, working with industry and working with the education system to talk and talk about individuals about the safe use of these products and the appropriate and inappropriate use of these products.

It's always interesting as well, Mr. Speaker, that the government is asking us as legislators in this building to support Bill 55 and to support what he calls an allowable list of pesticides, but they won't share this allowable list of pesticides. So, essentially, the government's saying, trust us, we know what we're doing; we're in the best position to make these decisions and we want you just to agree to ban these products and, conversely, we want you to agree to allow these other products, but we're not going to tell you what these allowable products are.

\* (16:50)

Now, I know, in some of the discussions I've had with farm officials, they want to move to a product known as Fiesta, Mr. Speaker, This product—again, I can only rely on those individuals that utilize the projects—product, and it just happens that two individuals in my neighbourhood—in fact, one just lives a few doors down from me—owns a landscape company, and another friend of mine in my community also owns another landscape company, and, recently, at an event, we discussed the government's planned ban on pesticide use in their business and, more importantly, the impact that would have on their business. And, so, I thought, you know, this is a great opportunity to talk about the effectiveness of this product, of this alternate product that the government is suggesting is available to them, and, I guess, it's not—it's more or less a suggestion, it's available, but let's talk about the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of this product.

Well, again, I mean, both individuals, in two separate conversations, indicated that the new product, Fiesta, is not—it's not a no-risk product. And, I mean, the minister himself acknowledges that in his comments about, you know, uses the terminology low-risk product. But, more importantly, it has less effectiveness on dealing with the vegetation that the original products were supposed to be dealing with, and often times you'll have to take two treatments. So, not only will they be having to drive and attend an individual's property more often, they will actually have to apply more of the product to get the same level of effectiveness, Mr. Speaker. So that is, indeed, unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke—I mentioned at the beginning, the lack of, you know, how we, as legislators, have to rely on experts and individuals we bring in. And, I mean, the minister was kind enough recently to bring in on a briefing about the zebra mussel, the invasive species infestation and the government's plans on there. And at that briefing was obviously a number of the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) staff and science advisory council to provide me that information on zebra mussels, because they are the ones that have that expertise.

But what's interesting, there—as with anything, Mr. Speaker—there's always new products coming to market, and under normal circumstances, those products would be reviewed. And, well, they will continue to be reviewed by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, but in Manitoba's

instance, they won't be approved. Instead, companies will actually have to go directly to the minister and request that it be added to the provincial approve list. And that the minister has indicated—the department has indicated to those companies that the product label information would be reviewed and a decision will be made by the minister. So, I mean, I'm not diminishing the minister's credentials, but I would hardly suggest, or I would suggest that the minister's credentials do not in any way equate to the credentials being provided through Health Canada in the services that they provide on a regular basis when it comes to this product and many other products.

I also take concern of some of the minister's comments, you know, about this protecting children. And I remember the minister uses illustration of suggestion that, you know, we have children, young toddlers and that, free ranging Cheerios in our backyards that are soaked—with the grass soaked with pesticides. And, obviously, speaks more to the incompetence or poor parenting skills that such an individual would have, as opposed to the product itself, because, I mean, any parent that would allow their children to free range Cheerios in the backyard, as they soak those Cheerios in grasses with pesticides, I would suggest it's probably going to entertain a lot of other inappropriate decisions with their children and such, Mr. Speaker. So this is always a concern too when we use, sort of, very exaggerated references or analogies to support a piece of legislation.

It's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, the minister said and publicly stated, you know, this is about protecting children. And, obviously, the minister is not going to make any apologies from his perspective to protecting children, because this is what he says the community wants; the scientific or the, you know, the cancer—CancerCare and other agencies want.

And, yet, it's always interesting that the same organizations that are applauding this government for this decision or for interest this legislation, obviously, encouraging the passing of the legislation, has made similar remarks to government when it comes to, say, indoor tanning for minors. And, they have strongly recommended to this government that we need to ban indoor tanning for minors. That there's a strong correlation between cancer and skin cancer and indoor tanning. And yet, when that same recommendation comes to government, the government simply says, well, let us—we'll take a look at it. We'll study it. We're not really prepared to



go down that road. And yet, on an issue like this, Mr. Speaker, they have no hesitation.

The other part and the other comment I'd like to put on the record before I conclude my comments, Mr. Speaker, is that of first steps. And I have no doubt, again, based on the comments during my bill briefing, and it was made quite clear that Bill 55, The Environment Amendment Act and the properties that are currently applied to under the act, it's just the tip of the iceberg. The minister's policy staff made that quite clear that this was just the first step.

So, when we talked about the concerns from the agricultural community, and I think those concerns about the banning of these chemicals and what it would do to the ability of them to provide the bountiful food that they do, and again in a safe and responsible manner, will be severely diminished or at least threatened when the government—and it isn't a question of whether, it's a question of when the government—extends this ban to our agricultural producers.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to this bill going to committee stage. I have no doubt there'll be a number of presenters on all sides of the issue, as there is with any piece of legislation. I look forward to hearing those presentations to learn more from those presenters, have an ability to engage them and ask questions, as well as to put forward some amendments, amendments that we think will strengthen this piece of legislation. Amendments that I hope the minister takes under—with—takes into consideration so that then his legislation can actually be a more effective piece of legislation to achieve the goals that he's hoping to achieve.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your time, and I will let debate conclude to committee stage.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there any further debate on Bill 55?

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 55, The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure).

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

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

**Mr. Speaker:** On division.

#### House Business

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Thursday, May 22nd, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act; Bill 31, The Police Services Amendment Act; Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Health Workers Act; Bill 51, the Legislative Assembly act.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Thursday, May 22nd, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following bills: Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act; Bill 31, The Police Services Amendment Act (Community Safety Officers); Bill 50, the protection of temporary health workers act, Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code amendment—amended; and Bill 51, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I'd also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Thursday, May 22nd, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act; Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act; Bill 34, the consumer protection act; and Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Thursday, May 22nd, 2014, at 6 p.m. to consider the following bills:

Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved Consumer Protection and Enforcement); Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act; Bill 34, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (High-Cost Credit Products); and Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act (Opening Birth and Adoption Records).

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might call it 5 o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m. this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Tuesday, May the 20th, at 10 a.m.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 15, 2014

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