

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 14, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 24—The Wildlife Amendment and Fisheries Amendment Act

Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (Mr. Kostyshyn), that Bill 24, The Wildlife Amendment and Fisheries Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the wildlife and fisheries amendment act. I value the importance of sustaining viable wild animal populations while ensuring that violators are held accountable for their actions.

Through this bill, I intend to conserve our wild animal populations while finding efficiencies and reducing red tape for lawful resource users here in the province. The bill makes several amendments to wildlife and fisheries legislation, including enhancements to enforce provisions with respect to illegal hunting, such as doubling fines to a maximum of \$100,000, extending the statute of limitations from one to two years, making it illegal to obstruct conservation officers in carrying out their duties, enabling the department to prevent a person from obtaining a hunting licence if they have outstanding fines and enabling the province to enter into reciprocal enforcement agreements with other jurisdictions to share information about persons who have been convicted of wildlife violations and subsequently had hunting-licence privileges suspended. This will prohibit anyone from purchasing a licence in Manitoba when suspended from hunting in another jurisdiction.

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

The introduction of bills—I just want to—for information of the House, for all honourable members, when we're introducing bills, the

introduction at second reading, the statements are supposed to be very, very brief. And so I'm asking for the co-operation of the honourable members, when they're introducing bills, please remember that.

My apologies for having to cut off the minister, but I want to make sure that members of the House know that.

Any further—or is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*Agreed*]

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

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

Rights of Manitoba Children

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government should uphold the rights of children set forth by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by Canada over 20 years ago, to better protect and promote children and their rights and to ensure the voices of children are heard.

Instead, many children in Manitoba, especially those in the child-welfare system, reveal that they sometimes feel they have no say in what happens to them.

Under this provincial government, Manitoba's children and youth are falling behind on several indicators of well-being and areas that will prepare them better for outcomes in life.

This year, the provincial government's education system was ranked last of all Canadian provinces in science, health and math.

Under this provincial government, Manitoba also has the second highest percentage of children using food banks of all Canadian provinces and the highest child poverty rate.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities to ensure that the rights of all children—Manitoba children are respected and that the opinions of children are taken into consideration when decisions that affect them are made.

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities to correct the tragic systemic flaws that have failed Manitoba children in the recent past.

This petition's signed by S. Bohn, S. Drenkew, J. Skromeda and many more concerned Manitobans.

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

And also, while I'm on my feet, I want to advise honourable members, when they're reading their petitions, not to add editorial comments into the petitions when we're introducing the names of constituents who have signed.

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

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by J. Gutoski, T. Klepatz, M. Faspey and many, many other Manitobans.

Beausejour District Hospital—Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by M. True, S. Prysiogniuk, A. Kryk and many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Election Request

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) In 2015 the current provincial government will be in its fourth year of its mandate.

(2) There is a crisis of leadership unfolding on the government side of the House.

(3) According to media reports, the member for Minto stated that the Premier is, quote, more concerned about remaining leader than doing things in the best interests of the province, end quote.

(4) According to media reports, the member for Seine River stated, quote, if you are in a position where you support the point of view of the Premier, your priorities and your projects move up the queue, end quote.

(5) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated that, quote, the Premier has stopped listening to our advice, end quote.

(6) According to media reports, the members for Southdale, Dauphin, Seine River, Minto and Fort Rouge stated, quote, we can no longer work for a Premier who refuses to hear us; he refuses to hear us not just on the leadership issue but also on a wide range of issues in our portfolios, end quote.

(7) The concerns over the Premier's leadership have not been confined to just government members. The NDP provincial council member Darlene Dziewit has been reported as saying, quote, we have a crisis here in that I don't think the people of Manitoba trust our leadership anymore, end quote.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Premier to immediately consider calling an election so that Manitobans can decide who is best placed to govern in the best interests of Manitobans.

And this petition has been signed by G. Fuchs, G. Maynard, G. Scull and many, many more fine Manitobans.

*(13:40)

Minnesota-Manitoba Transmission Line Route—Information Request

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line is a 500-kilovolt alternating-current transmission line set to be located in southeastern Manitoba that will cross into the US border south of Piney, Manitoba.

(2) The line has an in-service date of 2020 and will run approximately 150 kilometres with tower heights expected to reach between 40 and 60 metres and be located every four to five hundred metres.

(3) The preferred route designated for the line will see hydro towers come in close proximity to the community of La Broquerie and many other communities in Manitoba's southeast rather than an alternate route that was also considered.

(4) The alternate route would have seen the line run further east, avoid densely populated areas and eventually terminate at the same spot at the US border.

(5) The Progressive Conservative caucus has repeatedly asked for information about the routing of this line and its proximity to densely populated areas and has yet to receive any response.

(6) Landowners all across Manitoba are concerned about the impact hydro line routing could have on their land values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro to immediately provide a written explanation to all members of the Legislative Assembly regarding what criteria were used and the reasons for selecting the preferred route for the Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line, including whether or not this routing represented the least intrusive option to residents of Taché, Springfield, Ste. Anne, Stuartburn, Piney and La Broquerie.

This petition is signed by B. Webber, D. McLean, E. Bouchard and many more fine Manitobans.

Bipole III Land Expropriation— Collective Bargaining Request

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

On November 19th, 2014, the Premier authorized an order-in-council enabling Manitoba Hydro to take valuable and productive farmland for its controversial Bipole III transmission line project without due process of law.

On November 24th, 2014, the minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba

Hydro Act signed a confirming order for the province of Manitoba declaring that no notice to landowners is required for the seizure of property.

This waiver of notice represents an attack on rural families and their property rights in a modern democratic society. There was not even an opportunity provided for debate in the Manitoba Legislature. In many cases, the private property seized has been part of a family farm for generations.

Manitoba Hydro has claimed that it has only ever expropriated one landowner in its entire history of operation. The provincial government has now gone ahead and instituted expropriation procedures against more than 200 landowners impacted by Bipole III.

Since November 2013, the Manitoba Bipole III Landowner Committee, MBLC, in association with the Canadian Association of Energy and Pipeline Landowners' Associations, CAEPLA, has been trying to engage Manitoba Hydro to negotiate a fair business agreement.

For over 14 months, the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro have acted in bad faith in their dealings with Manitoba landowners or their duly authorized agents. Those actions have denied farmers their right to bargain collectively to protect their property and their businesses from Bipole III.

MBLC, CAEPLA has not formed an association to stop the Bipole III project and they are not antidevelopment. MBLC, CAEPLA has simply come together, as a group of people, as Manitobans, to stand for their property—for property rights and the right to collectively bargain for a fair business agreement that protects the future well-being of their businesses.

MBLC, CAEPLA are duly authorized agents for Manitoba landowners who wish to exercise their freedom to associate and negotiate in good faith.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government immediately direct Manitoba Hydro to engage with MBLC, CAEPLA in order to negotiate a fair business agreement that addresses the many legitimate concerns of farm families affected by the Bipole III transmission line.

And this petition is signed by R. Ehnes, C. Deborek, J. Bouyer and many more fine Manitobans.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this afternoon from St. John's-Ravenscourt School 20 grade 9 students under the direction of Matt Henderson. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Allum).

And also in the public gallery we have with us today Heidi Howarth, who is the guest of the honourable Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Caldwell).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Investors Group Field Construction Timeline and Costs

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a stadium proposal that began with approximately a \$15-million commitment on the part of Manitoba taxpayers has ballooned by over \$200 million, and it's growing, it seems. Tens of millions of dollars of additional costs have been added to the project lately: access issues, heating and insulation problems, even cracking in concrete.

Given that this project proceeded immediately prior to the last provincial election, would the Premier assure Manitobans that none of these problems were the result of the NDP rushing the project to serve their political agenda?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I was pleased today that the Conference Board of Canada has indicated that Winnipeg, at 2 and a half per cent growth, will be the strongest city for economic growth in the Prairies, Mr. Speaker, and part of that strong growth story will be events held at the stadium, such as the FIFA Women's World Cup, such as the Grey Cup which will be held this fall and will generate tens of millions of dollars of economic activity.

Mr. Speaker, the old stadium was time expired. It was identified as being unsafe. There was a broad consensus in the community that we needed a new facility, and that new facility now serves the community extremely well, and we believe it will

serve the community for many years to come extremely well.

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, you can rush a quarterback and that can work out well, but when you rush a construction project it generally works out badly, and that's what's happened to Manitoban taxpayers.

Now, on May 20th, 2010, the Premier made comment on this project, and he said, let's just get 'er done. But it's not done, at least not properly, and the result is millions of dollars in additional costs. I want to emphasize these are allegations, but they come from the former chair of triple B, who said, we knew the plan had problems that needed to be fixed and addressed.

Well, the question is simple and the Premier should not avoid answering it. Why did the NDP government fail to address these problems and prevent them before they started to run into millions of dollars of costs?

Will the Premier simply go on record and admit that he did or deny that he did rush the stadium construction project to serve his political agenda?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that Winnipeg is going to have the strongest growth of all the prairie cities in western Canada this year and I know the new stadium is an important part of that. It's going to serve the community, not only the Bombers, not only the Bisons, amateur sport, but the community generally. I've been assured that it's a safe facility.

And, yes, there is a lawsuit that is going on between the owners of the stadium, triple B, and the contractor, and that is before the courts, and there will be many allegations made within that, and the courts will sort that out.

In the meantime, the public needs to know the stadium is safe. It'll be fully functional for all the activities that are scheduled for there. We look forward to the FIFA world-Women's World Cup, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to the Grey Cup. We look forward to the Bisons having another great season there. We look forward to the Bombers having another great season there. We look forward to all the economic benefits that will generate for the economy of Winnipeg and for Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: I've given the Premier two opportunities, and he's become a witness for his own prosecution, Mr. Speaker, with his political answers.

I've given him two opportunities to simply clear the air on this issue and deny these allegations and the truthfulness of them, but he's failed to do that.

* (13:50)

Now, the New England Patriots were just found guilty of deflating footballs, but he's deflated the enthusiasm for this project among all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier announced this project at the old stadium, and he claimed the old stadium had a leaky roof and it was surrounded by pails of water. And now what do we have? We have a new stadium that leaks and has pails of water in it, and the Premier is refusing to simply address the issue in a straightforward and transparent manner.

Now, Manitobans expected to get the stadium that they invested hundreds of millions of dollars in, and they're not getting the stadium they deserve. The original cost estimate was less than half of what we see the cost rising to now, and the Premier has a chance here to explain whether, in fact, he hurried up the construction project to serve his goals or he did not.

And I give him the third opportunity to simply come clean and admit he did or deny that he did rush the project to serve the political agenda of his party ahead of the agenda of Manitoba citizens.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we needed a new stadium in Manitoba, no question about it, and the new stadium generated over 2,500 jobs in the construction alone. It is now generating economic activity. More fans are going to football games, both professional and amateur. There are major concerts going on there. We've now been able to attract the FIFA Women's World Cup event to Manitoba. We've been able to attract the Grey Cup to Manitoba. We look forward to a Winter Classic at some date to be specified in the future.

All of these things are helping us have one of the strongest economies in Winnipeg of all the Prairies right now, Mr. Speaker, and we have one of the strongest economies in the country now with new jobs, over 75 per cent of which are in the private sector.

We will let the lawsuits unfold. It's not uncommon to see lawsuits on major projects as people sort out the issues that arise out of that.

But the public needs to know the stadium is safe and it's serving the community well.

Investors Group Field Repairs Request for Auditor General Investigation

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier seems either unable or unwilling to answer the question, so perhaps one of his new ministers will be able to answer these questions.

It is alleged that the Premier and his colleagues were warned hundreds of times about the consequences of cutting corners and fast-tracking the project.

Can the minister indicate whose best interests the Premier (Mr. Selinger) had in mind when he said during a press conference on the stadium, on the eve of the last election, when he said, and I quote, let's just get 'er done?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the best interests we were referring to was the best interests of this province.

Now, let's put on the record that members opposite didn't support the construction of the MTS Centre. They didn't support the construction of the stadium. They haven't supported the construction of many of the hydro dams that are taking place throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, let's make it clear. The C in PC doesn't stand for construction; criticism, maybe, but they can nitpick all they want.

The reality is the stadium needed to be built. Canad Inns was in dire need of replacement. It was this government, working with our partners and working with the Blue Bombers, who did it. And the eyes of Canada will be on us with the Grey Cup; the eyes of the world will be on us for the World Cup, because we had the vision to get the job done.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans deserve answers to these questions because they are the ones that are on the hook for the tens of millions of dollars in repairs just two years into the very existence of this building, issues like concrete issues, heating and insulation issues, access issues, even some safety issues like missing guard rails and lack of fireproofing in some areas.

Manitobans deserve to have the answers to what happened. Why was he so quick to get 'er done just prior to the election and now dragging his feet when it comes to answering questions for taxpayers?

Will the minister write a letter in support of our call for the Auditor General to investigate what happened in this matter?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've put it on the public record that we welcome any and all scrutiny of this.

And it's important to note that the original discussions in terms of the stadium go back to 2007. There were various different sites that were identified, various different ownership and finance options that were done. And it became increasingly clear that not only did we have to replace it, there was an urgency with Canad Inns because there were numerous safety issues that would've required investment in Canad Inns.

So we did the right thing, Mr. Speaker, and if the members opposite want to accuse this Premier and this government of wanting to get 'er done, guilty, because we are the get-'er-done party.

Mrs. Stefanson: It'd be nice if they'd get 'er done right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words.

If the minister is so supportive of transparency and accountability of what transpired with this project, I have asked him: Will he support our call for the Auditor General to investigate this matter? Will he do so by putting it in writing, put his money where his mouth is and support this project, yes or no?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, again, we've been on the public record. We welcome all scrutiny and, of course, the auditor's an independent office, and if the auditor chooses to conduct an audit on this, so be it.

But I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, the real question here is why members are so critical of an initiative that I think is celebrated by many people in this province. And I want to suggest to members opposite, I don't know if any of them have actually been to the stadium, but, you know, maybe when, you know, the pop group One Direction comes this fall. I think AC/DC might be more to my liking.

Or perhaps when the Roughriders come to town and members opposite don their Rider Pride gear, maybe they'd want to check on the fact that here in Manitoba, we got it done. We have a new stadium. In Saskatchewan—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Health-Care Services ER Closures

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, there's so many broken promises: 2,300 doctors have left Manitoba under failed NDP strategies, 26 closed emergency and operating rooms and more added daily, hallway medicine turned into taxicab medicine turned into highway medicine.

Manitobans are obviously paying more and getting less. NDP mismanagement is placing Manitobans' health and safety at risk.

Does the Minister of Health really not have a clue how to reverse these alarming trends?

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

I want to tell Manitobans today about a wonderful event that occurred at the Brodie Centre. I had the opportunity to welcome 107 new medical graduates in the white coat ceremony. Manitoba families can take comfort in the high quality of education these new medical graduates have received and the high quality of care they will certainly deliver.

Seventy-seven of the 107 new graduates from this year's class will stay in Manitoba to complete their residency; 34 are moving forward with studies in family medicine, of which 19 will proceed with a residency in family medicine in rural and northern Manitoba. In fact, one graduate will be—

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

Mr. Briese: Great at announcements, pretty poor on results.

Mr. Speaker, there is such a lengthy list of failures in the health-care system in Manitoba under this NDP tenure, and they seem to have no clue how to reverse these alarming trends.

Would the Minister of Health at least tell Manitobans: What are the reasons for all the closures?

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, one thing I will tell Manitobans is that as—sorry, there's so much good news in the last answer I couldn't get it all in—that we will have one graduate who will be undertaking an anesthesiology residency in Brandon and, again, I'm pleased to see the number of graduates who are choosing to proceed in family medicine in rural and northern Manitoba.

And I would especially like to welcome and to congratulate Kyle Conrad, a graduate who will be completing his family-medicine rural-stream residency program at the Boundary Trails Health Centre. He grew up on the family equine ranch, and he says that growing up on the farm allowed him the insight into how much rural and northern Manitoba has to offer. The land and people are diverse and unique, creating an ideal environment to live and train. Manitoba, he says, possesses the opportunity for a wide range of rewarding practice, ultimately improving the—

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

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, the minister obviously has no answer to my question.

NDP mismanagement of health-care services in Manitoba continues to escalate. In the last few days alone, we've seen the closure of the OR at Altona, the closure of the ER in Melita, and now we have a closure of the ER in Roblin.

My question to the Minister of Health is simple, maybe she'll get this one: Who's next?

*(14:00)

Ms. Blady: Together with our regional health authorities, we are actively recruiting doctors to rural and northern areas. We're actively working to bring international medical grads to rural and northern areas as well as our own homegrown ones. Last year alone, working together with our RHAs, we brought new international medical graduates to Swan River, Morris, Killarney, Gillam, Thompson, Ashern, Garden Hill, Pine Falls, Russell, Gladstone and Vita.

Prairie Mountain Health Authority Suspension of ER Services

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, residents of Roblin have just—it was informed that the ER is now closed. That is two rural ERs in this single week: Melita first, now Roblin.

Does this minister even know what's going to happen in her own department?

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

Manitoba families deserve access to safe, high-quality care close to home, and on this—Mr. Speaker, we do believe that all ERs in Manitoba should be open 100 per cent of the time and this is what we are working towards.

While staffing decisions in emergency rooms are the responsibility of our regional health authorities, our government is focused on making sure there are more doctors practising in Manitoba, not less. We've expanded medical school seats after members opposite cut them. We're providing medical students with free tuition if they choose to practise in an underserved community, and we've expanded the amount of rural residencies available for new doctors.

Mr. Piwniuk: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table announcement suspending the Melita ER, saying that the emergency room is now closed and so is the acute-care services.

These dates have rural Manitobans travelling further and further away to Brandon for critical health care.

The question to this minister: Will she stop giving Manitobans false hope and start providing them with essential health-care services?

Ms. Blady: I'm not quite sure how 107 new docs is false hope, especially when so many of them are choosing to practise in our rural and northern areas.

As I said, thanks to the efforts—again, staffing decisions in emergency rooms are the responsibility of the regional health authorities and we're focusing on giving them the supports that they need to do it. And it is thanks to the efforts that we have been making in partnership with our regional health authorities that last year we saw the largest one-year increase in doctors with 83 new doctors practising in our province.

And when there isn't a physician available in a rural emergency room, our provincial EMS dispatch centre is made aware and adjusts land and air ambulance resources to provide the best possible response time. And as a result, we are also ensuring that by investing in more paramedic—

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

Mr. Piwniuk: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are paying more and getting less, especially with our health-care services.

Today, Mr. Speaker, more and more Manitobans are without critical care. With two of the highest risk occupations, the farming and oil industry, along with the extra travellers for the upcoming tourist season, this region of the province is currently without no ER services.

Why does this minister think Manitobans should accept that because of the government's waste and mismanagement, Manitobans' health care is at risk?

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, the only risk that is posed to Manitoba health care is members opposite.

As I said earlier, today I welcomed 107 new docs into the province of Manitoba. Under members opposite we would have maxed out at 70 a year. That's extra doctors. That's more investment.

We have done things like introduced the Physician Resettlement Fund as part of our recruitment and retention strategy for both specialists and family practitioners. That fund did not exist in the 1990s. This Physician Resettlement Fund is designed to incent physicians to move to areas of Manitoba where they are needed most, particularly in rural and northern areas. The amount of funding a recipient will receive will be dependent on where that physician chooses to relocate.

So again, Mr. Speaker, we are investing in rural Manitoba; they cut.

Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority Hours of Operation—May Long Weekend

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, during the summertime the population in the Lac du Bonnet constituency increases at times tenfold due to the many tourists and the many seasonal residents returning back home for the summer.

Unfortunately, in the past few years we have seen emergency rooms closed or on diversion during our various long weekends.

Can the Health Minister assure that the Powerview-Pine Falls, Pinawa and Beausejour ERs will be accessible and open during this upcoming May long weekend to all Manitobans?

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

As I've said, Manitoba families and those that come to visit other regions of the province always deserve access to safe, high-quality care. And we do believe that ERs should be open 100 per cent of the time.

But the staffing decisions in emergency rooms are the responsibility of the regional health authorities. It is about medical professionals to make those decisions, and it is our government's job to

support them, making sure that there are more doctors in place.

So we have expanded medical school seats. We have provided medical students with free tuition if they practise in an underserviced community.

So I can assure Manitobans that the 107 new docs, a lot of them are looking to rural areas, and I look forward to them joining the practising physicians already in our province.

Mr. Ewasko: This Health Minister needs to stop patting herself on the back and driving over the RHA with that bus she's driving.

There are people without—without health care in Manitoba because of the policies her government has created. This NDP government has gone from hallway medicine to highway medicine to cabs—taxicab medicine and now to no medicine. Manitobans are tired of paying more and getting less. When is this minister going to stop the rhetoric and start acting on these promises, Mr. Speaker?

Will she commit today that the Powerview-Pine Falls, Pinawa and Beausejour ERs will be open and accessible to Manitobans this May long weekend?

Ms. Blady: I thank the member for the question.

I know that of those 107 young students that came out today with their MD degrees, how many of them are looking forward to practising in rural areas. It's about making those investments in their education, in investments in working with the WRHAs makes things work for Manitobans. It is important that we invest in access to health care close to home.

And, again, we've invested in medical facilities and expanding services in rural areas in a way that members opposite never did. We opened our first rural QuickCare clinics in Steinbach and in Selkirk. We've added new or expanded surgical services in rural areas, including cataracts in Swan River, Minnedosa and Portage, hip and knee surgeries in Morden-Winkler.

We're investing in rural health care.

Mr. Ewasko: We have 2,300 doctors have left this great province of ours. The Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority has 26-plus doctor shortages or doctor positions available right now. And also, we know that this Health Minister has taken a hiatus from December to March of this past year.

Will she assure us today—it's a simple question, Mr. Speaker, yes or no—will she commit that the Powerview-Pine Falls, the Pinawa and the Beausejour ERs are going to be open this coming May long weekend? Simple question, answer should be yes or no.

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

And I can assure all Manitobans that, according to CIHI, Manitoba is actually among the best in the nation on doctor retention in rural and northern areas. We have more doctors practising in rural areas than any other province west of the Maritimes, including more than our neighbours in Saskatchewan and Ontario.

And I can assure the member opposite that I have been meeting—in fact, even just this morning—with members from the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, and we've been talking about how we're going to best work together with rural communities and AMM and other partners to make sure that more docs choose to work in their home communities in rural and northern Manitoba.

Child Poverty Rates Housing Allowance Increase

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, child poverty in Manitoba has reached an alarming level when 29 per cent of children in Manitoba are living in poverty.

Many of the recommendations in the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry touched on issues of poverty, including the EIA housing allowance. When this government—now this government has finally committed to this increase after three years of urging by our party and many other Manitobans. *[interjection]* It's on the record.

How long will it take the minister to actually put this increase through?

* (14:10)

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): Our government has been working on the issue with community members since 1999, and many of these members on this side of the House have been addressing the issues of poverty and social inclusion for a lifetime. We are continuing to make those investments. I ask the member why he chose to vote against our budget, why he didn't support it.

What we've been able to do is we've met one of the recommendations of the Hughes inquiry with 75 per cent market median rent. We are continuing to support families by more affordable housing, by improving child care for Manitobans and, the most important equalizer, a good education and a job.

Reduction Plan

Mr. Wishart: Well, as I've said before, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to support a government who's an absolute failure on child poverty rates.

Many of Judge Hughes' recommendations touch on the issue of poverty. After 15 years of NDP government, Manitobans have seen little progress in poverty reduction, especially for children in Manitoba. In fact, Manitoba now has the highest child poverty rate of any province in Canada, 10 per cent over the Canadian average.

How will this government achieve the goals in the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry if they cannot effectively deal with child poverty rates?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I've said a number of times in this House, we are committed to the Hughes inquiry and implementing the recommendations. There are 62 recommendations that we've implemented. We can start to talk about the progress that we've made. And, also, with the completion of adding the Rent Assist and 75 per cent market median rent, we are making those changes. We are continuing to work with the authorities and with the agencies to implement it.

You know, when I listen to the members across, the drive-by poverty activist talk, I can't only—I cannot stop to reflect on what they did when they were in office. They clawed back the national Child Tax Benefit, they developed a snitch line, and they built no housing at all.

Children in Care

Mr. Wishart: This from a government that only seems to be there for the ribbon cuttings.

This province has a disproportionate number of children in care and a disproportionate high level of child poverty; 29 per cent of Manitoba's children live in poverty. Nearly three out of 10 Manitoba children live in poverty. There is no doubt these two facts are related.

When is this government going to impact the number of children in care by dealing with the number of children in poverty?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We continue to work with all of our community partners to address the issue of poverty across this province. We have made progress; we know we have a lot more work to do.

We're committed to make that progress by building more housing across the province. We're going to make that progress by implementing Rent Assist, 75 per cent of market median rent. We're going to make that progress by building more housing and including training and employment opportunities for local families. We are also going to enable—we are going to be able to support the reduction of poverty by consistently creating more jobs and providing a good education for all Manitobans.

Little Saskatchewan First Nation Housing Construction Timeline

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, this is the four-year anniversary of when the people of Little Saskatchewan First Nation were evacuated in the 2011 flood. Many remain displaced today, and those still in the community live in flood-damaged homes.

On May the 8th, the co-Deputy Premier said that there were no evacuees in hotels. This is false. Today there are still evacuees in hotels.

He also stated, as I table, that there are 114 homes for Little Saskatchewan, while his co-deputy counterpart told flood victims that same day that there were only 60 homes being considered. We also know the true need of the community is about 300 homes.

Can the Premier sort out the confusion about what people are being told?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there is—there's one very important fact upon which there is no confusion: We took \$100 million and put it aside for the people that had been removed from their homes due to flooding in 2011, and the member opposite voted against that money being put aside. He demanded a balanced budget. We put the money where the people need it; he voted against it.

We're putting the money where people need it. We're going to work with the communities. We're going to work with the federal government. And we put our money where our mouth is. And when it counts, he votes against it.

Mr. Gerrard: Four years and no new homes in Little Saskatchewan First Nation because this government can't get 'er done.

I understand that the Little Saskatchewan First Nation has been shovel-ready to put homes up as of September 2014, eight months ago, at a height of 814 feet above sea level. I also stand that there—understand there's been months of protracted negotiations and delays by this Province.

I table today the brand council resolution of March 26th, 2015, passed and signed by the chief and council, who are here today in the gallery, and he's with other members of the Little Saskatchewan First Nation.

I ask: Is the Province ready to move forward today on the construction of these homes for Little Saskatchewan?

Mr. Selinger: The fundamental point is this. There's only one political party, one government in this Legislature that put the \$100 million aside to rebuild those communities. The members opposite, both in the third party and the second party, they voted against that. They demanded cuts. They demanded cuts in core services for education, health and psychosocial services to communities. We put the money aside.

We're going to work with the communities. We do have a very strong commitment to rebuilding those communities in such a way that they will not flood again.

When the first diversion channel was built over 40 years ago, Mr. Speaker, there was no consideration for the First Nations communities that would flood. We will not allow that to happen again.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, four years and not a single new home in the Little Saskatchewan First Nation because this government can't get 'er done.

The Province has been extraordinarily slow to get back to the First Nation. The latest word changes took four months to get provincial agreement. The construction season is already well under way.

Will the Premier give provincial approval by Tuesday, May the 18th, early next week, at the very latest, so that no further time is wasted and so the people of Little Saskatchewan First Nation can start seeing some actual progress? Will some of the homes be completed in time for the children to be home and in school this September?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we are very keen to proceed on ensuring these communities get rebuilt in such a way that they don't flood again, and we are the only political party in this Chamber that has put the \$100 million aside. The members opposite have all voted against that. They do not put their money where their mouth is. We voted for it.

We were running a deficit to keep the economy going, and in spite of that we put \$100 million aside to ensure our 40 per cent commitment, along with the federal government, to rebuild these communities in such a way that they won't flood again. It was never thought of the first time around.

We will ensure communities are safe. We'll partner with the communities. We'll partner with the federal government. We're keen on building houses. We're keen on building schools. We're keen on building roads.

Only the members opposite, when the times comes, vote against it.

Red River College Trades and Technology Centre

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, the conference board has said—Conference Board of Canada has said that Winnipeg and Manitoba's outlook is bright. The Free Press has reported that cranes dot the skyline across Winnipeg. Anywhere you drive in Manitoba you find road construction as everything is being built. Homes are being built in my area, thousands of them. It's clear that the Province is building, and all we hear from the opposition is about deep cuts.

This morning I attended an incredible announcement with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the Minister of Education that invests in the very facilities that train the people who build these projects.

Could we hear from the Minister of Education about this great investment that will train the people who will build all these future projects and thousands of jobs around Manitoba?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I thank my friend from St. Norbert for such a great question.

I was proud to join with him and the Premier today to announce a new \$60-million investment in a new 100,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility that will boost trades and technology education at the Notre Dame campus at Red River College.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an investment that fortifies our commitment to provide training and education for young people so that they have good opportunities for good jobs in the future. Contrast that with the opposition, who want to cut a half a billion dollars from the budget and rob our young people of the educational opportunities and the training opportunities that they could have.

On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're for good jobs for young Manitobans.

Wildlife Management Areas Accumulation of Refuse

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Conservation, wildlife management areas exist to, quote, protect the land in a near-to-natural state, end quote.

* (14:20)

I, along with my nine-year-old son, attended the Mars Hills Wildlife Management Area on the weekend and table some pictures for the minister.

Can the minister advise when he changed the definition of near-to-natural state to include discarded couches, doors, old TVs and general garbage?

Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I want to sincerely thank the member opposite for the question.

Wildlife management areas are near and dear to my heart. Anybody that peruses my speeches made over the last 16 years could certainly attest to that, and they're important to our government as well, as are all protected areas in the province of Manitoba. This is something that we have endeavoured over our entire time in office to improve upon, and the wildlife management areas are no exception in this province.

Thank you.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, conservation officers are well aware of the dumping of garbage in this area. They said they simply do not have the resources to address the issue.

The \$670,000 political payout that this minister supported could have provided employment for 200 summer students to return these areas to their near-natural state.

Why are the Manitobans paying more but getting less from this minister?

Mr. Nevakshonoff: As I said, investment in protected areas is fundamental to the survival of our ecosphere and our natural spaces. What's occurring in the—this particular—*[interjection]* Oh, they're amused. Well, they're easily amused, let's put it that way.

You know, the—but we will focus on the improvement of our protected areas, and this particular wildlife management area is one that is very familiar to me. I have a good relative of mine that has raised this issue with me before, and I will address it with my staff.

Thank you.

Mr. Martin: At Mars Hill we saw that there was more brass than grass, shells ranging from shotgun to 50 calibres strewn as far as the eye can see. Again, pictures, Mr. Speaker. It was clear that this was not a recent occurrence but a long-term situation, as verified by conservation officers.

Again I ask the minister: Why would he support a \$670,000 political payout but not the required resources to ensure wildlife management areas don't continue to be used as garbage dumps?

Mr. Nevakshonoff: What I will support is the budget that the honourable member for Selkirk, our Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar), just tabled recently.

The investments in our wild lands are obvious to all who pursue this—peruse this document. Parks—Spruce Woods Provincial Park, \$6-million investment; Birds Hill lake, a \$5-million investment in a park that's very important to all Manitobans.

We're continuing to fully fund the conservation officer positions. We're investing in the Office of Drinking Water, conservation districts, something that members opposite ignored entirely over their entire term in office, something that we have virtually doubled the number of in years—in our years in time—

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

Altona Health Centre Suspension of Services

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): The member for Kirkfield Park has clearly indicated in this House that she's in over her head. She continues to read her talking points as hallway medicine turns into an epidemic. She blames taxicab drivers, federal

government, doctors and nurses for all the problems in the health-care system.

But she cannot confirm why the Altona OR is closed. And I would like to table the map that she has caused the people of Altona and the surrounding areas 160 kilometres—extra kilometres just to get service, Mr. Speaker.

Can she say to this House today that the ER will not close in Altona?

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

As I've said earlier in this Chamber, we believe all ERs in Manitoba should be open 100 per cent of the time, and that's what we're working towards. But, again, the staffing decisions in emergency rooms are the responsibility of our regional health authorities.

And our government is focused on making sure that there are more doctors practising in Manitoba, not less. We expanded the medical seats to 110, and we had 107 graduates today. And, again, as I said before, 34 are moving towards studies in family medicine, 19 will proceed to residency in family medicine specifically in rural and northern Manitoba.

We're investing in rural health care.

Health-Care Services ER Closures

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, it's clear that Manitobans are paying more and getting less. This minister has closed and her party have closed 23, 24, 25 ERs in this province, a number of ORs, and who is next? Is that going to be Ashern? Eriksdale? Arborg? Who's next?

When we see this huge shortage in the Interlake of doctors today, why is she doing this to all of Manitobans not having any health care, no safe health care on a long weekend?

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

We increased the number of seats. We've increased the number of graduates. We've increased the number of doctors. We have more doctors practising in rural and northern areas than ever before.

And again, we've invested in ways—the only time emergency rooms ever closed was under members opposite and when they sent doctors on strike and fleeing.

We're working with RHAs and with doctors. We hire; they fire.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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

ATV Awareness Day

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, all-terrain vehicle safety is often overlooked, but essential to the use of ATVs. Last Saturday I had the opportunity to attend the 3rd annual ATV Awareness Day event at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. The event was organized by the Southeast ATV Association which is a non-profit organization with the purpose to advance the sport of ATVing and the positive aspects of ATV use. The event's intention was to educate the public on safe ATV riding and the preventing of forest fires.

Many families attended the event which had displays about topics such as safe riding practices and the proper use of riding equipment. Manitoba Public Insurance had a driving simulator to show the dangers of texting and driving which I got to try out. While using the driving simulator, they sent me a text on my phone that I had to reply to while distractions would appear on the screen. Many others who tried the simulator along with myself failed to pass, which showed us how important it is not to text and drive, because you never know what distractions can come up.

There was also a trailer with information from the Office of the Fire Commissioner as well as information booths about CPR and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Local dealers displayed and sold the newest ATV models at the event. Even Smokey the Bear attended.

ATV safety is very important in this province. As the number of ATVs being used grows, so does the number of accidents. While Manitoba has legislation about ATV use and safety, hundreds of Manitobans are injured while driving ATVs yearly. The RCMP and the Conservation officers provided information about ATV laws and rules. Both ATVs and UTVs were on display and the difference between single and side-by-side ATVs was explained.

I would like to thank the Southeast ATV Association for organizing such an event and all the business and sponsors for their help.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Heidi Howarth

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a privilege to stand today in the Manitoba Legislature and recognize the outstanding community service of Heidi Howarth.

Heidi is the owner of the Trails West Inn and The 40 nightclub concert venue in Brandon. Earlier this spring, Heidi was recognized by her peers as the recipient of the 2015 Brandon Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year Award. This award celebrates a business person who exemplifies outstanding business practices and achievements, who has created significant economic growth and who has made notable contributions to the Brandon community. These attributes certainly describe Heidi Howarth, who has been a leader in Brandon's hospitality industry for over 30 years.

Heidi began working in the hospitality sector at the tender age of 12, cleaning and renting rooms at the Downs Motor Inn in Winnipeg which was operated by her mother, Canadian country music impresario Ma Henning. Inspired by her mother and her work in the hospitality-music industry, Heidi and her family moved to Brandon in 1983 where her family continued to play an important role in her work life. Heidi's three daughters have all spent time working at Trails West and her husband Scott Howarth is a sound engineer who often helps with live shows at The 40.

*(14:30)

Working in the hospitality sector requires long hours, Mr. Speaker, but that has never certainly—but that has certainly never prevented Heidi from helping out with other community causes. Considering her family staff, and with the well-deserved reputation as a kind, caring and honest employer, Heidi has been supported to find the time to take an active role in many local, provincial and national undertakings.

In 1986, Heidi directed Country Music Week Winnipeg. In 1997, she served as vice-president of culture for the Canada Games. In 2002, Heidi served as the director for the Scott Tournament of Hearts. From 2004 to 2006, Heidi served as chair of the board of directors of the Manitoba Hotel Association.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is truly fortunate to have Heidi Howarth call our province home. Her work in my home community of Brandon has been central to the cultural development of the Wheat City. In receiving the Brandon Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year Award for 2005, her work has been recognized by her peers.

I invite all honourable members, on behalf of the Province of Manitoba, to likewise join with me in formally thanking her today in the Manitoba Legislature. Thank you, Heidi.

**Glen Findlay—
Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame**

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand here today to congratulate my constituent and former Manitoba minister of Agriculture, Glen Findlay, on being inducted into the Manitoba agriculture hall of fame.

There is no doubt in my mind that Glen Findlay deserves this honour. Born in Shoal Lake, Manitoba, he grew up in a farming family and went on to get both his bachelor's and master's degrees in animal nutrition from the University of Manitoba. He then completed his doctorate in nutritional biochemistry at the University of Illinois. This gave Glen the opportunity to go on to be a post-doc fellow for the National Research Council in Ottawa and finally move back to Manitoba to take a professor position in the ag department at the U of M.

These are already impressive accomplishments, and that was only the start of Glen's career contributions to the field of agriculture.

First elected in 1986, Glen served in this Chamber as an MLA for 13 years, including over five years as the Minister of Agriculture. He retired from the Legislative Assembly in 1999, and along with his wife, Kay, and their family, Glen continues to operate a 5,000-acre farm with 300 head of cattle outside of his hometown of Shoal Lake.

Still, again, this is not the end of his contributions to agriculture. In 2006, the federal government appointed Glen to the board of directors for the Canadian Wheat Board. This appointment was made based on his considerable experience as a member and director of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, flax growers western Canadian, Keystone Agricultural Producers, Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, and Western Barley Growers Association.

I would like to invite you, Mr. Speaker, and the rest of my colleagues to join me today in congratulating Gren–Glen Findlay on his recent induction into the Manitoba agriculture hall of fame and thank him for all of his hard work in promoting agriculture in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Day of Pink Film Festival

Mr. Peter Bjornson (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize the students and teachers at Dr. George Johnson Middle School in Gimli. Their film entitled Stop won first place in the middle years category of the first-ever Day of Pink Film Festival. Congratulations to our young filmmakers.

People around the world and right here in Manitoba celebrated the Day of Pink on April 8th. Dr. George Johnson Middle School was just one of more than 330 Manitoba schools and workplaces that participated in the celebrations.

The Manitoba Day of Pink Film Festival was held in Winnipeg at the Park Theatre. Eight student-made films were shown to the audience of more than 150 people. Students from across the province came together to watch all the nominated films and see the presentation of the awards for the best films. The Dr. George Johnson students in attendance accepted a plaque for their first-place finish in the middle years category. They were also treated to guest appearances from radio host, Ace Burpee, and former Blue Bombers, Obby Kahn and Milt Stegall.

The film festival was one of just many Day of Pink events that took place across the province. Over 15,000 people wore this year's specially designed Day of Pink T-shirts. Wearing the distinctive pink T-shirts and participating in events help us remember what the Day of Pink is all about: coming together to celebrate our differences and put a stop to homophobia and bullying.

Every Manitoban deserves to feel safe in their school or workplace, and I'm proud to stand with all parents, students and educators, but especially those at Dr. George Johnson school, to support antibullying initiatives. Every person deserves to feel respected, and we'll continue to work together to make this happen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Deer Lodge Community Centre

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): A mainstay institution in St. James recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. Everyone at the Deer Lodge Community Centre, including their many volunteers, should be incredibly proud of the role they played in shaping our community.

Deer Lodge started from humble beginnings in 1938 as a small ice rink for the local children. In the following year, two steel boxcars were added beside the rink as a shelter from the elements. Now the site's ice rinks are a hub of activity in the neighborhood and draw people from outside the community due to its excellent ice.

Despite all the changes throughout the years, one thing has remained the same: Deer Lodge has always been a place for the community to come together. It has also become a hub of sport and recreation in St. James and, certainly, a place where families gather. They offer great sports programs and hockey, soccer and flag rugby. They also provide families in the neighbourhood a chance to connect at movie nights and holiday events, something that I have enjoyed myself participating with my family.

Deer Lodge Community Centre truly goes above and beyond to support our community and it all happens because of its dedicated volunteers.

Last October, they celebrated their 'seventy-firth' anniversary—they–75th anniversary. They shared the centre's rich history with an exhibit of memorabilia donated from past presidents which drew people of all ages from the community, each with their own story to tell about Deer Lodge Community Centre.

I was happy to attend the event. It was an excellent way to link Deer Lodge's past to its current group of children and volunteers. The displays provided everyone the opportunity to reminisce with people in the community about the history and growth of Deer Lodge over the years.

St. James wouldn't be the same without Deer Lodge Community Centre and its volunteers. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for working so hard to bring our community closer together.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes members' statements.

We'll now move on to grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Government House Leader): Could you please—the—call the motion for the election of Deputy Speaker, followed by the motion, Mr. Speaker, for the election of the Deputy Chairperson of Committees.

DEBATE ON GOVERNMENT MOTION

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to the debate on government motions and the motion is that Jennifer Howard, the member for the electoral division of Fort Rouge, be Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole and Deputy Speaker.

Standing in the name are the honourable member for Steinbach who has unlimited time.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I just started into my comments yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when—actually, I expect to conclude relatively shortly and allow this matter to come to a vote to the great relief of all members of the House, I know.

But I do want to re-emphasize that this is not an unimportant role in the Legislature, not that there are any unimportant roles here in the Legislature. I mean, this is something that whether people are fulfilling roles as their individual caucus whips or caucus chairpersons or House leaders, they have a particular role and a function to fulfill. And we expect that the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), if she is successful in this nomination, that she will fulfill that obligation as well and that she'll do so with dignity and with fairness and impartiality.

We understand, you know, that in—there are times past perhaps where she has not been the most impartial person in this House, and I would be accused of that myself. But, obviously, now taking on this new position, she'll no doubt, when she's in the Chair in particular, if she's successful, she'll govern herself in a different way, Mr. Speaker. And we expect that that's how it'll be when she's in the Chair.

And I actually have confidence that that will be the case, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not overly concerned; however, time will tell and there are always ways to express dissatisfaction in this House when things

aren't going in the way that one would hope them to go. So we will see.

I know the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has expressed concern about the appointment of the member for Fort Rouge. We will see if, in fact, those concerns are valid, Mr. Speaker. He might have other sort of issues that he wants to voice at a different time.

But, again, the role of the Deputy Speaker is one that, I think, is important; is recognized in this House as being important; and it is one that we hope will be fulfilled with grace and will be fulfilled with impartiality, if the member is elected to that position.

* (14:40)

Of course, I think one of her first duties will be to preside over the Estimates process, which we would expect to begin on Tuesday of next week. Obviously, the government will have the opportunity to either call or not call that process on Tuesday, Mr. Speaker. But our expectation is that they will begin the Estimates on Tuesday, and so the Deputy Chair will have a role in presiding over some of those Estimates processes. And we look forward to answers from the government that are frank, that are forthcoming, and that are brief in terms of answering the question. And sometimes in the past in the Estimates process, we've not received answers as quickly as we'd like or the ministers have not been as forthcoming. And that also leads to challenges and problems in the process which we'd like to avoid.

I've often said that the Estimates process, at its best, can be one of the greatest things we do here in the Legislature. It not only informs the critic or other members, of course, but it also informs the minister. I've talked to ministers, and I know this was in the past for other governments as well, where the ministers themselves learned a great deal about their departments through the Estimates process. And so it can be very much a learning process for both the ministers and their individual critics as they go through that. That's at its best, Mr. Speaker. At its worst it becomes simply an extension of what often happens in question period, where you don't get answers and where there's simply obstruction for the sake of obstruction.

So we are hoping that that is not the case, because if that is the case, then there'll be other things that, as an opposition, will be left to deal with, Mr. Speaker. So we'll start that process off with some degree of hope that it'll be a better process than that.

And I certainly hope that the ministers will make themselves available when we get into the concurrence process after the mainline Estimates are done. And we'll have those discussions with the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) in terms of ensuring that ministers are available for concurrence and for questioning. I think that that is something that will be important.

So, in a fairly short period of time, we'll be having a vote, Mr. Speaker, on the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard) becoming the Deputy Speaker, and we will go into that vote with the hope that she will conduct herself in a way that will make things work effectively in the Estimates process, which, we think, will begin on Tuesday. We hope that that process is instructive for all members of the Chamber. I think of the new member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) for example. She'll have the opportunity as well to sit in the Estimates process. It'll be a great learning experience for her as it was for me as a new member and for all members who are new to the process. And often it's instructive to be able to go to other departments that you either haven't had obviously ministerial responsibility for, perhaps haven't been the critic for either, and you learn about those departments simply by listening to the questions and the answers from the ministers and the critics. It's often one of the great processes that we have where you can truly learn about things that are happening in individual departments.

It's also a good opportunity, I would say to members, where there are specific concerns that constituents have brought forward that relate to a particular department but don't necessarily fit well into the context of a question period question, to bring those into the Estimates process as well, because often the department officials are there and they can answer the more technical questions that don't always lend themselves well to a question-and-answer-period environment, Mr. Speaker. So the Deputy Speaker, if the member for Fort Rouge is successful, will have that opportunity to preside over that process as well.

So, with those concluding comments, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that I've had the opportunity today and yesterday to speak about the importance of the role of the Deputy Speaker, but also the role of the Speaker.

And I would re-emphasize for the House that there were a number of issues that I put on the record that I feel quite strongly about, about the need to

have a sessional and set calendar for future legislatures, Mr. Speaker, so that we have a predictable sitting time, but one that's also respectable for Manitobans.

I think it's important that legislation be given the time, whether it's controversial or not, for proper debate in this Legislature so members of the public are able to hear about the legislation and bring comment, because sometimes we think legislation isn't controversial, but, in fact, it ends up being—affecting somebody in some negative way and then they weren't able to hear about it. So I re-emphasize that.

I think it's important that we enter a new negotiation on rules in this House and included in that is the ability to challenge the Speaker's rulings. It's something that I've made the offer to government House leaders in the past, the last three that are willing to have those discussions and that that is something that can absolutely be on the table.

I re-emphasize that I think it's important that you, as the Speaker, become the authority, not just for this Chamber, but for the building and for the grounds as well, Mr. Speaker, to take the potential partisanship out of this building and the grounds of the Legislature. And I've made that point in other committees. I've made that point in the Legislature, and I've made that point to government. So there are a number of different things that I feel quite strongly about, having been the House leader for some time now for our party—but having been an MLA for longer than I'd perhaps expected to be an MLA and watching what was going on here in the Chamber and how things can evolve and how things can be done differently.

So I do think that the problems that we have in this particular session now where we'll probably end up finishing Estimates only on or about the 11th of June, which is the set rise date for this House, without ever having touched the issues of BITSA and the bills, Mr. Speaker, let alone opposition days and other things that happen in the course of a legislative session. Those things could've been avoided had there been a calendar. Now, of course, we face the prospect of sitting long into the summer and perhaps through the summer, and I don't—I'm not concerned about that, if that's what happens. But I don't think that that's how things should have to happen when you have a proper process, a proper calendar where you would have three and a half to four months in the spring to be able to have the

proper debate on legislation like other legislatures do.

And I remind you that we, other than, I think, the one jurisdiction in the Maritimes was having an election, we started later than any other jurisdiction in Canada. And I think I mentioned to the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) in January and in February and in March, that if we don't get back to sitting, this is going to be a very difficult session, because there are just some things that take time, there are just some things that have to happen. We have to do the 100 hours of Estimates. In fact, I would say that's too short a period of time, but we negotiated away, I guess, at some point, other hours, and I wasn't part of that. But we also need—we'll have time for concurrence, so that adds some time on to the Estimates process. We will have to have time for bills, and it wouldn't be unreasonable, you know, to spend two and a half hours to talk about a bill that's going to be here for eternity if it passes in the Legislature. But that means that it takes many, many days to pass through 30 pieces of legislation.

So those are, I think, are all reasonable things. But it's not reasonable when you start on April 30th or thereabouts, the date that we started, to expect that those things are going to happen by June 11th; they're not going to happen by June 11th. And so this government's going to have to figure out that problem. It's not actually our problem. We asked them to come back here—been—began to ask them to come back for an earlier session already in February. We got no response. I understand that they were off during the family feud, but we still have work to do here in the Legislature.

So I put those concerns on the record, Mr. Speaker. You know where I stand on those and where our caucus stands on those particular issues, and maybe there'll be some advancement in terms of the rules in the future; I certainly hope there is. I remain open to meeting with the current Government House Leader, as I was with past government House leaders, to talk about the rules and how things can be changed, and I suspect we'll have a long summer for those discussions to happen.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think we're ready to proceed to the vote.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable First Minister that Jennifer Howard, the member for the electoral division of Fort Rouge, be Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House and Deputy Speaker.

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 it by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the House is the government motion proposed by the honourable First Minister, that Jennifer Howard, member for the electoral division of Fort Rouge, be Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House and Deputy Speaker.

* (15:50)

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Briese, Caldwell, Chief, Crothers, Cullen, Dewar, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gaudreau, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lathlin, Mackintosh,

Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Mitchelson, Nevakshonoff, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Robinson, Rondeau, Rowat, Saran, Schuler, Selby, Selinger, Smook, Stefanson, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight, Wishart.

Nays

Gerrard.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 49, Nays 1.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT MOTION

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to the next government motion.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I move, seconded by the Minister for Family Services, that Jim Maloway, member of the—for the electoral division of Elmwood, be the Deputy Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Unlimited time?

Mr. Speaker: Oh, yes.

I wish to advise the House, too, that I've received from the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) information designating the honourable member for Steinbach to speak on his behalf and that the honourable member for Steinbach will have unlimited time.

Mr. Goertzen: I'm touched by the sentiments of our leader to be able to speak not only on his behalf but on unlimited time, Mr. Speaker.

I want to congratulate the new Deputy Speaker on her role. I know she'll take the job seriously, and it is an expression of confidence that we offered her in that role, and it's up to her to live up to that expression of confidence now, Mr. Speaker. So we enter this with hope, and we'll see how long hope lasts. It doesn't always last long in the Legislature, but we'll give it a shot.

In terms of the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), I know he's sought several positions over the last few years. In fact, I'm confused sometimes about which position he's seeking at any given time, Mr. Speaker. But this is not the highest office that he has sought. We'd want some assurance, of course, though. He was quite proud of the fact in Ottawa that he spoke the most amount of words of any MP in Ottawa. We want an assurance that that

won't be the case if he takes this particular position, and in the absence of that assurance, we're not sure how we're going to vote, but we'll negotiate that during the context of the vote that we're going to have over the next hour. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the government motion that Jim Maloway, the member for the electoral division of Elmwood, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House.

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.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the House is the motion—government motion that Jim Maloway, the member for the electoral division of Elmwood, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Ashton, Bjornson, Braun, Caldwell, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Howard,

Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Nevakshonoff, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Martin, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Deputy Clerk: Yeas 28, Nays 17.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: Will of the House to call it 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

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 10 a.m. next Tuesday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 14, 2015

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