

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, June 4, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills. Oh, pardon me, the honourable Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'm rising on a—I'm rising on a point of order.

This morning, in private members' business, there was a discussion of today's House business. The issue of sitting in the future was raised. Upon first draft of Hansard, which I've just had the opportunity to see, there appears to be confusion of the intent, purpose and nature of the motion. As government, we usually have a sessional agreement with all three parties, voted on by a motion.

I'm rising on a point of order as the motion did not provide proper notice and improperly impacts on the rules for session sittings. We will be continuing discussions and we will be tabling a motion for sessional order.

We admit, Mr. Speaker, as a government we came back late and we're prepared to sit past June 11th. That was our intention. The House does not need leave to sit in the months following June 11th. Historically, this Chamber has sat every month in the history of the Legislature at some point or another.

I would like to move the point of order on whether the impacts on the rules, as this matter was moved during private members' business and, as I said, it was very unclear according to the draft of Hansard. I was not—it was not a proposal for a sessional calendar, so there was no objections, and all parties, including the Liberal member, were not included in discussions, as is our practice.

We had no objections as we did not see this request for leave as of overriding the House rules if in—if the House—there was no specific date set, nor there was a request to expect that the matter be negotiated, nor were the dates ascertained, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the intentions appear to be anything from a single setting—or a single sitting in July,

August, September, October, November, December or on various dates.

So, Mr. Speaker, insofar as that's the case, it's a point of order, and I wish to indicate to the House that I intend to submit a motion on the sessional order for the House in order to provide some sitting which will extend beyond June and through into July and into the fall as well.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I'm disappointed that negotiations regarding the House have come to the Legislature in this form. For those who weren't watching, this morning a motion was brought forward by myself, which I think had clear intention about ensuring that the Legislature would be sitting through July, August, September, October, November and December, with the obvious intention, as we've come back very late in this session, there's a great deal of work that needs to be debated.

There are a lot—not just bills, lots of concerns that many Manitobans have been asking us to stand up for. When it comes to this government, there's concern about the payout to political staff. We've heard concerns about how the budget has been changed and how projections have been hidden. We continue to hear concerns about long wait times in ERs and ERs that are closed in many parts of Manitoba. We continue to hear concerns about child and family services and how, in Manitoba, those who are foster children are still held in hotels despite the promise of this government. So those are things that require lots of time to debate.

And, of course, I'll remind the Government House Leader, as uncomfortable as I am about discussing issues of House business and negotiations in the Chamber in this format, I'll remind him that our party asked him to recall the House in January, February, March and April of this year, and they were busy holding a family feud, Mr. Speaker, and chose not to recall the House.

So I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, when you're reviewing this, to note that the intention was clear.

Every member of the House who was here this morning had the opportunity to raise a concern if they wanted to raise a concern. They didn't, and, in fact, everybody agreed to it. So I'm not sure what's happened between now and then. Suddenly the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) has decided that he wants to cut and run and doesn't want to stand up for Manitobans. We're here to—prepared to do the work of Manitobans for as long as it takes.

Mr. Speaker: I'll listen to the honourable member for River Heights if he has points on—information for the point of order that's been raised.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the point of order which was raised.

I have listened very carefully to the MLA for Kildonan and the MLA for Steinbach, and I think that what is needed here is a plan for when the Legislature will be sitting for the next number of months. And ordinarily at this time of the year, when we're within a week, essentially, of when the normal sitting would end, there would be some sort of a plan which had been put forward and discussed and proposed and we could look at that.

We're all aware that under the rules of this House, that if we were to sit past June the 11th, there would need to be a calling of an emergency session, and if that were to be the case, then there needs to be an establishment or an explanation of precisely what the emergency is.

I think that all of us here would like and very much look forward to a proposal for, you know, how the matters of the House will be dealt with on a timeline and a schedule over the next few months, and I look forward to proposals coming from the—both the NDP and the Conservative House leaders, and hopefully we can come to an agreement.

I think it's important for everybody here so that they can plan the activities of the next number of weeks and months, and it's also important—I think we have to remember that, you know, it is not just us who are impacted by the timing of the session, that there are many civil servants who are impacted and that the planning for civil servants is important as well as, right, the planning for us and for the planning for people who are part of the Legislative staff.

So I would suggest to all members, all right, that it is important that we have a plan moving forward as soon as possible, and I'm ready to participate in any

discussions or to look at any clear plans for how we will proceed from either the NDP House leader or the Conservative House leader.

Mr. Speaker: I think I've heard enough information on—and unless the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) has further information on a new point of order, which I will entertain after I deal with this point of order, and I think I've heard enough information from the representatives of the members of the House.

On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, and I thank honourable members for their advice on this matter, I have reflected on the comments that were made this morning and the request that was made this morning. And I want to be absolutely certain that the House understands and to be very clear that this was a matter that was raised not as a motion but was seeking leave of the House this morning during discussion in dealing with this.

And I will recite this back to the House so you have a clear understanding of what was said. And it was a request seeking leave of the House, presented by the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), quote: "Mr. Speaker, I am seeking leave of the House for this—for the Legislature to sit during the months of July, August, September, October, November and December of this year." That's it in its entirety.

And I 'puched'—put that question back to the House, and the House has, because there was no dissenting voice to that matter, it was agreed by the House to have that occur. And so I left it to the will of the House to make that decision, and the House made its decision. And because it was not made as a motion, it was made as a request seeking leave of the House, if there were any objections that were to occur at that particular time, they should have occurred this morning, to the discussion that was ongoing, and that, from what we have seen, did not occur at that time.

Now, that—it's not the optimum time for House business to be decided, during private members' business. I would, as I said this morning, prefer to have members of the various parties represented here have these discussions in private and to come to some kind of an arrangement. If there's anything that I could do as the Speaker for the Assembly to facilitate that process, I am always willing to do that; my door is open and I have said that many times to the House. I will play whatever role I can in—to

facilitate the smooth operation of this House. That is my responsibility and duty to all of you, but that has not occurred.

* (13:40)

And I'm very reluctant to have debate or discussion occur on the floor of the Assembly with respect to how the House is going to conduct itself in the various sitting times and days. Even the fact that we have varied from that process by having discussion occur about the Estimates sequence being—and the variance of that being requested during private members' business, to me, was unusual. And, of course, I would prefer that for that decision and those discussions to occur outside of that process where we have and we're dealing with private members' business. So I reference and flag that for members of the House for future reference, to have those types of matters dealt with at this particular time of the day when we're dealing with routine proceedings.

So I must say respectfully to honourable members that had there been a point of order that would have been perhaps discussed at the time, it should have occurred this morning. And I regret to indicate to the House, and with the greatest of respect to members of the House, that there is no point of order. I did not hear that there was a breach of a particular rule as well during this process, and the House had a clear expression of its intent to me this morning. At least, that was my understanding of it. And if I am mistaken in that, I'm sure the House will draw that to my attention in the ways that are available to it.

So I respectfully say that there is no point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Now, the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, on a new point of order?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): On a new point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On a new point of order.

Mr. Ashton: On a new point of order, Mr. Speaker, and it does relate to the matter of our proceedings in this House in terms of our sessional calendar.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record that I think we see, year after year, that when it comes to our sessional calendar we're probably the

most dysfunctional Legislature in Canada, probably one of the most dysfunctional legislatures in the Commonwealth, I probably would say, probably the most dysfunctional legislatures in the world.

We normally proceed in terms of our sessional calendar through negotiation. We normally proceed through motions, Mr. Speaker, and I would point out that motions have one advantage: they're debatable. They require notice. That ensures full participation.

And I know we don't traditionally talk about being in the House or not being in the House, Mr. Speaker. We certainly don't do it in terms of other members of the Legislature. I was not in the House this morning. I was dealing with a very urgent situation in my department, and I was not able to participate in any debate whatsoever on this matter, the fact that we're being [*inaudible*] in this Legislature. That's why we have procedures under the parliamentary system that require notice, that require debate. In fact, we have to debate all motions regarding our procedures, including adjournment motions.

And in this House we're very generous in many ways. We don't have time allocation, effectively. We don't have closure, effectively. Many other jurisdictions—the federal House of Commons for many years has been able to have a fixed calendar that is enforced through closure.

So what we have, Mr. Speaker, is the same situation year after year. And I remember a few years ago when we brought in a fixed end date, June 11th, and we all found out it wasn't a fixed end date.

So, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes get some sanity in this place by watching Monty Python sketches. I don't know what could be more Pythonesque than what we're seeing today.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, your ruling—and I have been opposition House leader and I was government House leader for a brief period of time—is well taken. I think there has to be a better way of dealing with this. And I don't, by the way, in any way, shape or form criticize anyone in their role in this. When I was opposition House leader, there were many things, I'm sure, the current Opposition House Leader could quote back.

But it seems to me pretty clear that in this Legislature we have to have a sane sessional calendar, not just for MLAs but for the staff in this building, for the public to understand when we're

sitting, to be—to know when they might be coming before our committees in terms of bills.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think, again on—to the point of order, I just can't imagine any other Legislature where we could, by leave in private members' business, decide we're going to set the session calendar for the next six months.

Now, I'm actually pretty adept on the rules. I do—you know, I probably can quote Beauchesne back to front, but sometimes I think there's something that supersedes Beauchesne; it's called common sense. How about we make some effort—I'll raise this on the point of order—collectively to come to a sane conclusion and perhaps in the future come up with rules that work.

Mr. Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), on the same point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: On the same point of order, I hesitate, Mr. Speaker, to speak on this because I think this is getting dangerously close to a reflection on your previous ruling. And I would caution all members to not reflect on the Speaker's ruling, because we have great respect for you and for the people who work in your office.

The government did, however, mention dysfunction, and they referred to dysfunction in the context of these rules, but I would remind members that the reason we are actually in this situation is because of dysfunction of the government. I have been and I think all of our members of our party have been repeatedly calling—we've been repeatedly calling for the House to have a predictable calendar that would ensure that the House—or the business of the House gets done in a proper way. You can go back; I can show you speeches. I can show you articles that members of our caucus have been quoted in. We have continually said we should be having a calendar that's respectable, that gives members an opportunity to debate legislation, that allows the public to hear about that legislation.

I spoke about that not even two weeks ago in this House at length, and I—on that point, I agree. I've said to this House leader, to the previous House leader, to the previous-previous government House leader and to the previous-previous-previous government House leader I am more than willing to talk about how the rules of this House work and whether we should have a sessional calendar that's predictable, reasonable and respectable. I remain open to that discussion. We've been open to that discussion for months. But it's been the dysfunction

of this government and their leadership issues that have caused us to come back so late and not be able to have that discussion.

Now, every member had the opportunity this morning to say their piece if they didn't like the idea of sitting every day. As I repeated on the previous point of order, and I'll conclude on this, Mr. Speaker, there are many issues that Manitobans expect us to bring here to the Legislature, whether that's the issues in family services, whether that's the issues of finance and the potential 'drowngrading' in our credit rating, whether that's issues of justice, whether that's issues of payout to political staff. There's many issues, and we've barely had five weeks to discuss them.

I understand that this government doesn't like to work. We're prepared to work for Manitobans every day.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), on the same point of order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), on the same point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start in my remarks on this point of order reflecting back on when we had a sessional agreement, which I think was brought in probably about 2001, 2002; I don't remember exactly which year. But I do remember that Marcel Laurendeau was the Conservative House leader at that time and that there were fairly extensive discussions which led up to that agreement, and there were a number of fundamentals of that agreement: that we would have a more organized calendar in which we started at the call of the government and that we wound up on—in mid-June and then where we needed we could come back in September.

And as I recall, for example, this is exactly what we did in 2007, that we wound up in mid-June. We had Estimates to finish; we had bills to discuss. We came back in early September and we completed that job. There was not an issue. I mean, I complained about the fact that we were starting late when I thought that we should have started earlier in March, for example, when we often started in April. But, you know, that being said, we had a procedure which, for a number of years, was working.

In 2013 an exception was made because there was declared an emergency in the middle of June, and that emergency was related to the increasing of

the PST and the government feeling that they needed to get some legislation critically passed, and so we sat. We came back immediately afterwards, and it took us until, you know, September before the emergency was dealt with and we were able to move on.

* (13:50)

I think that there has been, you know, a concern, and let's put it fairly, that we haven't been sitting enough days, and we in the Liberal Party have raised that on quite a number of occasions and—that we should be sitting more days. But we do have a procedure in place with the rules that we currently have that if we don't finish in mid-June, there is the availability of calling an emergency session and putting the reasons on the table for why it is an emergency setting. If things are not an emergency, we are normally able, then, to come back in early September and to 'complete' the job that has to be done in terms of Estimates and bills.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, the measure that was put forward this morning which you read out and which I will just comment briefly, not wanting to go back into the previous point of order but because it applies here, and that is that that measure was to give the leave of the House if the House so decides to sit in June, in July, in August, in September and October, November, December. It is now up to the House to decide with an all-party agreement, and I would, with respect, ask the House leader for the government to put forward a proposal, and rather than putting it forward, you know, as a—you know, a resolution which is—that the government has only had input into, that the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) talk to the other House leaders and, you know, put the first suggestion down on paper and let's all have a look at it.

I think we all know that there's a lot of business here to do, that we are going to have to spend a lot of time in the next number of months in this Legislature dealing with that business. Let's get the schedule decided so that we know what's going to happen and let's move forward.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), and I thank honourable members for their advice on this point of order, I have had a chance, since our morning sitting, to reflect on events that have occurred. And I looked at

the request that was made. And I've also looked at the practice that we have in this Assembly.

And while we have—and I have it here on my desk and I refer to it often—a set of rules and practices that we have been following in my time in this Assembly, that does not mean to say that we have not varied from that practice by unanimous consent of the House, and we do that fairly frequently. And to give you an example, we have requests coming from all sides of the House to have a variance of those practices, and the House decides whether or not we're going to vary from the rules that we have in place.

And we had a request this morning indicating that we wanted to have a variance of that practice, and the House, of course, decided that it did not want, because there was a no that was expressed, and that because, if unanimous consent is not given, we don't vary from the rules that we have, but if consent is given, then we do. And we do that fairly frequently in each session.

And so I have to indicate to the House that, after reflection on that, that we have established a practice in here of having some ability to vary from that, and there are no provisions that say that we cannot in our rules. And so that is something that we continue to have accepted here, that we can make decisions as we need to on a day-by-day basis.

So with respect to the point of order raised by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, while I respect the comments of the minister and other members of the Assembly with respect to this point of order, I did not hear any matter relating to a particular breach of a rule or a practice of the House that we have not been following for a considerable period of time, so I must respectfully indicate that there is no point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Now, if we're ready to proceed, we'll move to introduction of bills.

Bill 34—The Safer Roads Act (Drivers and Vehicles Act and Highway Traffic Act Amended)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, that Bill 34, The Safer Roads Act (Drivers and Vehicles Act and Highway Traffic Act Amended); Loi sur la sécurité accrue des routes (modification de la Loi sur

les conducteurs et les véhicules et du Code de la route), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill means the introduction of immediate driver improvement actions, including licence suspension when charges are laid for serious traffic offences, longer administrative roadside suspensions for blowing over .05, especially when a child is in the vehicle, extending participation in Manitoba's Ignition Interlock Program for all convicted impaired drivers, which will complement regulatory changes for Canada's highest demerits for using a cellphone while driving.

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

Bill 212—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Gift Card Inactivity Fees)

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen), that Bill 212, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Gift Card Inactivity Fees); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (frais d'inactivité applicables aux cartes-cadeaux), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: Gift cards have become an important part of the retail landscape in Manitoba and Canada. In 2006, Manitoba was a leader and passed legislation to provide that gift cards purchased by consumers do not expire. It was and is the right thing to do. Currently, though, entities like shopping centres which sell gift cards are permitted to charge inactivity fees of up to \$30 per year for the privilege of holding consumers' money. This bill precludes such fees for gift cards purchased by consumers and is another step forward in moving consumer protection for Manitobans.

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

Bill 211—The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I move, seconded by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), that Bill 211, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Garnishment Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, this bill makes amendments to The Family Maintenance Act, setting up provisions for a six-month period for divorce settlements to occur before being referred to maintenance enforcement and inclusion of any legal costs of appeals.

And I urge the House to accept this bill when it comes forward. Thank you.

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

Bill 208—The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I move, seconded by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 208, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act; Loi sur la responsabilité et la transparence en matière réglementaire, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: This bill requires the government to develop formal procedures to make the process for enacting regulations more transparent. It also requires government departments to develop regulatory reform plans to eliminate red tape.

And, Mr. Speaker, I call on all members of this House to support this bill when it is debated.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

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

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:

Mr. Speaker, 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.

* (14:00)

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 Landowner 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. These 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 up 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 V. Pedersen, J. Pedersen, P. Rempel and many more fine Manitobans.

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

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 to 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 petition is signed by G. Unrah, B. Madsen, D. Gault and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Province-Wide Long-Term Care—Review Need and Increase Spaces

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

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) There are currently 125 licensed personal-care homes, PCHs, across Manitoba, consisting of less than 10,000 beds.

(2) All trends point to an increasingly aging population who will require additional personal-care-home facilities.

(3) By some estimates, Manitoba will require an increase of more than 5,100 personal-care-home beds by 2036.

(4) The number of Manitobans with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness who will require personal-care-home services are steadily increasing and are threatening to double within the current generation.

Number—or (6) average occupancy rates for personal-care homes across the province are exceeding 97 per cent, with some regions, such as Swan River Valley, witnessing 100 per cent rates.

(7) These high occupancy rates are creating conditions where many individuals requiring long-term care are being displaced far away from their families—displaced far away from their families and their home communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to consider immediately enacting a province-wide review of the long-term-care needs of residents of Manitoba.

And (2) to urge the provincial government to recognize the stresses placed upon the health-care system by the current and continuous aging population and consider increasing the availability of long-term-care spaces, PCH beds, in communities across the province.

And this petition has been signed by E. Hector, M. Jaslowski and D. Jaslowski and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Renewal and Improvements to PTH 5 and PTH 16 at Neepawa Intersection

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

This is the background to this petition:

Two major provincial trunk highways, Provincial Trunk Highway PTH 5 and Provincial Trunk Highway PTH 16, intersect in Neepawa along a distance of 1.5 kilometres, resulting in high volumes of traffic.

The town of Neepawa is experiencing consistent growth as demonstrated by a reported 6.5 per cent increase in population between the 2006 census and the 2011 census, according to Statistics Canada.

Due to population and industry growth in the Neepawa area, the area where PTH 5 meets PTH 16 is experiencing increasing volumes of traffic flows.

The portion of highway where PTH 5 and PTH 16 join is frequently used by emergency medical services to transport patients to the Neepawa District Memorial Hospital and health centre.

Manufacturers, agricultural producers, area residents and many Manitobans rely on the area where PTH 5 and PTH 16 are a joint highway, yet this part of the highway is in need of significant repair.

There are serious safety concerns due to the poor conditions of the 1.5-kilometre portion of joint highway in Neepawa.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation recognize that the 1.5 kilometres of shared area of PTH 5 and PTH 16 running through the town of Neepawa is in unsafe condition and therefore dangerous to the public, and as such, be urged to prioritize its renewal and consider making necessary improvements to reflect its current use.

This petition is signed by J. Kolesar, D. Birch, W. Wollmann and many, many other fine 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.

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 livelihood 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 G. Antymis, A. Antymis, L. Keefe and many, many more fine Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development Second Report

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report on the Standing Committee of Social and Economic Development.

* (14:10)

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 3, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 6)** – *The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act/Loi sur le Centre national de recherche pour la vérité et la réconciliation*
- **Bill (No. 9)** – *The Chartered Professional Accountants Act/Loi sur les comptables professionnels agréés*

- **Bill (No. 16)** – *The Terry Fox Legacy Act/Loi commémorative de Terry Fox*
- **Bill (No. 201)** – *The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act/Loi sur le centenaire de l'obtention du droit de vote par les Manitobaines*
- **Bill (No. 203)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety at New Schools)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (sécurité des piétons à proximité des nouvelles écoles)*

Committee Membership

- *Hon Mr. ALLUM*
- *Hon Ms. BLADY*
- *Mr. BRIESE*
- *Hon. Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Mr. GAUDREAU*
- *Ms. LATHLIN*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PIWNIUK*

Your Committee elected Mr. GAUDREAU as the Chairperson

Your Committee elected Ms. LATHLIN as the Vice-Chairperson

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following presentation on Bill (No. 6) – The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act/Loi sur le Centre national de recherche pour la vérité et la réconciliation:

James Wilson, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Your Committee heard the following four presentations on Bill (No. 9) – The Chartered Professional Accountants Act/Loi sur les comptables professionnels agréés:

James Kennedy, Private Citizen

Gary Hannaford, Chartered Professional Accountants - Manitoba Joint Ventures

Noah Globerman, Milton D. Rhymer and Associates

Mark Jones, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

Your Committee heard the following presentation on Bill (No. 201) – The Centennial of Manitoba

Women's Right to Vote Act/Loi sur le centenaire de l'obtention du droit de vote par les Manitobaines:

Muriel Koscielny, Private Citizen

*Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 203)** – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety at New Schools)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (sécurité des piétons à proximité des nouvelles écoles):*

Robyn Wiebe, Private Citizen

Vern Reimer, Garden Valley School Division

Written Submissions

*Your Committee received the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 6)** – The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act/Loi sur le Centre national de recherche pour la vérité et la réconciliation:*

*The Honourable Mr. Justice Murray Sinclair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
David T. Barnard, University of Manitoba*

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 6)** – The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act/Loi sur le Centre national de recherche pour la vérité et la réconciliation

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendments:

THAT the definition "Centre" in Clause 1 of the Bill be amended by striking out "national research centre" and substituting "national centre".

THAT the eighth paragraph of the Preamble to the Bill be amended by striking out "national research centre" and substituting "national centre".

THAT the title of the Bill be amended by striking out "NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE" and substituting "NATIONAL CENTRE".

- **Bill (No. 9)** – The Chartered Professional Accountants Act/Loi sur les comptables professionnels agrees

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 16)** – The Terry Fox Legacy Act/Loi commémorative de Terry Fox

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 201)** – The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act/Loi sur le centenaire de l'obtention du droit de vote par les Manitobaines

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 203)** – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety at New Schools)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (sécurité des piétons à proximité des nouvelles écoles)

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendments:

THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended

(a) in the centred heading before the proposed clause 68.3(1), by striking out "AT NEW SCHOOLS"; and

(b) by replacing the proposed clauses 68.4 and 68.5 with the following:

Notice to traffic authority

68.4(1) *When the finance board has approved the construction of a new school or a significant expansion to an existing school, the responsible school division must notify the traffic authority responsible for each road and highway that borders the school site.*

Pedestrian and traffic safety analysis required

68.4(2) *After being advised of the approval, the traffic authority must conduct an analysis of the roads and highways that border the school site to determine if any changes should be made or recommended to address increased pedestrian activity and traffic flow once the new or expanded school is in use.*

Considerations

68.4(3) *The pedestrian and traffic safety analysis must include a review of speed limits and a consideration of whether new infrastructure or traffic control devices, such as signs, crosswalks and pedestrian corridors, are required on roads and highways that border the school site.*

Notice of recommendations

68.4(4) *Based on the results of the pedestrian and traffic safety analysis, the traffic authority must provide the school division with written notice of all changes it believes are appropriate to address pedestrian and traffic safety when the new or expanded school is in use.*

Timeline to implement changes

68.4(5) *The traffic authority must provide the school division with a list of the changes that it will implement and the timeline for implementing each change.*

Application to Highway Traffic Board

68.4(6) *If the traffic authority recommends a change to a speed limit that requires the approval of The Highway Traffic Board, the traffic authority must apply to The Highway Traffic Board for approval of the recommended change in speed limits.*

Temporary safety measures

68.5(1) *If a new or expanded school is used before a traffic authority has implemented all changes that it recommended or before The Highway Traffic Board has made a decision on a proposed change in speed limits, the traffic authority — after consulting with the school division — must implement any temporary pedestrian and traffic safety measures that it considers appropriate.*

Duration of temporary safety measures

68.5(2) *The traffic authority must maintain any temporary safety measures until it has implemented all recommended changes and, where applicable, The Highway Traffic Board has made a decision on a proposed change in speed limits.*

THAT the title of the Bill be amended by striking out "AT NEW SCHOOLS".

Mr. Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, tabling of reports.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'd like to table the supplementary information for Supply and the Public Trustee of Manitoba '13-14 annual report.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Labour and Immigration for the 2015-2016 year.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I'm pleased to table for Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, Revenue Estimates of 2015-2016.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling? Seeing none, we'll move on to ministerial statements.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this afternoon from the East Kildonan Garden Club Frances Barrette and Valerie Denesiuk, and this—these folks are the guests of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS**Non-Profit Organizations
Funding to Agencies**

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we know that NDP wasteful spending is a threat to essential front-line services, and late last year the government sent out a letter to a number of non-profits threatening them with a clawback of 16 per cent of the balance of their yearly funding. These non-profits provide important front-line services for vulnerable youth, for persons with disabilities, for seniors. The estimated cuts, according to the FIPPA response, were in the area of half a million dollars, which is roughly equivalent to the secret payments made to six former friends of the Premier to go elsewhere to work. This was a mistake, in our estimation.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier rise in his place today, admit the mistake that was made and immediately commit to restoring the funds to these worthwhile and important agencies?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate the member doesn't check his facts before he does a press conference.

These five organizations were the inadvertent recipients of a request for a refund. When that—that was immediately rectified with phone calls to the organizations to give them assurance that they were not being asked to refund 4 per cent of their money. That has been corrected a long time ago.

The member's just simply wrong on the facts. He's wrong in his interpretation of the facts and he's

wrong on his amounts. These organizations are in good shape.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, in this budget we have more investment in what we call the non-profit red tape initiative, which allows some of these organizations to have access to more resources to do the excellent job they're doing serving the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: So serving the people of Manitoba by inadvertently, in error, sending out a threat to claw back funds from non-profits. That's not how you serve the vulnerable clients of these agencies, Mr. Speaker, not at all.

Now, the NDP has launched a multimedia pre-election ad campaign. Will they pay for it? No, they will not. Will taxpayers pay for it? Most certainly, but not just any taxpayers. Unless the Premier will commit today that the total funds clawed back from those agencies are refunded to them, it will be the vulnerable people of Manitoba who will be asked to fund this kind of wasteful spending.

So I'll ask him again to commit clearly today that the full amounts of any funds that were clawed back from any of these important agencies have now been refunded in full with an apology from the government.

Mr. Selinger: It's unfortunate when his prepared questions don't fit the facts. You sort of got to keep going.

The money was never taken from the organizations. They were contacted. The error was corrected by verbal contact with the agencies. As a matter of fact, some of these organizations are seeing an increase in funding this year because they're participating in the non-profit initiative.

Members of this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, won't be buffaloed by the false information of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Pallister: This is what the rebels meant, Mr. Speaker, at their press conference when they said the Premier had stopped listening. This is what they meant and this is what's on display around here most recently.

Now, we have a cover-up followed by incompetence, followed by an aggressive attack from a Premier who won't admit that he made a mistake. The fact is this is a government that will waste money, frequently, to serve itself: shiny red

helicopter, why shop around; rushes stadium construction project and millions of dollars of extra costs, not our problem, we got a pre-election photo op out of it; self-promotional ad campaigns and signs, no problem, it's somebody else's money.

NDP waste has doubled our debt in this province. NDP tax hikes are hurting our economy. NDP waste is threatening our essential front-line services even now, and they send out letters clawing back funds from pregnant women and vulnerable youth and people with disabilities, and then they attack others for raising the question in the House.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit that he made the wrong choice, and will he refund the million dollars-plus that he's paid his own party for doing nothing?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition's time on this question has elapsed.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, all those allegations the Leader of the Opposition made about not listening, he didn't hear my answer in my first two questions. That's very clear; he wasn't listening.

The money was not recovered from the organizations. They were contacted immediately once the error was discovered. They were assured that the money would not be taken back.

Some of those organizations will benefit by increased investment in the non-profit sector as part of our non-profit red tape initiative which provides more secure funding to excellent non-profit organizations all across Manitoba that are providing good quality services to Manitoba.

This is a direct contrast to the members opposite and another example of his double standard. When they were in office, they put everybody on very short funding requirements. They cut their funding. They made them hustle every single day to get funding. They couldn't do the service provisions because they were never secure in their funding.

The non-profit initiative, the funding we provide, gives them long-term funding and lets them provide good services to the people of Manitoba. It requires them to be accountable for that.

We support that. They don't. We won't be buffaloed by the Leader of the Opposition.

Non-Profit Organizations Funding to Agencies

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day on Friday, November 28th, 2014, 122 not-for-profits that provide essential front-line services to many of our most vulnerable citizens in the province received an email. It said: Despite our signed agreement, we want 4 per cent of your budget back. We want it now and we want you to give it to—and if you don't give it to us, we want written rationale. And it was signed by today's NDP.

Mr. Speaker, are Manitoba's finances in such poor shape that not-for-profits and their clients are unsafe from today's NDP?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I do want to let all members of the House know, of course, we have—we continue to provide stable, long-term funding to non-profit organizations and community-based organizations. They—these organizations provide stability for individuals going into that critical first job. They provide stability and training and upgrading. They help keep our communities safe and healthy. We also know that the organizations don't just provide support to the individual, but they 'spride' support to all the family members.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) was clear. There was a miscommunication to a small amount of agencies. That has been clarified.

These organizations continue to do good work. We continue to be proud of the work they do, and we will continue to support those organizations.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, the minister says a small number of agencies. The minister's own FIPPA response says, and I quote: The total number of service providers is 122 that the request was made of. I would hardly say a small number.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP clawback is unprecedentedly. Not only has the NDP been starving not-for-profits at the front end for years, now they're starving them—or clawing back at the back end.

One organization told today's NDP that if they cut back on their toiletries for staff and clients, that if they cut back on their fading ink 'cargages,' they may be able to come up with \$500. The response from today's NDP: Cut us a cheque.

* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, is this what non-profits have to look forward to under today's NDP: starvation at the front end, clawbacks at the back?

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations and agencies look forward to a government that puts priority on the needs that they do to provide support to families.

I, of course, well aware of the incredible work non-profit organizations do. I get to see it every day in the neighbourhood that I represent. In fact, I met Abby [*phonetic*], a single indigenous woman working incredibly hard, and she bragged about the incredible work that non-profits provide: that she had someone to help her get that first job, Mr. Speaker; that when she needed child care, that support was there because those workers were there for her; that when she had interviews for jobs, she was interview prepared by these non-profits.

Mr. Speaker, we're incredibly proud of the work that our organizations do every day. I would let and invite any time that members opposite want to come and see it first-hand, the incredible work these—

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

Mr. Martin: I had the good fortune of working in the not-for-profit sector and I saw first-hand the good work they do. The question isn't the good work the non-profits did, Mr. Speaker, but the godawful work by today's NDP.

The minister claims that only five organizations received the email. I would ask the minister to name those five plus the other 117 identified by his own FIPPA response, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in December, I brought this issue up to the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross) and the Minister of Children and Youth. I asked them to look into this. I asked them to fix this. I asked them to stand up for these front-line services.

Three months ago I filed a FIPPA to every department asking them about this information. Now today, after an opposition news conference, we find out, whoops, it was sent and released. We meant to send a retraction. We just simply forgot.

Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time—for Morris—has elapsed.

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. When the Leader of the Opposition was in government, he clawed back the National Child Benefit. He froze minimum wage seven times. He cut, in one budget, 56 organizations that provide support to the poorest children and young people. He wiped out friendship centres.

And, Mr. Speaker, I remember those kinds of things. I remember the irresponsible things, building a policy on a snitch line and then campaigning it, attempting to embarrass and shame and stigmatize poor people. That is his record. He has never taken responsibility for that record.

This side of the House, we continue to invest in non-profit organizations. They continue to thrive and do incredibly well. We stand with those non-profit organizations; we always will.

I hope the Leader of the Opposition takes the time and apologizes for his policies on shaming, embarrassing and attempting to stigmatize—

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

Hospital Discharge Case Concern Siloam Mission Placement

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, a woman in her late 80s was discharged from hospital, put into a taxicab and dumped off at Siloam Mission. The executive director of the mission said that they were not prepared to deal with a sick patient who they felt should have still been kept in care.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain why an elderly person who was discharged while still sick, according to Siloam Mission, and put into a taxicab and dumped at Siloam Mission.

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

I'd like to thank the member for raising this matter. The situation as presented does not sound like the kind of care that any one of us would expect for our loved ones.

And I can assure that if there are any details of this case that have already been provided to my office, I will endeavour to provide the member and the family with an update as soon as possible. But if this case has not yet been raised with my office, I ask the member to provide me with that information so

that I can look into the issue right away. I invite her to do that right away.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the elderly woman was in her 80s. She was disoriented, needed an oxygen tank and had nowhere else to go. She was discharged, however, and became what Siloam Mission calls a, and I quote, dump job. They say this is not an uncommon situation.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us how often busy hospital ERs discharge patients like this and have them dumped off at another agency.

Ms. Blady: I thank the member for the question. And, again, I invite her to provide myself and my office with the specifics of the case, anything that we can do to ensure that this is investigated properly.

Without having immediate access to the specifics of the case, I can say that every month there are over 20,000 emergency room visits in Winnipeg alone, and this doesn't include the thousands of patients who receive care at Pan Am Clinic and the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre, and that our front-line professionals do do their best in triaging emergencies and responding to them with care, compassion and professionalism.

And when something doesn't go right in an ER, Mr. Speaker, I want to know about it, and, again, I invite her to provide me with that information.

Mrs. Driedger: Perhaps the Minister of Health would like to read today's paper. The story's in there.

The executive director of Siloam Mission says that most shelters are not prepared to deal with people who need extra medical care, but some still get dumped off at their front doors. It appears that our health-care system, our ERs that are in crisis, are off-loading health care to private shelter agencies who aren't able to handle it.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health to tell Manitobans: Why are we paying more for health care and getting so much less?

Ms. Blady: I thank the member for the question, and, again, she's familiar with our protocols and protections that we have around the safety of patients' information. So, again, if she would like to provide information to this Chamber, that is—I would—that would be very much appreciated.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that it's for these kinds of reasons that our government implemented and subsequently

strengthened a number of mandatory incident investigation and reporting requirements, including critical incident investigations and investigations for the protection of persons in care office into abuse at health facilities, as well as bringing in new members—a new number—a number of new measures to take the pressure off our emergency rooms.

So, again, any additional information that she or anyone else can provide to my office, I would gladly work with the family to rectify the situation.

New West Partnership Manitoba Participation

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Well, I would suggest that the member read the paper. It's in the paper today and it's an article by John Perras [*phonetic*] himself, so I would suggest that the member be a little bit more up to speed with what's going on, Mr. Speaker.

Manitobans are tired of paying more and getting less, not only in the areas of health care and education and social services, Mr. Speaker, but also in the areas of jobs and the economy.

Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill for second reading debate that would offer Manitobans economic hope for the future by encouraging the participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership.

Mr. Speaker, it's been a number of weeks since the Alberta NDP was elected into the Alberta Legislature.

I would like to ask the Minister for Jobs and the Economy: Has he spoken to his counterpart in Alberta about this very important issue that could create hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs right here at home in our province?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I want to thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to remind the member and all members of the House that we, of course, have one of the best job growths in the nation. Validator after validator—we're not saying this; private sector forecast validators are saying it. Good folks like Chris Lorenc are saying it, that we have one of the strongest economies in the country.

And, you know, we're proud that we are in the centre of the continent, and being in the heart of the continent, we're proud to be able to say that we do

more than 50 per cent of our trade and build our economy with the provinces to the east of us and we continue to work with the provinces to the west of us. We're going to continue to take full advantage of that, and part of that—and it's why, over the last 10 years, we've been able to see exports increase by \$4.1 billion; that's a 44 per cent increase.

We'll continue to work with our neighbours to the west and to the east of us and to the north. We continue to invest in strategic trade routes and we'll continue to build our economy and create jobs.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, the New West Partnership has the potential of creating hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs right here at home in Manitoba. I'm surprised that the member opposite, the Minister for Jobs and the Economy, does not see the importance of this issue.

Mr. Speaker, if he really cares about the future of jobs and our economy, he would join in solidarity with his friends in Alberta and negotiate Manitoba's entry into the New West Partnership.

Will he do so today, Mr. Speaker?

* (14:30)

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, we're listening and hearing people like Robert Kavcic talk about how strong our economy is, a rising star on the regional map when it comes to jobs. Rosemary Sparks from BuildForce Canada tells us that because our economy's so strong there's a demand for jobs, and we stand with businesses to do that.

Mike Moore from the Manitoba Home Builders' Association says this: There's never been a better time to start a business if you're a trades person and in Manitoba. Chris Lorenc—Chris Lorenc—from the Manitoba Heavy Construction says that we are seen as leaders when it comes to infrastructure and trade infrastructure in growing our economy.

We are standing with businesses. We're standing with workers and we're standing with families. When are members opposite going to do the same thing?

Mrs. Stefanson: I am shocked that a minister responsible for jobs and the economy has neglected to enter into discussions about this very important agreement that could create hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs right here at home, Mr. Speaker. Shame on him.

I ask the minister: Will he agree today to support Bill 202, do the right thing, call his counter part in

Alberta, move forward on this issue that is of utmost importance for the future of jobs and the economy right here at home in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Chief: I was glad to be joined by the Leader of the Opposition at a trade infrastructure luncheon where the keynote speaker was John Law, president of Lawmark International, co-author on building advantages and improving Canada's trade infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition asked the question: What do you think of Manitoba's infrastructure plan? His response was clear and simple, Mr. Speaker, that not only are we seen as leaders, but a long-term plan builds the economy.

Manitoba's work with the private sector is the envy of other provinces, Mr. Speaker, and simply put—and this was a question by the Leader of the Opposition to John Law—simply put, Manitoba is doing it right. That was *[inaudible]*

Mining Industry Investment in Sector

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I will agree with the Minister of Infrastructure today in that this is a dysfunctional government.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear the NDP have and are refusing to listen to recommendations coming from the mining sector. This is resulting in our industry falling even further behind other jurisdictions. We know that investment in this sector goes where it's wanted and, clearly, this NDP government is sending the wrong message.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government refusing to listen to this very important sector?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I'd—I like to acknowledge the member's question, and I'm very pleased that we are probably the only jurisdiction in the country that's opened two mines in the last year.

And I'm working with the prospectus that I've already tabled in the House of one of these companies, a new company that's looking at a new gold mine in Manitoba of a new brownfield development. It's highly motivated and it says, the Manitoba advantage, Mr. Speaker, of coming to Manitoba is the lowest hydro rates in the world.

Why this company is coming to Manitoba, which is totally contrary to everything the members stand for, everything the members want to do, Mr. Speaker, and everything they would do to the

economy of Manitoba if they were to ever to get their hands on the economic levers of this province.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly applaud the people at HudBay for creating those jobs in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, Gail Ferguson of the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba recently completed a paper on the mining industry here in Manitoba. This document is the result of a literature review and certainly extensive interviews with Aboriginal, industry, government officials here in Manitoba, and these interviews were just carried out this past August through November. The report clearly identifies that the lack of government policy and direction has resulted in our inability to attract investment here in Manitoba.

I'm going to ask the minister if he's had an opportunity to review this important document.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, at the same time the member is talking about this so-called review by an individual, the president—the vice-president of HudBay said, quote: This is a good place to build good mines that produce benefits for business, employees and the province as a whole.

Glen Kuntz, the private sector CEO of Mega Precious Metals, said: I think Manitoba does deserve the ranking. It's a better place to work than a lot of other places in Canada and the world.

Ken Green of their right-wing Fraser Institute said Manitoba is the fourth out of 122 locations—the fourth out of 122 locations—in the world to do business. That's their own person, their own right-wing institute that says we're the best place in Canada—the second 'blest' place in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

I think the member is—

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

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister should have a look at the report and see what the people at the U of M have found after they've talked to all the people in the mining sector here in Manitoba.

And I'm going to read from the report here, Mr. Speaker: The results revealed that the existing relationships among the parties were frustrating. These frustrations were attributed to a breakdown in implementation and application of provincial policies

and procedures. Uncertainties in land claims and protected-area designation have continued to deter investment into the mineral sector. Policies need to be updated and should clarify the roles and responsibilities of each interested party.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to step up to the plate and address these very serious concerns?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I guess it's—*[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, it's one of those days in the Legislature. I wonder why they want to sit, because it's a recycle day; I haven't heard a new question—I haven't heard a new question—nothing new.

And when the buffalo award gets awarded this week to the worst MLA, I'm afraid it may go to that member, because tonight I'm meeting with 10 chiefs of First Nations in Manitoba and all of the main participants from all of the mining companies who sit with the government on the minister's Mining Advisory Council to talk about the development of mining, including a manual for Manitoba, a manual for consultations, a First Nations co-operation company that's going to work with private sector companies to provide mining futures, Mr. Speaker, and we're meeting tonight to talk about the progress and they're very—

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

Emergency Medical Services Review and Recommendations

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the EMS system review was conducted, and many recommendations were brought forward.

One recommendation, to date, has been implemented, and there are many more that would benefit directly the residents, both permanent and seasonal, of the Lac du Bonnet constituency as well as the rest of Manitoba.

Why is this Health Minister dragging her feet? Or was it because she was preoccupied for the months of December to March, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to thank the member for the question and put some actual facts on the record.

Yes, EMS is critically important for Manitoba families, and the care is provided by our first responders to save lives daily.

There were 54 recommendations made, Mr. Speaker, and 19 are now considered complete, and the rest are either well under way or in planning.

Paramedic Services Fatigue Policy

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House respect the hard work and dedication of our EMS providers.

This is why I'm asking why this NDP government feels that it's okay for paramedics to be working beyond a straight 16-hour shift.

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

Again, I'd like to remind members, too, that EMS has changed a lot. In fact, prior to 1997, EMS was a municipal responsibility and the staff, under members opposite, were largely part-time volunteers with limited training, and there was no—little to no provincial co-ordination of services.

Again, we've made an incredible difference. We've worked with paramedics and we have more professional paramedics practising now in the province than ever before. And, again, I would like to remind members opposite that we've also created a new 16-seat advanced-care paramedic program at Red River and, again, it's more opportunities for rural paramedics to upgrade their skills, and also assure Manitobans that the EMS review task force has met regularly since May of 2013.

And, as I said, 19 of the recommendations are completed and work is ongoing—

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

Mr. Ewasko: Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Health Minister is failing to listen to what the question is, but I'll clarify a little bit.

A memo was sent out to all EMS staff within the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority February 25th, 2015, and I quote: Effective immediately, we will be cancelling the paramedic fatigue policy, EMS 1-12. End quote.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, where was this Health Minister the months of December to March? Was she busy protecting her own job instead of protecting those hard-working EMS staff?

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

And I know that I was here in this province working hard and actually meeting with folks from all levels of the health-care profession, whether that was doctors, nurses, paramedics and other first-line responders—front-line responders. Again, we are working with paramedics and we are working with RHAs to make sure that Manitobans have the best front-line response possible.

So, again, we're working with Manitobans, we're working with paramedics, and it's unfortunate how members opposite continue to politicize the vital work done by our first responders.

Child Daycare Spaces Wait Time for Placement

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, at the end of 2011, there were 8,171 children waiting for child care in Manitoba. A year later, the number had risen to 9,759. A year after this, the number was 10,523. At the end of 2014, there were 11,105 children.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier says he's making progress with 900 spaces. But the reality is that his efforts are not even addressing 10 per cent of the actual increased need.

Why is today's NDP progressively failing to keep up with the increased need for child care in Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the number of places for child care in Manitoba have more than doubled since our time in office. There are just about 30,000 publicly funded daycare spots in Manitoba, 15,000 when we came in office. The funding has tripled. The wages for daycare workers have gone up 60 per cent. We're only one of two jurisdictions in Canada that has put in place a pension plan for daycare workers.

We announced this morning \$2.8 million to build and upgrade another 14 daycares in Manitoba. I was with the member from St. Vital when we announced a new daycare centre in the St. Vital area which will be 48 spots, of which a good portion, I believe 12, will be for infants, and the remainder for preschoolers.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when other provinces and at a time when the Leader of the Opposition was part of a federal government that killed the national daycare program, we're moving forward with better

jobs, better wages, more spots, better facilities and more training. And there's more to come in our five-year plan, 5,000 more spots. We're going to build a universally accessible daycare program in Manitoba.

And I only wish the members of the opposition would support it, all of them, including the member from River Heights.

Brock-Corydon School

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, still 11,000 short and growing.

Brock-Corydon is a UNESCO-associated school and is one of only two public schools in North America with a Hebrew language track. It's an inclusive school that attracts people of all backgrounds from all over Winnipeg. The attached daycare is essential.

We know today's NDP claims to support the concept of having daycares associated with schools, but the Province is not funding all the licensed Brock-Corydon daycare spaces as promised.

Why is the government not funding existing and much needed spaces as promised when there's such an overall shortfall under his watch?

Mr. Selinger: I want to commend the local school for the work they're doing in providing daycare spots for their children and their families. I remember the experience ourselves in our neighbourhood with our daycare when there were completely—there were reductions in funding, and we found ways to fund more daycare support for families in our neighbourhood at the daycare that our—my children attended. It's very important that they do that.

We are expanding another 900 spaces. We did 800 last year. We're going to build it out by another 5,000. We have increased wages 2 per cent January 1st this year, another 2 per cent January 16th will be coming forward. Additional support will be available for people to upgrade their skills. They will get additional support and salary when they upgrade their skills. We've got a pension program. Two point eight million for 14 daycares was announced today, and stay tuned. There's going to be another announcement.

And all the daycares we're doing in schools—every new school we build in Manitoba will have a daycare centre in it. That means now, in Manitoba, about half of all daycare places are in public schools. That's progress.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, Brock-Corydon School daycare serves families from all over Winnipeg.

In 2013, the daycare's board consulted with Family Services about expanding to meet a growing need. They were told funding could take up to two years, but they were licensed right away. They added 38 new spaces that families immediately filled.

Now, two years later, they're told the funding model has just changed, and their new spaces are no longer a priority.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier address his minister's short-sighted decision and commit today to providing adequate funding to Brock-Corydon School daycare, or will the Premier call each of these families to tell them that their children no longer have a daycare space?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we will roll out another 900 spaces for daycare in this province this year. We will invest \$2.8 million in existing and new daycares unattached to schools. We will have a future announcement, double-digit announcement in the millions of dollars, of daycares we're building in public schools. We will increase wages for daycare workers; we've done it in January, we'll do it again next January. We will have more support for training and we will continue the pension plan and have a fee structure which is among the most affordable in the country, based on people's ability to pay.

All of those things we'll do, and we will certainly find ways to work with all families and all communities as we move forward to ensure that daycare's available. We want a universally accessible and affordable daycare system for this province. That's part of our vision for the future. That allows families to work. That allows families to go back to school. That allows families to get training.

All of those things were never done when the opposition was in power. They cut welfare. They cut daycare. They cut school funding. We're doing the opposite, Mr. Speaker. We're going to find the way forward for Manitoba families and the Manitoba economy.

Film and Video Industry Tax Credit Expansion

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I'd like to share an open secret with some of the members that may not know that I was the first producer of a feature film in Manitoba—one of the first—and definitely the first in Canada to bring a Bollywood film industry right here

in Manitoba. It was Howard Pawley who was the premier and Eugene Kostyra was the minister of Culture, and we started making the industry called cultural industry reality to Manitoba that is prospering.

And I had only three days back, Mr. Speaker, a visitor from Bollywood that was looking for locations all over Canada and fell in love with Manitoba. And when she heard about the incentives, tax incentives, I was thrilled.

And I'm very happy to ask the question with—from the minister about the extension of that particular incentive for the cultural industry.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I thank the member for the question.

Yesterday I was thrilled to be with the member from Minto to announce an extension of the Manitoba film and video tax credit, the interactive digital tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, last year, over 67 films, television and web-based productions were created in Manitoba, over \$108 million in direct economic activity. Our tax credit of 65 per cent in Manitoba is one of the highest in the country, as opposed to other provinces like Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, for example, that have cut their tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, we look to a thriving industry, one that's growing every day, as opposed to the members opposite that say, we don't see any value whatsoever in a tax credit, when they were asked just last year about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're extremely proud of our contributions and our investment in this industry, and we continue to see this industry grow and thrive.

Non-Profit Organizations Administrative Costs

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, McCreary/Alonsa Support Services to Seniors is not—is a not-for-profit organization that's operated by volunteers and funded by an RHA grant and local fundraising.

They have recently been told by the RHA that they have to have a review engagement done yearly by a public accountant. The cost is \$1,500 to \$1,800.

Why is this NDP government discouraging volunteer organizations with increased costs?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): I'd like to thank the member for the question. Working with not-for-profit and volunteer organizations for seniors is very important and it's something that we value on this side of the Chamber, as we've seen with the increases to the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit.

And, again, working with RHAs and how they provide, in many cases they are the direct conduit to those organizations. And it's important that regional health authorities play that role. They're the ones with the on-the-ground regional experience. They're the ones that have the front-line relationship with those organizations, and we continue to support those organizations.

* (14:50)

Mr. Briese: I'll remind the minister that this is a health issue and the buck stops on her desk.

The support services do congregate meals and Meals on Wheels, and they struggle to fundraise to meet their commitments. This organization faces losing volunteers because of increased fundraising activities to meet the extra costs being imposed on them.

Why is this NDP government placing volunteer groups at risk by raising their costs?

Ms. Blady: We do many things on this side of the Chamber to support seniors in a variety of ways, whether that's our Aging in Place strategy, helping seniors to stay in their homes longer and giving them options to continue to contribute to the social, civic and economic life of the community.

And we are investing in over \$9 million to provide 162 safe, additional, affordable homes for seniors, and this builds on our original commitment of more than 517 units already delivered over the past five years. And, again, through a variety of programs, we support over 15,000 units of seniors housing across the province.

There's a variety of things in place to help seniors throughout Manitoba, and we will continue to work with all organizations, even through the WRHA and RHAs.

Mr. Briese: The minister simply doesn't grasp how important volunteer organizations are to seniors in those communities, those small communities across Manitoba.

Volunteers supply those essential services. They used to be able to do what was called a compilation

statement. Now they need this review engagement. The compilation statement could be done internally and turned in to the RHA. Now they want something that is going to cost them an extra 15 to 18 hundred dollars a year.

Once again I ask: Why are the NDP discouraging volunteers in Manitoba?

Ms. Blady: I'd like to thank the member for the question, and, again, I encourage the RHA to continue to work with that group to, again, resolve the issues that are there. And I look forward to any information that the member can bring me so that I may help facilitate that.

But I can tell him I do value the importance of not-for-profit seniors' organizations. I can say proudly that Kirkfield Park is the home to the very first Men's Shed in North America, a vital group that provides men a place to go. It does mental health supports, seniors' activities, and it is something where we recently had visitors from Ireland and from British Columbia and Quebec looking at ways that they can follow the same model as what happens in Kirkfield Park.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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

East Kildonan Garden Club

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, for those that enjoy gardening and want to learn tips on taking care of a flower or vegetable garden, the East Kildonan Garden Club is the place to be.

Since the club got its start in 1967, the club has seen many changes. Rather than focusing on planting large flower beds as they've done in past years, today the club now focuses on helping to educate others on good gardening practices and making gardening accessible.

Today the East Kildonan Garden Club works to encourage members to cultivate trees, shrubs, flowers, plants and vegetables, and to provide gardening information to the community. They do this by hosting various workshops to teach sustainable planting techniques for all sorts of different plants. These workshops are designed to help make planting easy so that anyone and everyone can plant a garden.

I myself enjoy gardening, and was further inspired when I attended the club's annual plant sale at the Valley Gardens Community Centre. Thanks to the excellent help of the garden club's volunteers, this year I now have some wonderful tomatoes, peppers and some herbs to grow this summer. I also bought some annuals to add some colour to my yard. The sale was well attended, and I know I'm not the only resident of northeast Winnipeg who is grateful for the help of the East Kildonan Garden Club.

Many of the executive members, including Valerie Denesiuk, who has joined us in the gallery here today, and France Barrettee have also been instrumental in the club, donating much of their time over the years.

Many of the members have also—also help support community gardens like the Millennium gardens and the Watt Street gardens, where I also volunteered by helping to build some of the raised wooden plant boxes. The gardens are a point of pride in northeast Winnipeg and they are in better shape for having the East Kildonan Garden Club around.

Thank you to all the members and volunteers of the East Kildonan Garden Club for sharing your green thumb and helping make our community a better place.

Thank you.

Annaliese Loeppky

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of this House to Annaliese Loeppky, whose hard work, dedication and integrity as a high-school student was recently rewarded with a \$100,000 Loran scholarship to a university of her choice.

Annaliese attends Garden Valley Collegiate in Winkler, where she has contributed to the fabric of her high school by promoting the values of achievement, volunteerism, inclusion and respect for others. Annaliese has earned a prestigious scholarship and one that will continue to ensure open doors and greater opportunities in the years to come.

The Loran scholarship is awarded to 30 students from across Canada each year on the basis of character, commitment to service and outstanding leadership potential. Annaliese was among five Manitobans selected for the award this year and one of 3,800 applicants nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, the Loran Award is a merit-based award that offers to match tuition to one of

25 partner universities, provides for summer internships abroad, access to a network of hard-working peers and distinguished mentors and encourages the development of good character values, leadership and service.

Annaliese is very deserving of the award, and her record at GVC is marked with promise and distinction. While on the high school sustainability committee, she spearheaded efforts to bring reusable dishes to the cafeteria and a new dishwasher was installed. Annaliese undertook several efforts to promote a safer, healthier school environment and leading campaigns against drug use and promoting kindness through enterprises such as free hot chocolate and granola bars. She set an example of excellence and hard work beyond academics and sport, serving on student council and playing a lead role in the high school's recent musical.

It goes beyond saying that her success in this award is a tribute to teachers, staff, family and friends who served to shape and encourage the positive values Annaliese exhibits.

I am pleased to honour Annaliese's significant achievement and wish her all the best as she prepares for university and the journey beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tourism Week

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): This week is Tourism Week in Manitoba. It's a great time to plan out summer activities for the family, visit parts of our province that you haven't seen yet, to take your friends on one of those favourite cultural events.

I would like to share with you all the events that I am excited about. During the week—the second week of July, the village of Winnipegosis will be celebrating their 100th anniversary, and I do truly expect it to be quite a party. Winnipegosis is a quaint village nestled in the southern tip of Lake Winnipegosis. With rich farmland, forests, fisheries, the village drew people from all over in the beginning of the 20th century. The residents of Winnipegosis have been very proud of their beautiful community ever since.

In 1990, they hosted an event at which they celebrated the town's 75th anniversary, and it was a great success, drawing over 3,000 people. This year's event, the 100th anniversary, the festivities should even be bigger. The party will kick off with a show

will be put on by the royal Canadian Armed Forces' famous Snowbirds on Wednesday, July the 8th. After that, the weekend will be full of exciting activities: grand reopening of the newly renovated Winnipegosis Museum, cribbage tournaments, golf, baseball tournaments, a raft race, dunk tanks, a fashion show, fireworks, and, of course, it wouldn't be a party without dancing.

Plans for the event have been in the works since 2008. Volunteers have been hard at work ever since it would—made its way sure that Winnipegosis's 100th anniversary showcase will be the best of what the village has to offer.

I am excited to mark this important milestone with the residents of the community that is very important to my constituency of Swan River, and I would like to extend my invitation to all Manitobans to head out to Winnipegosis for the second week of July and enjoy what will surely be a fantastic event.

Royal Canadian Air Cadets Squadron 249

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, cadet programs play a vital role in teaching youth about social development, leadership and decision-making skills. The Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron 249 in my constituency in the Beausejour area has served the community for nearly 50 years. The group is composed of air cadets between the ages of 12 and 18 who meet on Wednesdays. Some of the activities that these youth participate in include sports, outdoor activities, aviation training and summer camps.

On April 26th, 1967, the air cadet squadron No. 249 received their official certification charter. The group has a parent sponsoring committee which is a non-profit organization that exists to support the 249 air cadet squadron by providing access accommodations, training aids and funding.

Mr. Speaker, last month, 25 air cadets and officers from the 249 squadron traveled to Europe to participate in remembrance and liberation ceremonies commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of the World War II in Europe. They traveled to the cities of London, Hailsham, Nijmegen, Groesbeek, just to name a few. The air cadets had the opportunity to travel to Vimy Ridge and Juno Beach in Normandy, which are important Canadian memorial sites. The trip taught the cadets of the importance of Canada's role in World War II and how many soldiers sacrificed their lives for peace.

* (15:00)

I would like to commend the Royal Canadian Air Cadets Squadron 249, including Lieutenant Level Training Officer Miles Drynan, Captain Alyson Boxshall, Admin. Officer Cindy Buss and all of the other supporting officers, volunteers and, of course, parents, Mr. Speaker, for its significant contributions to my community and for its dedication toward educating and mentoring our youth.

I would like to wish the air cadets many more successful years of operation and ask that all members join me in recognizing their efforts.

Thank you.

Fort Dauphin Museum

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): For 40 years volunteers have been making the Fort Dauphin Museum the go-to destination in the Parklands. Families of—and people of all ages enjoy visiting this 18th century fur trade post, which features archaeological fur trade and pioneer artifacts. This multi-purpose museum is home to the Parkland Archaeological Laboratory and many historical buildings, including a trapper's cabin, blacksmith's shop, pioneer log house and a school house.

The museum is a busy place and welcomes many visitors year round. This May and June over 20 different school groups will be visiting for a field trip, and it's a popular place for families to visit during the summer months. The museum also plans to run a one-week long Kids Camp. The day camp will have an archeology theme and kids can look forward to participating in a fossil and dinosaur dig.

The archeology theme fits well with the museum as they recently acquired a 5,000-year-old buffalo–bison skull and a 100,000-year-old fossil of a fish. These fossils join the many others in the Parkland Archaeological Laboratory located within the museum.

While these new additions are impressive, the 90-million-year-old marine reptile fossil, Chris the Croc, is still the main attraction. This fossil is one of seven of its kind to—known to exist in the world and one of the oldest ever discovered in Manitoba.

The Fort Dauphin Museum is a wonderful addition to the Parklands, and it certainly couldn't exist without its many volunteers. They run the front ticket counter dressed up in period costumes, and maintain the buildings and structures, among many other things.

A big thank you to everyone at the Fort Dauphin Museum. The Parklands area is lucky to have you around.

Thank you.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: 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'll be considered on Thursday, June 11th, is the resolution, Provincial Government's Failure to Stop the Spread of Invasive Species in Manitoba, sponsored by the honourable member from Morris.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the—in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday, June 11th, is the resolution entitled Provincial Government's Failure to Stop the Spread of Invasive Species in Manitoba, sponsored by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Martin).

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

The honourable member for Emerson, on a grievance.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, on a grievance.

I wish to rise in support of all of Manitobans, and I grieve the mismanagement of this NDP government that has cost us way, way more and getting far, far less.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we saw members from the Shoal lakes in here to meet with the minister who was unable to meet with them for various reasons.

But I—I'll refer to the Hansard of July 4th, 2001, when it was—this same issue was brought forward by a former colleague, the honourable Harry Enns, and this is some of the words that he put on the record in 2001. He said this road has never been upgraded since the time it was taken over as a provincial road back in years in the early 1960s. But I confess, I've resided in the area for some 42 years. I've never seen the road in the condition that it is now, and it has been a poor road in the springtime but never totally blocked. Mr. Speaker, the road that was in question

yesterday has been totally blocked for four years now.

So, Mr. Speaker, this response that came from the then-Emergency Measures Minister, also the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), he said I think it's important to recognize that this is the first thing we're trying to do. What I can indicate to the member is that I've asked the department and I will be—continue to pursue this over the next period of time.

Mr. Speaker, 14 years later we have many people in here discussing exactly the same issue, but the road has been closed for four years.

My colleague Harry Enns had raised this with the minister responsible for EMO, and it continues to be a problem. Was it ever addressed? No, it wasn't. Mr. Speaker, this is something that has been going on for a long, long time.

Again, in June 2011, my colleague the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), inquired about the Province's capacity to manage the watershed and associated infrastructure in the Shoal Lake Interlake region. And at that time they were going to address it, Mr. Speaker.

We have many people now—and yesterday we heard from the minister when he said that, we have the money, we can buy them out. That's not a solution to a three- and four- and five-year generation farm.

When questioned about Shoal lakes in 2001, the minister responsible responded he had driven through the areas a thousand times before. You would think someone so familiar with the area would have managed some necessary improvements some 14 years later, but, unfortunately, those improvements don't exist, Mr. Speaker.

The provincial drains in the area are completely inadequate to mitigate the watershed issues and flooding that is solely due to neglect on the part of this provincial government. As a result, area municipalities have had to step up to help assist with the drainage and with stakeholders forming local grassroots co-operatives to deal in the best way that they possibly could, but many of these ended up with no farm, with no holdings, that had been in their families for four generations.

We'll just go on to another particular area where we saw the residents, the area farmers, the area municipalities, step up to the plate and they formed an organization. It was called the Bifrost Agricultural

Sustainability Initiative Cooperative; for short, they called it BASIC. This group had been studying the watershed and lobbied the provincial government to invest in better water management strategies to assist agricultural producers in the area. They accessed federal funds. There was co-operation from the federal government. There was some provincial funds that went into this study. And, Mr. Speaker, that goes back over five years now. Over \$1 million was invested in this management strategy and no action by the NDP government has taken. No conclusion to all of the work that was done, and \$1 million invested. They're still have the same issues.

Poor provincial water management and drainage maintenance leads to loses of approximately \$64 million annually in the Interlake due to excess moisture. Despite these stark numbers and grassroots mobilization, provincial co-operation has not been forthcoming.

Regarding transportation, infrastructure, local area manufacturers required improvements to a highway, 326, in order to cater to a growing and thriving manufacturing base. And a request that had been asked many times of the NDP government on behalf of the Arborg Bifrost Community Development Corporation was to improve that highway. Over 500 people are employed by the manufacturers along that highway, and, Mr. Speaker, nothing has been done to improve that.

And what really ended up happening then was one of the companies decided that we're not getting any service: For what we're paying into this government, we're getting nothing back for what we have put in, and we have to go where we're going to be recognized and serviced. And so they have moved to the United States. The Pro-Fab has moved 200 jobs out of the province of Manitoba over a period of three years. Those jobs are important to this economy. It's important for the province of Manitoba to grow, and we need to service things like this.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the issues in that particular area. There are many other areas that—in the Interlake that have not been serviced. But, when the NDP hiked the PST undemocratically, these private citizens who stood up for their rights, they were called howling coyotes by some of the members on the opposite side of this House. When local Interlake manufacturers advocated for better infrastructure, about upgrades for the 326, they were

told they were—they had built their businesses in the wrong place.

So where is the right place in Manitoba to build businesses, Mr. Speaker? People build businesses where—and they have businesses where they're wanted. Here in Manitoba, they wanted to be in Manitoba, but it's clear that this NDP government does not want them in Manitoba. They raised the PST. They raised their taxes on their insurance. They raised taxes on many of the issues—of ingredients that they needed for their businesses, but they get no services for it. It's clear that the NDP does not want this kind of business in the province of Manitoba that employs, right now, 500, but at one time 700.

*(15:10)

The businesses want to grow. They need to be able to grow. Agriculture needs to be able to grow, not be bought out by the NDP government. They need to be able to grow and prosper. So when we take a look at the whole Interlake and the water management in the Interlake, what do we see? Oh, we see that the flood of the century was man-made. Lake Manitoba took out a lot of cottagers, took out a lot of farmland.

And also, Mr. Speaker, Lake St. Martin residents were moved away four years ago, and today, 2,000 are still displaced when not one of the NDP members in this House missed a meal; not one of them missed their own bed to sleep in; not one of them had their children or their grandchildren not attend the school of their choice. But these 2,000 people that have been displaced, moved many, many times and have not got a home at this point. That is shameful. And the members over there that are chirping still. They had their breakfast; they had their lunch; they had their dinners in their own homes. These 2,000 people are still displaced with no hope, no guarantee of where they're going to be.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that's unwilling to invest in the—in necessary infrastructure and in the form of improvements for 326. We have a government that's unwilling to invest in water management strategies and maintain the efficiency of provincial drainage, therefore passing the buck to municipalities, jeopardizing producers, land and cottage owners in the area. And you have a government that's unwilling to 'expediate' developments that would help mitigate flooding in Manitoba lakes and a government who has shown anything less than expediency in addressing the

plight of those displaced from Lake St. Martin, First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, the minister of MIT has had 14 years to improve the condition of the Interlake, and, sadly, little to nothing has been done. Most unfortunately for those in the Interlake, it appears that their current MLA is just as unwilling to—or is just as willing to ignore their issues. And he has demonstrated how he feels when he was speaking to a group of cottagers after their property and their cottages were totally destroyed in the flooding of Lake Manitoba, and he said to the group of farmers and cottagers: It could be worse. It could be worse—they had lost everything, but this is what the MLA of the Interlake said to these people who had just lost everything: It could be worse. But a minister—the Minister of Agriculture says: We will cover you; we will cover you; you will not lose anything; we will see that you have insurance for the next two, three, years; you will want for nothing. They got nothing. That's what they got from that minister too.

So I'm saying, as I stand here today, that there has been nothing—

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker: On a grievance.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a grievance this afternoon. I want to take this opportunity to express to this House my dismay with the Finance Minister and with the NDP government with respect to their decision to not disclose to Manitobans in the 2015 budget the total government spending and the forecasts pertaining to total government spending in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my remarks by saying that over the course of the Estimates for the Finance Department in the last couple of days, I questioned the minister again and again on this issue. Indeed, I know that the Leader of the Opposition posed those same questions to the First Minister in this Chamber during the Executive Council Estimates, and I know that the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) also posed those same questions. And, again and again, this government failed to provide any coherent reason, any rationalization that

people could accept, for why it is that they would leave out of this budgetary document a road map, a fundamental plan for how the government plans to get back into balance when it comes to total government spending.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear about this. This is not something that the opposition is asking the government to provide that they have never provided before. I want to be clear, and this is what I brought to the Finance Minister's attention, that in the year previous, exactly this chart was printed on page 4 of Budget 2014. It is a year-by-year chart that shows a plan of how the government would expect to get from the deficit position in which they find themselves yet again, to a place where they would be in balance. That was a challenge that his predecessor, the former Finance minister, got to.

Now, let's be clear. I don't mean they meant the challenge of getting out of deficit. No, as a matter of fact, the opposite is true, that this government continues to be very consistent on one thing, and that is the ability to overshoot their projections of deficit. But in—but I will be clear that this minister's predecessor did publish this total government spending forecast and, indeed, the former Finance minister's predecessor also provided that same information. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, going back in time to 2008, it was this very government who brought—who had reinstated this practice. They said they were responding to the Auditor General. They said that they were going to report the government's progress in what's called the summary budget.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And, Mr. Acting Speaker, for the purposes of this address this afternoon, I would want to refer to that April 30th, 2008, media release in which the former Finance minister, the now-Premier of the province of Manitoba, said that he was responding to the Auditor General—and with new legislation, The Balanced Budget Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act, which they changed and tweaked and over time made weaker and weaker—but what he said is they were completing the implementation of a long-standing recommendation from the Auditor General that they would commit to summary budgeting in law. The old law did not require it, and in this media release what was clear is that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) was saying, as Finance minister at the time, that the new law would ensure government uses one set of books that would provide

Manitobans with the most comprehensive budget presentation.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister's predecessor did this. That Finance minister's predecessor did this. This new Finance Minister says it's too hard. When asked over and over why this Finance Minister was not presenting a total government spending forecast as his predecessors had done, he said that the government can't control all the areas of government spending.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is—this should be alarming to every Manitoban. I can assure you it is alarming to economists; I can assure you it is alarming to financial forecasters; I can assure you it is alarming to bond-rating agencies internationally. When the Finance minister of a province says he just really can't report on what the future may bring because it's just too hard—and let's be clear about what we're referring to here. We're referring to the fact that the Finance Minister is failing to disclose all of the costs of government. He has revenue accruing; he has expenses that they are having to look after. At the end of the day, the cost of government is more than the core government services of things like education and health care and infrastructure and mining and resources. We know that the total cost of government must also include all those expenditures, all the debt that is taken on in areas like Hydro and MPI and various other agencies.

I questioned the minister on this in question period and he was very disingenuous in his response. He says, we still report on summary. That is a misleading statement. My question to the Finance Minister day after day was very clear: Why was he failing to provide that comprehensive road map that—what we call the summary forecast that would indicate the total government budget forecast? There used to be a date by which even this government said they could get into balance.

*(15:20)

Now, we are clear on this. This is the same government that said they would balance the books by 2014, and just in advance of that they said they were on track and, of course, they missed it. They missed it by a mile. But, when they missed that target, they said you can believe us this time; this time we're going to balance the books by 2016. Only weeks ago this Finance Minister stood up and said, whoops, we missed it again, we're not going to get there. It won't be 2016, but you can believe us for

sure this time because we're going to get in balance by 2018.

And, Mr. Acting Speaker, it's even worse than that because instead of going in the right direction, they're going in the wrong direction with respect to deficit. This same government a year ago stood up and said that the deficit of the province of Manitoba was pinned at \$357 million. And, as a matter of fact, over time there wasn't an indication by this government in the quarter one, or quarter two report that they were missing the mark. But, when these numbers came in in the new budget, all of a sudden Manitobans learned that the actual deficit wasn't the \$357 million that was projected, it was much, much higher; it was \$424 million. And this Finance Minister has the audacity to then table a new projection of deficit at \$422 million and say that he's going in the right direction.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is the—this is ludicrous. The minister knows that his government's record of overspending is the worst of any Canadian province in—the cumulative overspend of this government, even though revenues accruing to government were rising, is the worst of any record of any Canadian province. Why does it matter? Why does it matter that the government won't report what the future holds according to how they are structuring the finances? It matters because others are watching. Now certainly it matches—it matters to Manitobans, Manitobans who have to pay more and get less because of this NDP's mismanagement and waste.

But their mismanagement of the provincial finances has a real affect, a real cost to every Manitoban every year in the form of debt-servicing costs, those costs now in excess of \$840 million. But let us be clear, the bond-rating agencies, international money lenders, are not looking at this minister's cute core government forecast. They are looking at comprehensive costs. They are looking at the total costs of government spending. They are looking for a plan and they are not provided with a plan.

Why would this Finance Minister fail to disclose a plan? Well, for one, of course, he wants to mislead Manitobans because if it was a good plan in the forecast he would have disclosed it. It must mean bad news. But there is another group that is looking for leadership and not finding it, and that is bond-rating agencies who have already warned about their lack of confidence in this government; Moody's issued a negative outlook on Manitoba's forecast. If they do not see a summary forecast, they have no

clear sense that the government is moving in the right direction and they have only one recourse, a recourse which they will not hesitate to go on, and that is to lower this province's credit rating, meaning that our borrowing costs goes up, meaning that Manitobans will pay more and get less. Money that was meant for front-line services goes to debt-servicing costs.

Mr. Acting Speaker, thank you for allowing me to put these words on the record.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The honourable member for Spruce Woods, or, sorry, Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to rise today to put a few words on the record in regards to a grievance.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Please proceed.

Mr. Ewasko: I rise today, of course, to speak to a grievance regarding the state of education in Manitoba today. This grievance is to address my concern over how this NDP government is treating students and how they are failing to prepare our young people for the prosperous futures that they deserve.

I might start by sharing the results of recent international and national tests that show how Manitoban students are continuing to fall behind compared to students in other parts of Canada and the world. The most recent OECD program for international student assessment demonstrated that Manitoban students are among the lowest achieving students in Canada in the subjects of reading, science and math.

In math our students have seen the most significant decline out of all Canadian provinces. Over the past nine years Manitoba students have fallen so far behind in math that their scores are now below the OECD average. Not only are we among the worst in Canada, we're not—we're now slipping in the lowers achievers on the world scale.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we were once a leader on the national and international stage. This NDP government in the last 15 years have taken us, has—our results have declined to almost the bottom of the barrel.

In addition, Mr. Acting Speaker, Manitoba's PISA scores for math have declined more than any other province in recent years and are now below the

international average. The declining trend isn't the standard. While Manitoba's PISA scores in reading have declined, the Canadian average has actually gone up. Manitoba students are now reading below the international average while the average Canadian student is well above the international marker.

Although the NDP are paying more every year, Manitobans are getting far less. This NDP is not providing Manitoba's young people with the best education and is failing to look out for their well-being.

And it's not just the PISA that shows our students are falling behind, Mr. Speaker. The Pan-Canadian Assessment Program revealed even more depressing results. Manitoban students scored last among all provinces in all three core subject areas.

Let's take a minute to unpack that. This means that grade 8 students in Manitoba are the least prepared for the numeracy skills that adult life will demand on them. This means that students in Manitoba are the least prepared to enter the technical industries that are transforming our global economy, whether it's technology, chemistry or engineers. All of these fields demand strong science and math scores. And Manitoba is at the bottom of the barrel.

This also means, Mr. Acting Speaker, this government continues to pat themselves on the back when it comes to the trades technology and all the trades and apprenticeship programs that they're offering. This government is forgetting that, indeed, Manitoba students need strong science and math abilities and skills developed for those areas as well.

Not only are we behind other provinces, Mr. Acting Speaker, they are falling even further. Last year, PCAP scores demonstrated a significant decrease from last—from the last test, with Manitoba dropping by a whole nine points from year to year.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on this side of the House, we believe in lifelong learning. We believe that when given the proper skills, young people can discover a love and passion for learning, and this will inspire in them new abilities and capacities as they grow. We are greatly concerned that this government is failing to give Manitoba students those essential skills.

But, Mr. Acting Speaker, it's not the students, it's not the teachers, it's not the educational support staff. It's this revolving door of leadership we see on this NDP—within this NDP government. This present Education Minister is the fourth Education minister

since the election of 2011. And we wonder why our results have continued to decline to the rate of—into the abyss.

And it's going to be a point where we're going to need a change. Manitobans are tired of this NDP government and their broken promises. And it's time for a change. And I know that in—on April 19th, 2016, that change is going to be coming towards Manitobans or for Manitobans, Mr. Acting Speaker.

We know that these results are not a reflection on the students themselves, as I said earlier. Manitoba students are as hard-working and industrious as their counterparts across this country, but within this government's education system, they're simply not being provided with the skills to succeed.

We've already heard this Minister of Education acknowledge the failings of his government's discovery-based math curriculum. It's about time that we listened to what experts are saying and go back to some of the basics and prepare our students properly for the math skills that they will need as they become more financially independent young adults.

We've heard a number of Education ministers express their remorse and concern over the test scores, and yet we don't seem to see any improvement, Mr. Acting Speaker. In fact, we're seeing our students even less prepared, falling even farther behind.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the scores are bad across the education system as a whole. Among university graduates, Manitoba has the worst results for numeracy skills and second worst for literacy skills. With the recent dissolution of the Council on Post-Secondary Education, known to many as COPSE, the Minister of Education can now make decisions about Manitoba's post-secondary institutions with little oversight or input from those most affected by his decisions, like faculty and students.

Mr. Acting Speaker, with evidence that our education system is failing students at every level, how can we trust this minister to bring more responsibility into his own office? Knowing what these results tell us, how can we believe that this minister is equipped to take on even more responsibility for the education and preparation of Manitoba students?

*(15:30)

When we talk about child poverty, Mr. Acting Speaker, what's truly tragic about these education results is that Manitoba children are facing some of the toughest situations in the country. Under this government, Manitoba has the highest child-poverty rate of any province, almost 10 per cent above the rate for all of Canada. Almost three out of 10 of Manitoba's children are living in poverty and the number continues to grow each year, including since a poverty-reduction strategy was introduced by this present NDP government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, under this NDP Manitoba has the second highest proportion of children using food banks of all provinces, nearly 45 per cent, over 20,000 children a month. Under this NDP government almost 84,000 children are growing up with fewer opportunities and in poorer health than their peers. This is entirely unacceptable. Children who grow up impoverished are more likely to fall behind in school, experience more health and mental health problems, and are vulnerable to perpetuating the poverty cycle in their adult lives. We see skyrocketing rates of youth involved in crime, up 92 per cent over the last—just over the last five years. When we look at the numbers, it's clear that this NDP is failing our province's youth when it comes to their education and well-being.

Manitoba's children and youth make up 26 per cent of our population. Children and youth are our future, and if we do not position our youth properly for their outcomes in life at a young age, Manitoba's social fabric as well as economy will suffer tremendously.

Progressive Conservatives care and believe in Manitoba students, Mr. Acting Speaker. On this side of the House we care deeply about the development and prosperity of those students. We believe in a brighter future for our children. We understand that all youth in all parts of Manitoba, no matter where they live or their race ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation or culture, must be given equal opportunities for the best-quality education in early years and later.

Manitoba Progressive Conservatives are focused on ensuring our students score better on national and international tests, and we want all of our youth to know there are meaningful opportunities right here in this great province of ours. We want to see more children graduating from high school and able to find their supports they need to be able to do so. The PCs want all of our young people to fully participate in

shaping a better future for themselves because in doing so they will shape a better future for us all.

Manitoba Progressive Conservatives are looking out for our children and youth and for the public servants who are so critical in educating and shaping the minds of our children and youth. Our front-line teachers face more challenges today in our school systems than they ever have. The tasks teachers have are as important to our future as they ever were. That is why the PCs are committed to creating a confident work environment for all the front-line workers, including our teachers.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in conclusion, I want to say that as an educator, as a parent and as a Manitoban, the issues I raise in this grievance are of the utmost importance, and I know that my colleagues and, indeed, all Manitobans would agree.

So thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The Chair recognizes the honourable member for Charleswood, on a grievance?

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I do rise on a grievance.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): On a grievance, please proceed.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise today to grieve what I see as the NDP's failure to fill nursing vacancies in Winnipeg ERs. It is something that I find quite disturbing and it is something where we do not see the NDP keeping their commitment to address the challenges. And, despite many years of the NDP saying and promising that they were going to fix this problem, they have not done that. Right now we've got an ER crisis in Winnipeg hospitals. We've gone from 1999 from hallway medicine to right now we have a full-out ER crisis in this city, and it is not being resolved any time soon.

We are hearing daily of challenges within our city ERs. We are seeing this government fail to address the scheduled appointments that they were told in 2004 to totally eliminate because they were plugging up the ERs. Instead, this government indicated that they would accept all those recommendations. They are saying they accepted them. They said they moved them all forward. But it begs the question, what in the world did they mean, because while they may have accepted that recommendation, we've got tens of thousands of people that are still going for scheduled

appointments in our ERs. That is absolutely wrong. It is not what ERs are meant for. People shouldn't be going there for IV antibiotics. They shouldn't be going there for suture removal. They shouldn't be going there for staple removal. They shouldn't be going there for dressing changes. That's not what the ER is for. And this government, although they accepted the recommendation, have done nothing with it, and instead it's gotten worse.

So scheduled appointments are one thing that they haven't done anything with, and it is not helping at all to fix this ER crisis. Left without being seen, again, the highest numbers we've seen under this government. The numbers just keep going up. People are frustrated. They leave the ERs without being seen. They're supposed to be followed up with a phone call, and that is not consistently happening. So, again, it's another failure by this government, where both of these numbers of left without being seen and scheduled appointments are getting worse instead of better. That has a significant impact on our ERs, and it is causing part of the crisis.

We've got ambulance off-load times that are growing. How many patients are falling through the cracks because they aren't getting the care they need soon enough? Mr. Speaker, it's quite disturbing to know that this government, while they talk a lot about these issues, they aren't able to deliver on them, and, in fact, they are failing at just about every level in trying to fix this ER crisis. And their failures put patients at risk, and that is something that it just doesn't seem to be something that this NDP government grasps. Even in questions in Estimates with the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady), there seemed to be a disconnect with her lack of understanding that if all the recommendations from the 2004 ER task force report had been followed through, we might not have ended up with what happened with Brian Sinclair falling through the cracks, having to have an inquest and having a whole bunch of more recommendations come forward.

I have had an opportunity to look much more closely at the Brian Sinclair inquest. And I don't think there's going to be anybody in Manitoba that will forget that he died in an ER waiting room after waiting 34 hours for care, and basically was ignored and died, sat in the waiting room dead for hours. Nobody looked after him. There were people in the waiting room that went to ask nurses for help because he was vomiting, and the nurses said, we can't, we're too busy. That was certainly somewhat of red flag for me. As a nursing supervisor in an ER,

there was something that was off about this because nurses don't ignore patients that are vomiting in an ER waiting room.

And, when these nurses are saying they're too busy, that they can't attend to this person, that was a bit of a red flag for me. But what became more of a red flag for me is when the premier of the day, Gary Doer, stood in this House, I don't know how many times, when asked about the nursing shortage in the Health Sciences ER at the time, he never answered it. He danced around and he always talked about the doctor shortage and that there wasn't one and that it was adequate. And I thought, there's something very fishy here in how he is evading answering that question.

Then he went on to CJOB and he actually said on CJOB that the nursing coverage at the time was very positive and very significant. In fact, he said, very, very positive and very significant. Mr. Speaker, he misled the House at that time; he was in cover-up mode. As we saw through the whole period of time at the occurrence of Brian Sinclair's death, this government went into major cover-up mode. They didn't want the truth out there. They weren't prepared to be transparent and they actually misled the House about the nursing circumstances at the time Brian Sinclair died.

* (15:40)

And, Mr. Speaker, anybody that is involved in health care knows that you cannot provide safe, quality care if you don't have enough nurses in our ERs. And, in fact, at the time that Brian Sinclair died, contrary to what Gary Doer said at the time, contrary to what the minister of Health was saying then, there were 18 nursing vacancies in that ER at the time he died. That was a 12 per cent vacancy rate in the busiest ER in Winnipeg. Twelve nurses were forced to work overtime over that three-day period. Eight were casual nurses, not regular staff. They did not know the ER. Eighteen were new, inexperienced grads, and that really is a whole 'nother' aspect to the ER. It's not just the vacancies; it's the qualifications that are either there or not there of new people working in that ER. Eleven were relief nurses; they were casual nurses.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that was a recipe for disaster, and instead we had a premier in Manitoba that stood up and said everything regarding nursing coverage was very, very positive and very significant. That is not true. That, in fact, was a cover-up, and that, in fact, was misleading

information. That is—those were serious numbers. I was so concerned about that that I actually wrote to the inquest council with a letter stating my concerns about what the nursing numbers were at that time. And, if we go and look at the comments that were made by veteran emergency-department nurses during the inquest, they were saying exactly what I was saying too. And even though the NDP government and the minister of Health kept blowing off my concerns, the nurses, the veteran nurses, supported everything that I was saying too. In fact, that they were indicating—and when I look at the inquest, they were indicating that they needed more staff. They were indicating that on a daily basis emergency-department nursing staff were working with only 80 per cent capacity. So each day in 2008 the Health Sciences Centre ED nurse commenced work with baseline needs which were 20 per cent short. They indicated during the time that Brian Sinclair was in that emergency—this one veteran nurse said that on a couple of those shifts it was horrendous. There were very sick patients there. That nurse went on to say that there was short staffing on a daily basis. She communicated that and was not, obviously, listened to. She said that they couldn't provide enough care because they didn't have enough staff and they didn't have enough experienced nurses. She called it a war zone.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those are serious comments from nurses. This government did not do anything about it. They were short 18 nurses then; today, they are short 16 nurses. That is a busy ER. These nurses are being set up to fail. It is not fair to them; it is not fair to the patients; and this government needs to do better than the rhetoric they put forward.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The honourable member for Brandon West, on a grievance?

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): On a grievance.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Please proceed.

Mr. Helwer: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the failure of infrastructure funding by this NDP government.

It's no surprise to many Manitobans to see failure from the NDP, but it is shocking how dramatically they have failed on funding infrastructure. The municipalities have been trying for years to get the attention of the NDP government,

but they finally did get some attention from them and they did admit that, yes, there were infrastructure issues in Manitoba. So then there was some promises that came out, promises after promises.

What's the first promise? Well, the first one, of course, is, you know, on the gas tax. They said—the government did say they're going to spend twice as much of every dollar raised. So if you—every dollar raised through the gas tracks the government committed to spend \$2 on infrastructure. Of course, an utter and complete failure—not one dime, not one nickel, not one penny—even though they don't exist anymore—went to increased infrastructure spending from the gas tax.

So then we come along again and it's time for another promise and so we broad—the NDP broadens the PST, and, again, they commit increased spending on infrastructure from broadening the PST to many things that Manitobans did not expect to pay sales tax on: insurance, haircuts, that type of thing. And, again, they promise every dollar, every penny, every dime from this increased PST is going to go to increased infrastructure spending, and again the lie that that did happen. Of course, we see that they did not fund infrastructure from that tax increase.

So then we're going to look for more revenues. The government looks again. Where can we find more revenues from those poor Manitobans—suck some more money out from them? Well, you know what? We'll do it through MPI. We'll increase the vehicle registration fee, double it, and we'll take that increase. We'll promise them. We'll put another promise out there that that increased vehicle registration fee, all of it's going to go into infrastructure spending. And, yet again, yet another lie from this NDP government. Not one penny, not one nickel, not one dime, no dollars came from that increased vehicle registration fee. It just went into the government coffers never to be seen again in infrastructure.

So, again, then we think, well, what else can this government do? How much more damage could they possibly do to infrastructure or to Manitobans? Well, here they come out with the sales tax increase—increase to—of over 14 per cent over one year. And they battled and, again, they took away the promise that they made to Manitobans, because at one time there was the promise that Manitobans would be able to vote on tax increases like that PST increase, but they took away the right of a referendum for Manitobans. So they increased the tax, and again

there was the promise of every penny, every nickel, every dime from that increase in PST was going to core infrastructure and, again, the failure: over \$2.3 billion underfunded on infrastructure over five years.

Just imagine if we had been able to follow those budgets through, if the government had actually followed through on their promises and had spent that \$2.3 billion on infrastructure. Just imagine what we'd see today instead of where we are. We see potholes all over the place. We see bridges that are damaged and destroyed—over 80 bridges from the 2011 flood still out there and the government meddling away, trying to figure out how or what or when or if they're going to replace any of those bridges, trying to suck the municipalities into spending their own municipal money on provincial infrastructure. Very sad to see.

And sometimes those municipalities, they bite because they are so desperate to see that infrastructure repaired that they will, indeed, invest municipal dollars on provincial infrastructure. And the government hangs that bait out there. If you want to move up the list, just bring your money in, you know. Two-tier infrastructure—here we go. That's what this government does and they try to bait the municipalities. They try to get them on board because we have such a deficit out there.

And then we look at—the minister was quite proud of No. 1 Highway and granted there has been some work done there. And it's at verily random times because, you know, they replace a bridge over a year close to Portage there, they have the traffic rerouted, and finally the bridge gets replaced and traffic starts to flow over the bridge. But then, well, you know, they close it again because there were some culverts that they needed to replace just a little ways upstream. And what—or up the road from there. What's the possibility that they might've planned to do that at the same time so they didn't have to close the road for a whole—another period of time?

And Manitobans are tired of this mismanagement of this government of this file because we see it all the time. We know as you travel along the Trans-Canada Highway, you travel under an underpass on the far side of Portage la Prairie that has been damaged. I can't remember when that actually happened—how many years ago. And, of course, we—if you travel over that overpass, you can see that the hole of that one lane continues to get larger and larger and larger. More of it falls in,

possibly creating a hazard to traffic, so they have to move the Beirut barriers back a little more to close off the traffic.

* (15:50)

And this is an important access to Portage. Portage is a very important part of the agricultural industry in Manitoba. A great number of producers rely on Portage for access to markets, for access to equipment. And some of our large equipment that they use doesn't fit over that overpass. So they go to move into Portage to go over the overpass, and they can't get past those Beirut barriers, so what do they have to do? have to back that piece of equipment—not an easy thing to do with many of these pieces of equipment—back down onto the Trans-Canada Highway and then go around under the underpass and find another access route because that one's been closed off. Were there warning signs to stop them from doing that? Well, as they get close to those Beirut barriers, there are, but, again, accidents waiting to happen because of the failure of this government on this infrastructure file.

We see that throughout the province, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. As I have travelled the province, I have seen this failure time and time again—the \$2.3 billion that this government underfunded on infrastructure. Promises were made, but all NDP promises do is to serve to highlight their failures year after year after year on this file.

I've travelled a great deal over the last several years and over my lifetime, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and seen how other provinces, how states, how other countries deal with infrastructure. And if you come back into Manitoba it's just sad to see the underfunding and what that has done to damage not only our infrastructure, but our economy, because this damages how we move goods. It delays them. We can't access the proper roads and then we have the damage to the vehicles that's done by the roads that this government tries to pass off as highways.

You know we pretend to pave the roads, and then what do we do the next year? Well, we rip them up again because the government issued the tenders too late, and then we get frost that freezes the asphalt, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. It all falls back on the government. They're the ones that have control over when those tenders are issues. They're the ones that design the replies to make sure that their responses so that—make sure that the people that are responding to the tenders have, indeed, some of the proper information. But then we see out there

that they fail year after year, this government, in guiding our infrastructure file along.

So it's quite sad to watch how this has all come together, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and certainly we see that the cost of repairing infrastructure is not getting less. Of course, it's going up year after year, but our spending on it just doesn't keep pace. This government is not able to fulfill its promises. It fails time after time, and Manitobans are paying the price and they're tired of it. The government has made promises. They have failed to fulfill those promises. They time—they promise again and again and again, and they make announcements again and again and again.

Indeed, we look at the speed limit on Highway No. 1, the 110 was promised some six years ago by the then-premier, and now six years later, well, we've seen some increases in the speed, but then they're not quite ready for prime time there, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, because there's still construction going on to need it—to bring it up to the necessary capacity of having that speed limit. And, of course, we have the 110 signs that we knew this was going to happen for at least six years apparently, but we didn't have time to issue a tender for those signs. We had to go back to the individual that was the sole-source contract for those signs, and say, you know, can you just—well, we'll give you another \$50,000—contract to print up some signs because we don't have time to issue another tender. Because, you know, this government's not too worried about following proper procedures and making sure that everybody has access to those tenders.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The honourable member's time has expired.

Recognizing the honourable member for La Verendrye, on a grievance?

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): On a grievance.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Please proceed.

Mr. Smook: I'm pleased to rise on a grievance this afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my grievance this afternoon is the state of emergency health care in rural Manitoba. Health care in rural Manitoba is in a crisis situation. Our ERs are being closed. Presently there are 30 ERs that are either closed or operating on reduced hours, and it looks like that's not the end.

There's been rumours that more will be closed. Manitobans don't know where they should go in case of an emergency. What do they do when one of their loved ones have been injured?

In the last 16 years of NDP rule, our health-care system is slowly losing ground. This government keeps spending more money on health care and Manitobans are getting less.

Mr. Speaker—Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are tired of this same NDP broken promises. This NDP government has decimated emergency health care in rural Manitoba. Rural Manitobans are tired of this. They are tired of not knowing where to go when something happens. They go to one ER, it's closed. They go to another ER they've been sent to, well, they're not sure if they can do it; they get sent to a third ER—valuable time being lost.

I've heard horror stories from constituents about having an incident at 6 o'clock in the morning where somebody slipped and fell, went to their local doctor, the doctor suspected that they had broken an ankle, sent them to one hospital, couldn't do anything, send them to the third hospital. It was finally at 2 o'clock in the afternoon when this person got a X-ray. What we have to deal with in rural Manitoba is great distances, and those distances are important because they take up time.

I have listened to three Health ministers and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) say rural families deserve access to high-quality health care close to home. No matter where they live, health care is important. And we've had a revolving door of Health ministers. Everyone seems to take their time as they have to learn what's going on; it's not fair to Manitobans to put up with this type of health care.

Family doctors, we were promised to have—all Manitobans should have a family doctor by 2015. Well, I know in my constituency they're having a hard time even keeping the clinics open; they can't provide family doctors to everybody without having doctors in the clinics. I mean, yes, they could say, well, we'll find you a doctor in Thompson. They have doctor find. Where are they going to send you if there's no doctors within 50 miles? It's important that this government start realizing that they need to treat people in rural Manitobans the same way as they do everybody else.

We are coming to the tourist season in Manitoba, and during the months of June, July, August, typically the population doubles and triples in some

of the areas. I know myself and my colleague from Lac du Bonnet with having the Whiteshell and Lake of the Woods, it's—health care is important because as families go to their cottages, there's more and more people on four-wheelers, boating, swimming, they are more susceptible to insect bites, you know, get stung by a wasp, they need emergency care. But where do they go if all the ERs are closed? By the time they get some place it's unfortunate they may not be here.

And to—the tourist industry is very important to Manitoba, Mr. Acting Speaker, but I don't know if this NDP government really cares. I'm just wondering, they closed the tourist information booth at the Saskatchewan border, I'm just wondering if maybe that's where the member from Brandon East is today, opening it up and manning it because there's nobody there to work there. Are they just wanting to send all the tourists right through to Ontario because that seems like what they care about? It's—we need services in our rural areas to help us keep tourists.

Well, Mr. Speaker, last session I talked a lot about the ER in Vita, and my constituency of La Verendrye, how important health care is. Well, I think I'm going to rehash a lot of this today because nothing has been done.

* (16:00)

I had two hospitals in my constituency, one in Whitemouth and one in Vita. Well, several years ago the one in Whitemouth was closed and was turned into a PCH. Then they had problems that they couldn't find any doctors, family physicians to work in the clinic, again, having to drive hundreds of miles to find a family doctor. That's just not right. Vita, it's—this October, it will be three years that the hospital ER in Vita was closed. Three years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without an ER. At that time, the minister says, oh, it's just going to be a short closure, Mr. Minister, you know, 30 days, maybe. Well, it's almost three years, so I would think that the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady) should really check their calendar and their clocks because they don't seem to know how to keep time.

At that time, they also promised a collaborative—a CEC, Collaborative Emergency Centre. This would have advanced care paramedics working, so when they would go out to a scene if somebody was having a stroke, they could, you know, provide the proper drugs to get them through. And I met with the minister at that time, and she explained to me how important that this type of system could work

better than even having an ER. Well, we know the technology is changing and things are changing, but this, again, almost three years and no EC-CEC, no Collaborative Emergency Centre.

And I would ask the minister, again, how many advanced care paramedics are there in the system in rural Manitoba? Not enough to, surely, staff even one hospital ER. And the disappointing part of that is, I've listened to other, you know, RHAs talk about—they've made the same promise to those hospitals that there would be a pilot project. Well, Vita was promised a pilot project, and they said, three years later, and nothing has happened. I don't know where or why they haven't done anything about it, but it's not right. And that's some of the reasons why nobody can trust this government. They say one thing, but they don't follow through on anything.

You know, I was listening to the radio this morning, and there was a doctor on there and he was talking about how important, especially in the case of a stroke, it is to be—you know, to reach proper health care as soon as you can. Well, Mr. Speaker, he had said, and I couldn't remember what the exact number is, but it's millions of cells that die every minute when a person's having a stroke, and how important it is to get health care in a hurry.

Well, we don't have an ER, we don't have extend—or advanced care paramedics. We're just not being treated the same as other parts of the province. And I don't think that's right. I mean, 30 ERs—you know, 23 close, 30—on, you know, with revolving shifts. We don't—Manitobans don't know where to go. They don't know where to look for health care.

Safety is what we want for Manitobans. So we're asking this government, they should finally look at what they're doing, stop making promises they can't do and look after the citizens of Manitoba, because they're the ones who pay the taxes and they make sure that this province is going to run efficiently.

But, with this NDP government, this province is far from running efficiently. They—the way it looks in their business 'accruements' they couldn't run a lemonade stand if they tried. And it's showing. Spending more money, but Manitobans are getting less. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Recognizing the honourable member for Arthur-Virden, on a grievance.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): A grievance.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): On a grievance, please proceed.

Mr. Piwniuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to put—my grievance today is the flood of 2014 in the Arthur-Virden area, which we experienced last year during a flood 'revent'—a rain event that happened and at the end of June. And it was a real test how this government, this NDP government, has handled the 16 years that they were in as government. And it was the first-hand of how inactive they are and how they're failing Manitobans.

When it came to the 2014 flood of two—of last year, last summer, again, we had a lot of victims. And we had a lot of people who came together in the flood and they—all communities came together, different municipalities come together. There was a lot of true leadership when it came to our local governments, but there was no leadership with this government. There was nobody that was out there for the first three days of the flood, and, again, when the Premier (Mr. Selinger) finally came out, it was days after, and already, people were already doing their own things.

I remember the one event that he came to was the flood—the sandbagging that's—the town of Melita were doing. When—just a couple years ago, they were actually promised a ring dike around their community. Again, it was inactive. There was nothing there for them to have that support. So the citizens themselves had to sandbag just like they did in 2011. And, again, we finally got that ring dike this past fall, and, again, they still have a lot of work to do in that community.

We experienced a lot of creeks that flooded, and one of the biggest things was that most of those creeks came—were rushing of water, and the infrastructure, the bridges that were on those creeks, were destroyed. And I really do believe that if there was a proactive approach that this government would have had in the last 16 years, they would have replaced many of those bridges. And right now, the one bridge that was replaced because of an accident that started on fire; the bridge was replaced. And that was the only bridge that didn't have any work to be done—had to be completed on that bridge. Meanwhile, on the 83 Highway, there was at least seven bridges that have to be replaced. Another six bridges in—on highway—one on Highway 2, one on Highway 257 has to be replaced.

And I can see why they wanted to shut down the tourist booth in—when you come into Manitoba from

Saskatchewan border and actually increase the highway speed limit to 110 because they want these people to fly through Arthur-Virden as fast as they can so they don't see the Third World-country conditions that we have to live in. With the conditions of the highways that we have, it's very dangerous for our local citizens right now with all the rains that we had. The infrastructure—this government did not hesitate to take all the oil revenue out of our constituency and use it for their cash-spending addiction that they have.

And so, what I want to say, Mr. Speaker—Deputy Speaker—is that this was a really true test of how this government has operated this province. And, again, when the state of emergency was declared for the Portage and Winnipeg area, when the water was coming closer to the city of Winnipeg, all of a sudden, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) asked for a state of emergency, and then the military came in, sent by the federal government, and, again, Arthur-Virden was left out of this whole situation. We didn't even get an ambulance, air ambulance to come and actually look after the citizens if they had to be evacuated. They did send a Conservation helicopter, but I'm not quite sure how much that would have done for rescuing.

Right now, one of our municipalities, the reeve of the municipality says it's like a water ghetto in their—in the municipality of Two Borders down right in the southwest corner of the province. And it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I came through there one time a few weeks—about a month ago, and I couldn't believe how much I had dodged all the potholes and all the frost boils that came up from all the—from the roads and the highways. And when you have all this equipment on the highway from the oil industry, the farming and agriculture industry, this was very dangerous for the local residents of the area.

Mr. Acting Speaker, again, farmers who are in this area too are all suffering right now, especially in the Pierson-Lyleton-Melita area. Many of the farmers haven't got a crop on their—a crop in for the last four years, since 2011. They probably had one year, I think; I believe it was 2013 that they actually got crops in. We have a lot of young farmers in the region who are suffering right now. Even with the unseeded-acre coverage for Manitoba Crop Insurance, with the high deductibles, increased deductibles, increased premium and a lack of coverage they can get, it's not worth them to actually buy this coverage anymore. And this government—the Agriculture Minister said that we're going to have

a review on Manitoba Crop Insurance for unseeded acres. To this day, they haven't met yet, and they actually got this committee assigned a year ago. Again, this ineffective government has done terrible when it comes to the passing grade.

* (16:10)

Another thing is, too, is the infrastructure. When you have Saskatchewan fixing their infrastructure very quickly on one side of the border and building up bridges—right now all the bridges are—all their roads are open. All the bridges have been replaced; our bridges are slowly getting done. And I still believe that if we wouldn't had been—had a—this government had a proactive approach instead of a reactive approach, we wouldn't paying a lot of money on contractors to build these bridges.

Now, the supply and demand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a big demand to get these bridges completed, but we have a small supply of contractors in our province because this government has failed to spend \$2.3 billion of money that could've been put onto infrastructure in the last five years. Again, they failed. And the residents of Arthur-Virden have experienced that with the failure of this government when it came to the 2014 flood. Again, like I said in previous speeches, we've felt like the Hurricane Katrina moment in the Arthur-Virden area when this government failed to help out this—our region.

And this is quite typical of this government when it comes to looking at ER closures in throughout the rural Manitoba. Again, aren't we all Manitobans in this province? We take pride, and you know what? We supply a lot of revenue for the city of Winnipeg, and Winnipeg grows and it's a regional hub for this region. And we work together.

If we have a stronger Manitoba, we have a stronger city, a business centre that we call and that—here in Winnipeg. If we have a stronger North, up north with the mining sectors and the tourism in Churchill, we do have a stronger province and a stronger city of Winnipeg. And this government has failed to see that.

And it's funny, when they considered the tourist booth, they were going to close it in—at Kirkella and move it to Riverbank Discovery Centre. But the funny thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does Manitoba actually start when the first NDP riding is? Because that's where the Riverbank Discovery Centre is, is in the first riding of our constituency of the member from Brandon East. And we feel in Arthur-Virden

that this closure of this ER—of this information centre was a slap in the face to our constituents.

And when it comes to the farmers who are in the Assiniboine valley, the farmers along Whitewater Lake and major farmers in the major creeks that flow into the Souris River and the Assiniboine and the Oak Lake Aquifer, we've all had our challenges in these last number of years. But, again, we tell this government—they tell this government what's happened, and again they fail to even consider any compensation in the Assiniboine valley. These farmers are frustrated, especially this past spring when it came to the mismanagement of the Shellmouth Dam. Again, this water could've been released out of the Shellmouth Dam from March 27th to middle of April. That was almost three weeks of this water could've been flowing when the ground was frozen, but instead they delayed it and started letting the water out into May. It was too late now. Lot of those farmers cannot get on their land right now because of the amount of water there is on the valley.

And, again, I just feel for my constituents. I'm here to fight for them. And I really do believe that Arthur-Virden is just waiting for this opportunity for April 19th, 2016, to make that change. And they can't wait. And I know there's—all in the—everybody in the—in rural Manitoba and in Winnipeg want that change to happen too. And I believe that, with outreach that we had in the North, they need it, they want a change too. And it's right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do need a change, and we're going to make that change happen.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): The honourable member for Midland, on a grievance?

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Yes, on a grievance.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Please proceed.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Monday, June 15th of this year, in a couple of weeks from now, Monday, June 15th, 2015, marks the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta in the meadows of Runnymede, England, between King John and his rebellious barons.

So here we are 800 years later. Now, there are many connections here in Manitoba with the Magna Carta. This document was the foundation of our

system of law practised today in Manitoba and across Canada, and a stone from the meadows of Runnymede was laid as a cornerstone for our Canadian museum of human rights right here in Manitoba. So we do have deep connections with the Magna Carta that was signed back on June 15, 1215.

But perhaps of equal and maybe even more significance was that what was contained in this document and how it appears that history is repeating itself today here in Manitoba, and I'll give you a few comparisons to show you what I mean, by comparing King John and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger).

Now, in the year 1215—there are many similarities—and in the year 1215 King John was despised and hated by the masses. I think the member for St. Boniface has got that one ached. The Magna Carta stated as one of its overarching principles, that the king, too, is bound by law. Perhaps the member of St. Boniface needs to be reminded of that principle, that everyone is bound by law. Given the various lawsuits—Downs, the First Nations, hiding severances, hiding losses on Crown corporations—that is not being bound by the law.

Now, King John, being one of the most despised monarchs in history, was a failure in wars. Well, the member for St. Boniface has been a failure in economics, so I guess he's got that one in comparison. And King John is infamously known as enjoying hangings as after-dinner entertainment, so I just have to sort of think of the member for St. Boniface vindictively firing staff and close advisers to him, and then leaving those others close to him to hang out to dry.

So another of the goals of the Magna Carta was to stop the practice of, and I'll quote: the will of the King is the will of the law. Unquote. As a result of the negotiations on the Magna Carta, King John agreed not to levy extraordinary taxes on his subjects without the approval of the greater lords.

So I have to again compare the member for St. Boniface and the PST increase, first broadening the PST and then increasing the PST without a referendum, without letting the people of Manitoba have a vote, without the approval of the province as a whole.

So now another principle agreed to by King John was clause 39 of the Magna Carta which reads, in quote, no free man shall be seized or dispossessed by

the Crown except by lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land. End of quote.

Now, I have to think of the 140 landowners across Manitoba having their land expropriated by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), who simply passed an order-in-council to bypass the notice required by law—passed an order-in-council to take away land from landowners across Manitoba. And then his minister responsible for Hydro signs a waiver of notice so that they don't even notify landowners. They simply walk into Land Titles, which this government has sold and privatized the Land Titles offices, and they've changed titles without even notifying landowners.

And, when we speak of Bipole III, it reminds me of speaking to a grade 6 class. Just not too long ago I was speaking to a grade 6 class about the job as an MLA, and I like to get into questions and answers from the grade 6s, and they have the usual questions, but then one of the questions was—this boy sitting at the back of the class, he says there's a hydro line that they're building. And I'm kind of waiting for it and, yes, okay, yes, there is, and I said, Bipole III. He said, yes, that's the one.

So I take the blackboard at the front of the—or, actually, it's a whiteboard now, in front of the classroom, and I draw a quick map of Manitoba, and I could do the same for members opposite if they really need to, because if you draw a map of Manitoba and you draw where Winnipeg is, you draw where the generating stations are, you draw bipoles I and II on there, and then I proceeded to draw Bipole III, the long west-side waste line, and Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I lost control of the class. They said, well, that's stupid. That's idiotic. Why would anybody do that?

* (16:20)

I guess grade 6 class is smarter than the NDP government, that's all I could say for them. And then, when I somewhat get control back of the grade 6 classes, I explained to them that this new generation now is going to cost 11 cents to generate and another 3 cents a kilowatt to transmit over the west-side waste line, which Manitobans will pay for.

So my math—and I think I'm pretty close here—11 cents plus 3 cents is 14 cents. So we're going to lose money on this and then we're going to give it away to the Americans. We're going to give it away to the Americans for 2 and a half cents. Only NDP math can work that and I—again, I lost control of the

class because they said, well, that's stupid, why would anybody do this? Ask the NDP government why they want to do this. So—and that was an interesting exercise, and perhaps I should just take the NDP caucus out to explain this to that grade 6 class and they maybe they will be able to understand.

But I digress, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, clause 40 of the Magna Carta says, and I quote: To no one be sell, to no one deny or delay a right or justice. End of quote. In modern language this means due process of law, and this is another thing that has escaped this government: due process of law. So I guess the Premier, the member for St. Boniface, because we know that he has less and less support each day going by from his own caucus, he's decided to act like King John did prior to the signing of the Magna Carta. The member for St. Boniface has decided that he is above and beyond the law.

So it's unfortunate that this government, this Premier (Mr. Selinger) has taken that attitude. An in reference to the Magna Carta it's been said that no single document had such a profound influence on the establishment of constitutional instruments around the world, And here we have a government that has ignored the basic premises of the Magna Carta in this province because they think they can do it without the consent of Manitobans, and Manitobans know better. They will not take this.

And I would suggest that—because this June actually a copy of the Magna Carta is going to be at the Human Rights Museum to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, I would suggest that the member for St. Boniface take the members opposite from the NDP caucus over there and read the Magna Carta because it is a document that is the basic tenet of our laws here, that should be the basic tenets of our law here. And yet, this government has chosen to ignore it, to think that they're above the law. And how ironic, when a government mentions a previous government hundreds of times in this Legislature, 800 years they're repeating the mistakes from 800 years ago, you would think that they would've learned that by now.

So, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I would urge all members opposite to—when that Magna Carta comes to the human rights museum this June—to go and read it and become more familiar with it because our laws were based on that, and Manitobans do not deserve to be treated like this government is treating them.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Recognize the honourable member for Lakeside, on a grievance?

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair—

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Excuse me, on a grievance? Is it on a grievance?

Mr. Eichler: Yes it is.

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): Yes, okay, please proceed.

Mr. Eichler: We're still on grievances, are we not?

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): We are.

Mr. Eichler: Did you not call grievances?

The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer): You might be getting up for a point of order, so I have to confirm, that's all. So on a grievance, please go ahead.

Mr. Eichler: Thank you. Now that we got that cleared up, I do have to remind the Deputy Speaker that I am rising on a grievance.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

As we know, on this side of the House we've been talking about the Hydro and the hydro plan that this government has brought forward in the—actually in 2011 they started talking about what a great deal it was for Manitobans that—and that Manitobans would not have to pay one red cent for the cost of Bipole III or the transmission line. That was all going to be included in the cost of the customer that was going to buy the power.

Now, that's typically the way business works. When you make a product—and anybody that knows that in business—you pass that cost on to the consumer. Not in this case—not in this case. They're giving the Americans cheap American hydro and Manitobans are paying for it. Unfortunately, what this government has done is misled Manitobans once again. Once again, they've done this and shame on this government for doing that, from going door to door, and not just one of them, every member on that side of the House went door to door and said to Manitobans that this plan was absolute not going to cost Manitobans one red cent.

Then we find out in committee last summer that this government had no intentions of honouring their

commitment. They were going to let the CEO tell Manitobans the true facts about what was going to happen, that they would be on the hook for the Bipole III line, and also the cost of Keeyask, plus the cost of the Manitoba–Minnesota–Wisconsin transmission line.

And then they decided that in the PUB hearings on Keeyask that Bipole III discussion would not be part of that discussion, so they allowed any presentations on it, whether or not it was right, wrong or indifferent. What we saw from this government is their leadership to dictate to the PUB that this was an out-of-bounds topic, that they would not allow discussion on Bipole III.

It would've enlightened members opposite if they would've been paying attention to this discussion because, quite clearly, there's enough lines left on Bipole I and Bipole II that would more than be able to carry the current that they're needing if, in fact, they do have a contract.

We have not seen that contract; it has not been made public. It's been held in the vaults of the government. They just don't seem to want to be able to let the general public know about this fantastic deal that they made with the Americans to our south. And we love trade with America. There's—they're our biggest trading partner, we understand that, we get that. But, if it's such a great deal, then Manitobans should know about it. What we do know is that the spot market right now is about four and half cents a kilowatt. It costs us about 10 to 12 cents a kilowatt to make it. So, if that's the case, it may be not such a good deal.

No wonder they don't want to go back to the Crown corporations being part of their summary budget. All they want to do is hide those Crown corporations for whatever reason they decide they might want to, but Manitobans aren't going to be fooled. They'll be watching, holding this government to account.

And that's what our House leader has been telling members opposite, that that's one of the reasons we want to be able to sit a little longer in order to deal with these issues, not only hydro, but Family Services. We've seen what a mess that's been.

And I give credit to the member from Thompson saying this government's dysfunctional. I totally agree with him. I know that we, on this side of the House, if they had things that are ready to go, that wanted to be able to deal with those, they would've

called us back in March. I mean, we know very clearly—very, very clearly that this is the right time to sit down and do a sessional 'scalendar'—calendar. And I've been calling for this myself.

The—my constituents say to me on a very regular basis, when do you go back? Well, we don't know. Well, how long are you going to sit? Well, we know that we have legislation that says we have a certain date at which we're supposed to rise in June, but that don't necessarily mean we're going to rise in June. And they say, well, wouldn't you go back in the fall? Well, we really don't know. The government decides that, but we do know there's a possibility of a date in December.

But I kind of got off topic here when I was talking about that. I want to come back to my hydro. I want to come back because this is a really—I mean, time goes so quickly in a grievance. Next thing you know, my 10 minutes is gone and I haven't finished what I wanted to say, but I just wanted to commend the member from Thompson on his comments because I think he was bang on.

* (16:30)

When it comes back to the transmission line, with the hydro line being put through, the transmission line to Wisconsin and Minnesota, what we are seeing now is again a heavy-handed government that's dictating where that line's going to go. Instead of letting the engineers, letting the public have a say on it, they're just not listening. The member from La Verendrye has been reading petition after petition. The Emergency Measures officer sent a letter to the government saying move it away from the population area. In fact, I got correspondence from a former vice president of this—of Manitoba Hydro that wrote me a letter who's in Alberta now and saying, why are they not putting Bipole III into the forest area to create a fire line to stop those fires? And exactly what the Emergency Measures department from La Verendrye actually sent a letter to the minister asking him to take a look at that because they had serious fires—every member in this House knows and the Minister of Conservation; when they looked at that fire just not that long ago, that would have been a significant help for them in order to control that fire. So, Mr. Speaker, we know that this government has a lot to learn. We have a lot to learn. We need to listen to those folks that—and those experts that have that expertise.

Now, in regards to the long-term contract for Manitoba Hydro, we have learned, and most people that follow Hydro have seen an increase in solar power, and Manitoba is the ideal place for solar power. We also know that North Dakota has a surplus of natural gas that's been—being burned off with the Bakken oil fields. And they have told us time and time through our sessions, through our normal meetings with them that they are going to develop a natural gas plant. They will no longer need our hydro. They said, sure, we'll take your hydro for a year, two years; we'll see what happens when we get done with it. But is that really going to be sustainable for us?

So can you look at the natural gas, the solar power that is going to happen. What is this government's plan? Are they going to just do like California, put a flat fee on every household for hydro, a basic rate whether they use hydro or not? Whenever they talk about 3.59 per cent increases every year for the next 20 years, we know that hydro rates are going to double if not triple because they are compound rates. And every family in Manitoba has to heat their home. Now, these rates go up for those families whether they heat their home or can afford to heat their home with hydro or natural gas. Natural gas has been on the decline because of all the surplus and the drilling the natural gas and so on, oil that has come forward. So we know that that's another measure that the government should have looked at. In fact, in Arizona, a lot of those homes there are going to solar power. Most of them are 80 per cent efficient by solar power. And Manitoba is a prime place, as I said earlier. We have not even begin to talk about that. Some of the hearings—it's come up recently on the PUB increase on the 3.95 per cent increase that some of the submissions have brought that forward and drawn it to the PUB's attention that maybe if they would have included this in the conversation when they were talking about Keeyask we may not be in the position where we're at today.

What we've also seen is that this government has encouraged Manitoba Hydro to spend almost 3 and a half million dollars a day on Bipole III and Keeyask. That's a substantial amount of money. But what the general public has not gotten onto yet is that it's feeding the speeding—the spending habit of this NDP government. They're receiving the tax on that. They're receiving the jobs, the taxation that's coming from that. So it's a spend, spend government that just wants to be able to rely on the backs of hard-working

Manitobans, the ones that are true owners of Manitoba Hydro, the ones that truly are the ones they should be consulting with and not sticking to on a regular basis every rate increase that they can get and put on the backs of hard-working Manitobans.

And, with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that my time is about to run out, but I have much more to say, and I can wait to the next time that whenever we're in this House and we're able to debate other bills. I know that maybe doing our new procedures—we're talking about grievances can go unlimited in time, and that might be a good idea, that we could talk about these good things and share the knowledge that we have with one another and maybe come up with the best legislation that we can have.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say it's been an honour to stand here today and provide this grievance for all Manitobans—

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

The honourable member for Tuxedo, on a grievance?

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I am rising on a grievance today, regrettably, Mr. Speaker, but I feel the need to put a few words on the record today and grieve the NDP waste that is threatening the front-line services in our province. This is a very serious issue. There's been many, many examples of how this NDP government has wasted the taxpayer dollars of this province. I'm going to go through some of those, the wasted monies, and I'm also going to talk about some of the front-line services that have been threatened as a result of their NDP mismanagement.

I want to talk a little bit about the NDP waste, and it's difficult to do that without first talking about the severance pay that has taken place with respect to a number of NDP staffers that saw fit to leave as a result of the NDP dysfunctional leadership race that transpired earlier this year, Mr. Speaker. And it's unfortunate that when we had a Premier (Mr. Selinger) that said that any—everyone would be able to keep their jobs, and then he effectively turn around and handed them hundreds of thousands of dollars to move to Alberta. And I think it's unfortunate because that's something that didn't have to take place, had the NDP—had this Premier kept his word and said that those people could keep their jobs. And I think it's—so, again, that is an example, one example, of NDP waste. And, again, I could go

on and on for hours about this. Unfortunately, we're limited to only 10 minutes in a grievance.

But, Mr. Speaker, we only need to look at the Bipole III line, the—down the west side of the province. It's much longer down the west side than it would be down the east side of the lakes, and it's less—much less reliable as well. And the NDP is doing this to deliver hydroelectricity to the United States at a loss—again, NDP mismanagement and waste of billions of taxpayer dollars. And Manitobans are wondering why their rates are being jacked up at the same time, and they're being jacked up only because this NDP government's waste and mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro funds.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to talk about the \$20-million student-loan financial-aid program that never happened. So the NDP somehow expended \$20 million of taxpayers' money on a system that doesn't even exist, on a new system that was supposed to provide financial aid at a more efficient and effective way for our students in our province. But this never happened. Again, the money was expended and it was wasted and it's another example of NDP waste and mismanagement.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss to forget, of course, the millions of taxpayer dollars that is being spent on a government advertising campaign. And I would submit that it is a false advertising campaign that is happening in Manitoba right now, entitled Steady Growth, Good Jobs, because we know that that is not, in fact, the case. There's steady growth in taxes and good jobs outside the province as a result of young people leaving our province. And we know that the net interprovincial out-migration numbers, there's more people leaving Manitoba for every other province in Canada, than we're getting here in Manitoba. So that is again a direct result of NDP waste and mismanagement in Manitoba.

And, of course, how can I forget, Mr. Speaker, the many, many, and we're not even sure how many, untendered contracts that have been entered into by this government, but we know, thankfully, the Auditor General did a review of this and came up with a number of examples of NDP waste when it comes to untendered contracts. We know, of course, what untendered contracts means: there's no competition; you're paying the highest price. We need to have competition for these contracts and make sure that they are tendered to create those competitions, to save taxpayer dollars. So, again, it is

difficult to say exactly how much money has been wasted with respect to untendered contracts in the province, but we know that it goes into potentially the hundreds of millions of dollars.

So you add all, just these up, Mr. Speaker, and there's many, many more examples, but again, I don't have the time to get into them today. You add all of these up, and it leads to billions of dollars of taxpayer monies that has been expended as a result of this NDP mismanagement. And you think of the front-line services that could be covered with those billions of dollars of waste by this NDP government.

* (16:40)

We need only look to our child-welfare system as a very clear example, where front-line services are being affected and having a negative impact on the children in our province. We know that people—that children have been housed in hotels over the last number of years. And many, many years ago, they said it was not—this was not a good thing, that they would end this practice. But they never did. They broke that promise. And we know that today that there are children still in hotels in our province, another broken promise by this NDP government.

But, again, it's all of the dollars that have been wasted by this government that is having a negative impact on the front-line services, and the people that are hurt the most as a result of this are the most vulnerable children in our society, those that are within our child-welfare system, Mr. Speaker. And so we know that children who have been in hotels, that they have had incredible hardships. Many of them have been injured and as a result—and people have died as a result of this. So—and we know that just the child-welfare system as a whole, children are falling through the cracks under this NDP government. So those are some of the front-line services and the most vulnerable people in our society who are have—being negatively impacted as a result of this NDP government's mismanagement and wasteful spending.

Mr. Speaker, we need only look to our education system and how our education system under this NDP government is failing the children in our province. We know they are dead last. Our children are dead last in the country when it comes to education, when it comes to science or when it comes to—sorry, reading, when it comes to science, when it comes to math, the core subjects that children need in order to survive, to move on to university, to college, to move on with the jobs that

we need to be created for these children here in our province to help grow our economy. This is having a negative impact on our children and it will have a negative impact on our economy. Again, this is all a result of the NDP waste and mismanagement that is affecting and having a negative impact on the front-line services and education.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss to leave out, of course, health care. When it comes to the health-care delivery, diagnostics and delivery of services to the most vulnerable people in our society, our seniors and, indeed, all Manitobans who deserve to have a health-care system that is there for them when they need it, when they want it and when they deserve it, and that is simply not happening. Wait-lists continue to get longer than ever before, and it's unfortunate that members opposite fail to see that their waste of all of the areas that I spoke of earlier, when—whether it be from the severance pay, the bipole line, the student financial aid program waste, the advertising, all of these areas have created the kind of waste that has been taken away from what—where it could've been spent in the areas of front-line services to make sure that those services in the areas of diagnostics and the other health-care services are there for Manitobans when they need them. But, unfortunately, that is not happening.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to also say that it is having a negative impact on our economy, all of these areas, if people can't get the health care they need, if they can't get the education that we need for our children, if our children are dying under our social welfare system. We have the murder capital of Canada. We have the highest child poverty rate in Canada. These are not things to stand up and be proud of in the province. These are things that this NDP government has mismanaged as a result of their waste in our system. And, unfortunately, Manitoba and Winnipeg is almost dead last in the area of job growth. And that, I think, comes from, as well, the NDP waste and mismanagement in the system.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, we see so many examples that I've outlined today of NDP waste and how it is having a very negative impact on our front-line services, and that is extremely unfortunate. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Morris, on a grievance?

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): On a grievance.

Mr. Speaker: On a grievance.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity today to rise in the House in question period and talk about an issue that had to do with the NDP demanding a clawback of not-for-profit organizations here in the province of Manitoba. And it's unfortunate that, again, we see members of the NDP government putting false information on the record, misinformation on the record, in order to justify their actions.

And I listened carefully to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and to the minister in response to my questions about the 122 service providers that were asked to return 4 per cent of their budget to the jobs and economy branch, and both the Premier and the minister insisted that, no, it was just a small number of agencies that received the request and, in fact, the minister went on to say that only five agencies received the actual request—five, Mr. Speaker. I think he described it as a handful.

Now, the odd thing is, Mr. Speaker, that a freedom-of-information response sent by the access officer in Jobs and the Economy dated March 30th, says, and I quote: The total number of service providers was 122.

So I'm at a loss, Mr. Speaker, today, to wonder am I supposed to take the word of the member, the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief) when he stands in this House and tells us that only five service providers received the clawback request when the access officers—officer in his own department, on March 30th of this year, says the number was actually 122.

So either, Mr. Speaker, we have a minister putting false information on the record, and knowingly putting false information on the record, or we have a bureaucrat sending false information to elected officials in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I'll put my stock in the bureaucrat over the minister and over this NDP government any day.

Now, of course, they don't just end there, Mr. Speaker. They send out the deputy minister on this for the department to try to, you know, sweep the whole thing under the rug, and, of course, the deputy minister says, and I quote: That the staff person just didn't understand and sent that email to about five agencies. So, again, that lie is being repeated, where they have a deputy minister out and on the public record saying that five agencies received that request for the clawback, and I think it

bears repeating: On March 30th—that's 2015, the access officer for Jobs and the Economy said, and I quote: The total number of service providers is 122. End quote. So there seems to be a discrepancy of about 117 service providers that got the request.

And, of course, well, my colleague talked about NDP math, Mr. Speaker, and I think it goes beyond NDP math. It goes to a government that feels that they can simply hide information, that they can put misinformation on the record and not get called on it, which is truly unfortunate, as they take money from these front-line services that protect so many vulnerable citizens. They provide services to persons with disabilities. They provide services to young people, to seniors, First Nations. I know in one instance they provide services to help individuals for life transition skills as they leave correctional institutions. In that instance they did get a request, and I spoke to them the other day, and they got the request for the 4 per cent clawback, and now the minister is just simply saying that it was all just a mistake and that, yes, it took us seven months to recognize that the email was sent out by mistake, but, rest assured, we've identified that error and we'll be sending that corrected notice to the agencies.

But what they don't say, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not they will be returning the \$566,000 that they clawed back from these agencies, and that \$566,000 is a number, again, provided by the access officer of Manitoba Jobs and the Economy.

So, again, I'll take the access officer at his request, whose job it is to provide the information under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Mr. Speaker. So the access officer says that they clawed back \$566,000. The minister admits that the letter was sent out in error and that today, literally seven months after making that request, they'll let those agencies know that it was all just a big misunderstanding.

* (16:50)

But, of course, one of those agencies that actually sent the money in, Mr. Speaker—I know of several agencies that said that they weren't able to meet the government's required 4 per cent and, to add insult to injury and to understand the full context of the request—and I had the good opportunity to run a not-for-profit that helped people with disabilities and I know the members across the way laughed and made fun of that organization when I referenced it, and obviously the good work they do for persons with disabilities that are helped every day by that

agency to overcome their barriers—the members opposite might think that it's a joke but I don't think we on the—I know we on this side of the House would disagree with that assertion.

But not only did they make the request, Mr. Speaker, but they made the request on November 28th, so you can imagine the time frame. November 28th, literally Friday afternoon about four in the afternoon, they received this email saying, I've been told by today's NDP that you must—

An Honourable Member: Bullied.

Mr. Martin: —bullied—that you must return 4 per cent of your funding back and you have two weeks to return that, and if you're not able to return it, give us what you can and rationalize—you have to rationalize why you can't give us that full amount. And in speaking to several not-for-profits, they weren't able to identify that full amount. In some instances, they were only able to identify a few hundred dollars, and the response from today's NDP was, great, we'll take it; send us the cheque.

But on the flip side, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to stand in the House and put misinformation on the record that it was only five organizations—only five organizations received this—and to not apologize to the hundred—other 117 organizations that got it is truly unfortunate. But, to add insult to injury, he's not even committing today to return that \$566,000 that they clawed back from these organizations just before Christmas as they were entering their last quarter.

And I'm sure you're well aware as somebody who has been involved and has interactions with not-for-profits, whether in your own home constituency or within the province of Manitoba, budgeting is a very, very tight process, Mr. Speaker.

A large part of your budgetary expenses is—are simply on salary costs, and those costs are set out at the front end of the year, you know. So starting April 1st, every month, you know, you've got to pay your bills, and your bills are your bills for a non-profit whether it's your rent cost or your salary cost, and actually discretionary income and discretionary revenues is incredibly limited.

So to get a request from today's NDP literally on November 28th, at 4 p.m. in the afternoon, and being told to return 4 per cent of your total budget, Mr. Speaker, not of your remaining budget but of your total budget and two weeks to do it, again speaks to the desperation of today's NDP when it comes to

financial matters that they are willing to claw back from society's most vulnerable, and in this instance in terms of 122 agencies.

And so it's always amusing too, Mr. Speaker, that the minister stands up and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stands up then says, wowee, we had no idea. This is all just a big mistake and we're going to send a corrected notice.

In December, Mr. Speaker, I sat in the committee room, in room 255. I spoke directly to the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross), to the Minister of Children and Youth, I let them know about this issue. I tried to do it in a very reasonable manner, just give them a heads-up on the issue, asked them to look into the matter, asked them to use their influence as members of the New Democratic Party and take action on behalf of these not-for-profits that had reached out to me saying, you know, we've got this request and what can we do—what can we do about it? Can you help us? And so, in those committee rooms, I brought this forward to the ministers and the minister of children and youth, of course, said, well, you're making this all up. It's simply not true.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's the email from today's NDP to the service providers that has been previously provided saying, give us the 4 per cent and I think would suggest that the minister of children and youth was, in fact, wrong, and she, along with the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief) and the Premier should add their voice to the apologies that are forthcoming.

But again, so seven months ago I brought this to the attention of two members of the NDP, those two ministers that I identified, and, of course, in those seven months, what did they do? Mr. Speaker, they were too busy, embroiled in their own internal politics, in their internal fight to actually stand up and defend these not-for-profits, to stand up and say to their colleagues, every one of them that voted in support of this clawback, every one of them.

They talk often about how we stand up every day, well, in this instance, Mr. Speaker, they stood up and they said, absolutely—

Mr. Speaker: Order please. The honourable member's time for this has elapsed.

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a grievance.

Is the honourable member for Portage la Prairie rising on a grievance?

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Yes, on a grievance.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a grievance.

Mr. Wishart: I rise today to grieve on the condition of Child and Family Services in this province. And I think everyone in the House must join me in this particular grievance because there are—been so many issues.

And I'll talk, initially, I think about the numbers of children in the care of CFS. And, given the rate of increase that was standard through the last three years, we must be very nearly to 11,000 children in care on CFS. And just to put that in perspective, on a per capita basis the next near us is Saskatchewan; they have about 6,600, and they have virtually identical demographics to Manitoba in terms of different ethnic groups, with the exception of they have less French than we do. And I can't really see that having more French would certainly drive the number up here in Manitoba that much. And they only have 6,600, so that is half of ours. In fact, if you look at BC, with four times our population, they have only about 9,400. So, clearly, we have a serious, serious problem.

And I think it's at least partly due to our knee-jerk reaction to births here. We move very quickly, move into the hospital.

And I raised the issue the other day of a family from Columbia whose first child was taken for—from them without any explanation, and they got no written explanation whatsoever. And they had—their second child came along and she was in Brandon; they had moved to Brandon by then. Winnipeg CFS came all the way out to take that child without even assessing the situation. They had zero jurisdiction to be there, but they talked their way through it, and they took the child. Fortunately, they weren't able to take it from the hospital simply because the child was premature and not well enough to leave the hospital, or I think they probably would have.

Now their jurisdiction has been removed, and the family is now under supervision of Brandon western CFS, and they're getting the child back, Mr. Speaker, working through the process. Thankfully, somebody in the system has at least a small degree of sanity.

But we overreact in terms of taking children, and then what do we do with them? Well, in some cases, we find good homes; in some cases we don't. We're struggling to find enough foster parents in the province. But a lot of times we put them in hotels, Mr. Speaker. Isn't that a wonderful example?

And I know the minister has been harangued constantly, and I'm responsible for it, about what she's doing with children in hotels, because, frankly, the same sort of thing happened in 2007, and, within six months, the children were back in hotels. And I have yet to see anything to convince me that this situation will be any different.

I'm pretty sure that—I mean, and that's only in the city of Winnipeg. We still got them staying in hotels in rural areas, and I can list off lots of hotels in rural areas if you'd like, because I'm in talk—contact with a lot of people who are saying, well, they've taken my child; they're in a hotel in Dauphin. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), certainly, would be aware of that. Some, in fact, some in Dauphin have been there as long as—get this, Mr. Speaker—seven months they've been in a hotel—seven months. They can't find a suitable situation for them to put in, so they just leave them in a hotel. And the worker that's responsible for them operates out of Swan River. She's seen them about three times according to them in seven months, which is probably above average maybe, I don't know.

I am disappointed to no end and how poorly things seem to be getting run, and we would all like to see improvements in that. But what costs—the only time we ever seem to any action at all is an embarrassment in the media, Mr. Speaker.

When you see the example of Tina Fontaine, which sensitized the media to this issue, fortunately, and, to some degree, sensitized the minister. Now that child should have been—was dropped off at the hotel, basically walked in the front door and probably out the back, and no one paid any attention to what had happened to her. And a few days later she turns up in the river.

Now someone out there is a predator. I certainly don't blame CFS workers for that, but the opportunity was left there. And you'd think that they would learn from that, because the number of missing kids in Winnipeg is a horrendous number. We're way out of line with other jurisdictions and other cities of equal size.

In Winnipeg, teenage girls, those that are at risk by sexual predators, are six times more likely to go missing than any other city in this country. And we have this sort of mindset that, you know, the sex trades—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 4, 2015

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