

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

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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

Tuesday, June 23, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

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

**Highway 10 and Victor Avenue in Onanole–
Pedestrian Safety**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Local and seasonal residents have expressed safety concerns regarding the intersection of Highway 10 and Victoria avenue in Onanole.

Highway 10 has two double lanes of traffic flowing north and south which makes it difficult to make left turns and also creates difficulties for motorists and pedestrians crossing the highway.

The intersection is in close proximity to the south entrance of Riding Mountain National Park and serves as one of two exits from Sportsman's Park.

Recent commercial development near this intersection has dramatically increased traffic—of vehicle and foot traffic in the area.

Motor vehicle and foot traffic in this area increase dramatically in summer months, making safety a concern.

On August 2nd, 2014, a 14-year-old girl was struck by a motor vehicle at the existing crosswalk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to install a pedestrian corridor at the intersection of Highway 10 and Victor Avenue in Onanole to replace the existing crosswalk.

This petition is signed by L. Bryson, T. Bryson, D. Wiebe and many other 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.

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 is signed by D. Bates, C. Gavran, A. DePaulo and many other fine Manitobans.

**Beausejour District Hospital—
Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability**

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and

holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority region.

(3) During the 2000 election—sorry—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 H. Hastman, C. Nordstrom, R. Loudon and many, many more 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 increasing 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.

(5) The last personal-care-home review in many years—in many areas, including the Swan River Valley area currently under the administration of the Prairie Mountain regional health authority, was conducted in 2008.

(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 a 100 per cent occupancy rate.

(7) These high occupancy rates are creating the conditions where many individuals requiring long-term care are being displaced far away from their families and 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 is signed by R. Minish, A. Harris, D. Brown and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Bipole III Land Expropriation— Collective Bargaining Request

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

On November 24th, 2014, the minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act signed a confirming order for the province of Manitoba declaring that no notice to landowners is required for the seizure of property.

This waiver of notice represents an attack on rural families and their property rights in a modern democratic society. There was not even an

opportunity provided for debate in the Manitoba Legislature. In many cases, the private property seized has been part of a family farm for generations.

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

Since November 2013, the Manitoba Bipole III Landowner Committee, MBLC, in association with the Canadian Association of Energy and Pipeline 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. Those actions have denied farmers their right to bargain collectively to protect their property and their businesses from Bipole III.

MBLC, CAEPLA has not formed an association to stop the Bipole III project and they are not antidevelopment. MBLC, CAEPLA has simply come together, as a group of people, as Manitobans, to stand 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.

*(13:40)

And this petition is signed by D. Donald, A.J. Mason, G. Jobin and many more fine Manitobans.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Corey Seib, who is a guest of the honourable Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Caldwell).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Floodfighting Equipment Contract Tendering Process

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): When did the Premier first become aware that Peter Ginakes, a noted Winnipeg restaurateur and NDP donor, and the Infrastructure Minister were close personal friends?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I have no date on that. That's an allegation made by the member opposite. If he wants to discuss with the minister who his personal friends are, I invite him to do that.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the flippancy says a lot.

Mr. Ginakes has sole distribution rights for a floodfighting product called Tiger Dams. His pal, the MLA for Thompson, is the minister who buys floodfighting equipment such as Tiger Dams.

So I'll ask again: When did the Premier first know that the minister was in a clear ethical conflict?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member will know that a proper tendering procedure was put in place for any acquisition of floodfighting equipment, whether it be a specific product offered by one vendor or any other product that we purchase in Manitoba.

For a particular situation with the Interlake regional tribal council, that tendering process has not yet awarded a contract, although it has closed, and the member knows the proper procedures were followed.

Mr. Pallister: The question is one of ethics, Mr. Speaker, and the integrity of the purchasing process is a critical element of getting value for money for Manitoba taxpayers. If it is perceived to be lacking, then the system will suffer.

Now, the Premier either knew that there was a conflict here, an ethical one, or—and stood quietly by as an accomplice to it, doing nothing and watching while this ethical train wreck continued. We're

talking about over \$12 million of purchases, Mr. Speaker, for floodfighting equipment. So either he stood quietly by or he did not know at all and was grossly negligent in his responsibilities to protect the best interests of Manitobans.

So which was it? Was it deliberate negligence or was it incompetent negligence?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, a proper tendering process was put in place in this instance. The tendering process followed the procedures as required by the department. The competition closed, but no tender was awarded.

The proper procedures were followed in this case, and the member's talking about something that didn't actually happen. The proper procedures were followed.

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

Mr. Pallister: I'm talking about something that's been ongoing for over six years, Mr. Speaker. And when there's a conflict of interest, whether real or perceived, the system does not work effectively to protect the best interests of Manitoba ratepayers. That's one thing for sure.

Now, the Minister of Infrastructure spoke at his pal's Tiger Dam certification party in November of 2013—should've been a clue there—glowing in the attention while he endorsed a product that produced profits for his pal.

Now, didn't all this buddy-buddy palling around strike the Premier as a potential conflict of interest?

Mr. Selinger: As I indicated earlier, in the case of the \$5-million award that was not followed through with, other than by a tendered contract, Mr. Speaker, the proper procedures were followed, and that is always the case.

The department identifies what they potentially need for equipment, and in specific circumstances, specific decisions are made in order to protect communities, and different pieces of equipment are needed in specific situations at specific times of urgency, and they're followed through on.

The department follows the proper procedures and we make sure we protect communities.

Mr. Pallister: I'm asking the Premier about proper procedures today, Mr. Speaker, and not solely about one \$5-million attempt at a sole-source contract from a pal. I am talking about six-year record here of over

\$12 million of purchases primarily made, 70 per cent of the time, made from a buddy.

Now, anybody who had a hint about fairness would've removed themselves prior to any involvement in a situation such as this, but the minister chose not to. He obviously didn't care about fairness or the perception of fairness, or he would most certainly have removed himself from the process. His failure to do so places every transaction under his watch in doubt.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier is avoiding taking the responsibility today for protecting the interests of Manitobans.

I want to ask the Premier: Will he state today that he is absolutely certain that Manitobans received the best value possible from these transactions, or will he admit that there is some doubt about that given the minister's closeness to the person he bought a product from almost all the time?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, what I will state is that when communities needed protection, they were offered that protection. What I will say is that a variety of flood protection devices were used. In some cases, it was sandbags. In other cases, it was super sandbags. In other cases, it was Aqua Dams. In other cases, it was HESCO Barriers. In some cases, it was Tiger Dams.

The—each set of circumstances requires a different approach to that, Mr. Speaker. Some technology is more rapidly deployed than others. That protects certain communities.

In other situations we need, for example, super sandbags. I remember having to deploy them in Brandon when the waters were rising very, very high, double the height of an average individual; 12 to 15 feet of sandbag protection was required. And the proper technologies were put in place as rapidly as possible, and then, in addition, military were brought in to ensure that the community was protected.

So as circumstances arise in a very difficult situation called a flood, the Emergency Measures people responded with appropriate technologies and appropriate responses.

Infrastructure and Transportation Minister Request for Resignation

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the—for several years the Minister of Infrastructure headed up a department

which made purchases from his pal's company. He should have perceived that he was in an ethical bind. He should have declared this.

Many others, including his own colleagues, including colleagues on Treasury Board, were aware of this. They knew about it. They knew the minister failed to declare his conflict. They knew the minister failed to recuse himself from the process to protect the integrity of the process.

The Premier did nothing about it either, and then last year the government announces a \$5-million purchase from the Infrastructure Minister's pal, who will be the beneficiary of this intended untendered contract.

Now, up 'til now the Premier has not acted. He didn't tell the minister he's in a conflict. He went to bat for the minister. He told the Treasury Board to get 'er done, no ethics at all.

I'm asking the Premier today to stand up and protect Manitobans' best interests and demand the resignation of that minister from his Cabinet. Do the right thing today.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman investigated the circumstances, identified that a tendering process was put in place and decided not to proceed with any further investigation. That was the role of the Ombudsman when it was looked at through a whistle-blower complaint because the proper tendering process had already been in-'plut' in place.

If the member has these kinds of questions, I think he should direct them at the level of government that awarded the money to purchase the Tiger Dams. That would be the federal government—that would be the federal government—that put the money out there and allowed the product to be purchased with whatever guidelines they put in place.

In our case we followed a proper tendering procedure; no contract was awarded. The federal government had already stepped in to make this purchase available. That is how we handled this specific situation.

The member is pursuing something that he best pursues at the federal level, where the money was actually made available.

Social Impact Bonds Support for Program

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I guess, once again, the Premier's refusing to do the right thing.

In a recent government report outlining the Manitoba Social Enterprise Strategy, Mr. Speaker, pillar No. 5 refers to the benefits of implementing social impact bonds. In the report is a letter co-signed by the Minister for Jobs and the Economy as well as the Minister for Family Services indicating their support for social impact bonds.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Minister for Jobs and the Economy support the concept of SIBs just four months ago? What reason does he have to have changed his mind?

* (13:50)

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Mr. Speaker, we were proud to announce the Social Enterprise Strategy, and it was done in consultation with hundreds of non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, people that we work with every single day. They made recommendations. If you read in the report, those are the recommendations they made.

You know, we get to see people every day that have barriers, that those barriers are removed because of the great work that non-profit organizations do. Our government continues to support those organizations. Our government continues to support families.

And, Mr. Speaker, we think the best ideas come from people who work directly in the community, and that's where we got these ideas from.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, it seems that the minister is in support of it one day and his government isn't the next day, and now he's maybe indicating that he's in support of it again. But, Mr. Speaker, what's it going to be tomorrow?

Somehow, the minister and his government changed his mind in the last four months, Mr. Speaker, and I'm just wondering if the minister could indicate: Did someone urge him to change his mind with respect to social impact bonds?

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to supporting non-profit organizations, no one is more consistent about that than this government.

Over and over again I have invited the members opposite to come and visit me in Point Douglas. They can come and see the incredible work they're doing. I'll buy them the coffee. I'll buy them the bannock. They can see first-hand the incredible work these organizations are doing.

They can see why national foundations across the country continue to call this a golden moment in Manitoba because of the great work non-profits do. They can see why guys like Mark Chipman continue to invest in our non-profits. They can see why Gerry Price continues to work with our organizations like in Point Douglas, and they can see why guys like Gregg Hanson, now who are retired, are committed to work with our non-profits to support Aboriginal children and young people.

They should take me up on the offer, and I'll buy them the free coffee and bannock any time.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister for Jobs and the Economy to indicate who urged him to support the sole sourcing of the Tiger Dam equipment, and he refused to stand in his place and explain.

So I ask him again: Was it the same person who urged him to change his mind in support of social impact bonds?

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, I thought the member was going to take me up on the offer on the bannock and coffee to come on and visit—maybe come and visit the friendship centres, come and see the local YMCAs, come and see the family resource centres.

But I think I know why the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to take me up on my offer as an invite: because he'll be reminded by those organizations that when he was in government, he cut them. He cut friendship centres; he cut YMCAs; he cut family resource centres.

What needs to happen here is, Mr. Speaker, is the Leader of the Opposition needs to stand up, apologize for his disingenuous approach, his irresponsible approach to supporting our non-profit organizations.

Social Impact Bonds Government Position

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, last February the Manitoba government announced its Social Enterprise Strategy. Stated goal was to reduce poverty and increase social inclusion,

something we can all support, especially as our child poverty rates continue to lead this country.

As part of that, two of this government's ministers endorsed the use of social impact bonds as a source of investment. Suddenly, a spokesman for this government is attacking social impact bonds as a dangerous plan that would divert money away from services.

Can the minister tell me who urged her to change her position?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Once again, our government's been committed to working with our non-profits. We believe that these are the people who have the best ideas when it comes to supporting the community.

Members opposite—the Leader of the Opposition got his idea from New South Wales. He thinks folks in New South Wales have the best idea to support children and young people and families that are struggling every day.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House, we think the best ideas come from organizations and people right in Winnipeg and right in Manitoba, and that's who we listen to.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Wishart: —about their last-minute cut in their funding last year.

Perhaps this government is not aware of Manitoba's great history of charitable donations and strong charitable foundations. Foundations and local financial institutions like credit unions are, in fact, the most common social impact bond investors in Canada.

Could this government explain to us all why tapping into local altruistic funding is a bad way to deal with social problems? And who convinced this minister to change her position on social impact bonds?

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, over and over again we can tell incredible stories of success, incredible stories of achievement and incredible stories of resiliency. Young people like Candice, a young indigenous First Nations woman who right now is getting support as we speak from the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development. You can walk down the road not too far from here or take a bus or drive down to Urban Circle where they are doing incredible work

every day. You can go down and see The Boldness Project. You can go and talk to the good folks at the United Way and ask them about the approach this government has consistently taken to support those stories of success, to support those stories of resiliency.

Mr. Speaker, once again, when is the Leader of the Opposition going to stand up and be accountable for the cuts that he decided to make to friendship centres, to where people find their sense of belonging?

Our government's approach has always been consistent and will continue to be on the side of people who support our non-profit organizations.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly applaud those youngsters that are successful within the framework that's there now. But we want to add to that framework and use social 'improct' bonds to do that.

Government support was there for social impact bonds as a means to work on social problems back in February of 2015, and we announced our support for the concept in June of 2015. This government reversed its position on social impact bonds the next day. CUPE joined them in attacking the concept the following day.

What exactly is this government's position on the use of social impact bonds, and who, in fact, is deciding the position?

Mr. Chief: Mr. Speaker, Mark Chipman has taken me up on the offer of bannock and coffee in the North End. Dave Angus has taken me up on the offer of bannock and coffee in Winnipeg's North End to see non-profits. Gerry Price from E.H. Price has taken me up on that offer to come and have bannock and coffee with me. Gregg Hanson has taken me up on that offer.

Any time members opposite want to see first-hand the great work going on with non-profit organizations and why this government consistently stands with those organizations, come for some free bannock and coffee. I'll be more than willing to buy it, and you can see these things first-hand.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know why the leader doesn't—of the opposition doesn't want to take me up on the offer, because he will be reminded of his irresponsible approach to non-profit, community-based organizations—

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

Bipole III Transmission Line Landowner Concerns

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, TransCanada and Enbridge pipelines have discovered the value of working with landowners to address landowner costs and concerns when it comes to dealing with easements across private property.

The Minister of Agriculture promised to meet with the Manitoba bipole landowners committee back in January but has since failed to take up that meeting.

Why is this Minister of Agriculture not assisting the Manitoba bipole landowners committee in collective bargaining with Manitoba Hydro to address the many concerns landowners have with Bipole III?

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Thank you for the question, and I thank my colleague the member for Midland. This gives me an opportunity to put some facts on the record, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, let me say that the public has been consulted on Bipole III since 2008 with more than 400 meetings with landowners, RMs, First Nations communities, stakeholder groups, and the route selected for the line has the least impact on agricultural land among the three alternatives presented at public meetings in 2009. And based on the recommendations from the Clean Environment Commission, 74 route adjustments have been made.

Mr. Pedersen: Perhaps the Minister of Agriculture could clue the Hydro Minister in on the actual impact of Bipole III on agricultural land.

Collective bargaining is not new, something even this government holds near and dear. Landowners' concerns with major infrastructure properties is not new, yet this Minister of Agriculture refuses to stand up and support agriculture. It's the biggest single industry in Manitoba, and where is the Minister of Agriculture on this?

Why is the Minister of Agriculture refusing to acknowledge the impact Bipole III will have on agriculture in Manitoba and at least clue in the Minister of Hydro what—on the impacts of Bipole III?

Mr. Robinson: What we must understand, Mr. Speaker, Bipole III and any future hydro projects are going to be beneficial to all people in the province of Manitoba, and that is something that we have to understand.

* (14:00)

Listen, Hydro has been negotiating with landowners for voluntary easements and compensation agreements since July 2012. And if the members would listen, they would, in fact, get the true understanding. Hydro is offering fair and generous compensation for easement, amounting to 150 per cent market value for property, plus additional payments for structure impact, construction damage and ancillary damage.

For those who haven't signed voluntary easements, Manitoba Hydro has secured easements along the Bipole III route through expropriation. Those with land—

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

I am going to ask our guests who are with us in the public gallery this afternoon to not be part of the proceedings here in the House, please. I'm asking for your co-operation.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, since when is expropriation part of collective bargaining? Pipeline companies are engaging in collective bargaining with landowner representatives, but Manitoba Hydro only resorts to expropriation rather than collective bargaining.

Is this what the landowners on the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line have to look forward to? Every project that Manitoba Hydro wants to do in the future, is expropriation the only way they're going to do it? Why not sit down with landowners? Why not deal with the bipole landowners committee? They're up here in the gallery today. They're with us here.

Why will the Minister of Agriculture not—or will the Minister of Agriculture agree to meet with them today to begin the process of collective bargaining? He promised in January to meet with them. They're here today. Will the Minister of Agriculture meet them right after question period today?

Mr. Robinson: Let me repeat: Over 400 meetings have occurred since 2008 with landowners, RMs, First Nations communities and stakeholder groups. This has been occurring.

And what I said, Mr. Speaker, about the generous compensation for easement, it amounts to 150 per cent market value for property, and those with land expropriated through this process will still have full use of the land in the future. So every property owner in a city or in a country has an easement from Hydro and other utilities on their property.

Personal-Care Homes Resident Safety (Case Concern)

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, residents within personal-care homes have a resident bill of rights. Number 2 says, and I quote, to be protected from abuse.

Mr. Speaker, NDP waste is hurting essential front-line services.

Will the Minister for Healthy Living and Seniors admit that her NDP government is failing to protect our elders from abuse, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Thank you from the member opposite for this question.

This side of the House actually has done quite a bit of work to prevent elder abuse. We have a Provincial Elder Abuse Strategy, which has established a 24-hour Seniors Abuse Support Line, which I know is used, and it provides telephone counselling and follow-up support to older adults who are experiencing abuse. We obviously don't want our seniors to be abused, and we certainly want to make sure that we have resources in place for those who do call this line to get help, and that's why we've created it.

We also have created a regional elder abuse response team, which exists in each regional health authority.

We do these things because we know there's a need and we want to address it.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, on May 24th, Mrs. Jubinville was on the phone with her mother, a personal-care home resident. Another resident came into her mother's room, verbally abusing her mother and threatening to physically assault her mother, when all of a sudden the other resident grabbed the phone and hung it up.

Can the minister explain to this House what her NDP government is doing to protect seniors in their homes?

Ms. Crothers: Well, as I've outlined, we have the Seniors Abuse Support Line. We also have the elder abuse response teams, and we also have a Safe Suite Program that provides a safe haven for older adults who are leaving abusive relationships or in a—who are in abusive situations.

We obviously want to make sure that all of our seniors are well cared for and that they're receiving the supports they need. So when something like this does happen, we make sure that there's a way for people to reach out and help them or for those who recognize this is happening to have a way to reach out to us to let us know.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, the Jubinville family are here in the gallery today. They have reached out to this Minister of Health (Ms. Blady) for help, only to be ignored.

Do concerned citizens of Manitoba need to drive to the Legislature to get action? Will the minister agree to meet with this family after question period today to ensure the safety of their loved ones?

Ms. Crothers: Absolutely, I would be very happy to meet with them. They can come to my office after question period, and I can sit down with them, without a doubt.

Special Needs Students Educational Assistants

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, educational assistants are invaluable resources for schools. They support teachers in daily activities and respond to the needs of students in a timely and appropriate manner.

Last week, Manitobans were anxiously following the story of a 16-year-old boy with autism who went missing when he should have been in attendance at school. We understand that this student didn't have an educational assistant.

Can the Premier tell the Legislature why an educational assistant would not be assigned to such a student with special needs and if his minister has rejected applications for special needs funding?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Again, I thank the member for the question. It is important that we have special needs supports in our schools. We've got legislation that provides for that.

We've made funding announcements at well over inflation, Mr. Speaker, with our schools, at the rate of economic growth in Manitoba, and that

money has been allocated to school divisions, and they decide where they want to put their special assistants with respect to supporting students that have special needs, and we will always support them to do that.

If the member has a specific case with specific details, I'm sure the minister would like that information to be brought forward and it'll be looked into.

But I can assure him that our special needs funding has no caps on it. It is allocated on a basis of where the need is identified and acknowledged by all parties involved.

Special Needs Education Compliance Monitoring

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, in January 2012, the Auditor General released a report of the comprehensive assessment of special needs education in Manitoba. He found—or she found that today's NDP had failed to monitor for compliance.

In other words, the Minister of Education was handing out money without checking to see that reasonable outcomes were being achieved. Sadly, this is a consistent practice with today's NDP government.

Why was the government handing out money without monitoring to see if the required help was actually being delivered for children with special needs?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, in 2014-15, \$154 million was provided for students with special needs in school based on them meeting the criteria, based on them having a plan to address the needs of that special needs student. School division administrators are in charge of ensuring the resources go to where they're needed.

If there's additional oversight required, we take any Auditor General's report seriously. We work with the school divisions to ensure that they're actually putting the resources where they're needed and to ensure that those special needs students get the support they require, including support from educational assistants, which have been playing an important part in our school divisions for many years and will play an important part for many years to come.

I do have to say, though, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite himself voted against that increase in funding for our public schools, as have the

members of the opposition, who actually cut funding to schools when they were in office.

We have increased it every year we've been in office, and we've allocated it based on where the needs are. And one of the needs that has to be addressed is special needs, and we've allocated in last year's budget \$154 million for that.

Applications for Support

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I table data today to show that the Minister of Education rejects hundreds of applications for special needs support each year.

Each year, an average of about 425 applications that are carefully prepared with appropriate assessments and school support are rejected by this minister. Cumulatively over the last 11 years, this has meant 5,103 applications have been rejected.

* (14:10)

Why is the Premier and his government rejecting the efforts of so many parents to obtain appropriate educational supports on behalf of their children who have special needs?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the data. It indicates very clearly that there have been differing levels of demand for special needs funding, and it's actually peaked in about 2007-2008.

The number of applications approved has been pretty consistent with respect to the number received versus the number approved. His table shows that, and I ask him to take a look at it again. It's roughly the same across the various years.

But the point is this: there is no cap on special needs funding; it's based on criteria. That criteria is assessed by the officials. Money is allocated according to where it's needed, and we'll continue to be—do that.

The member himself and the members opposite took a different approach when they were in government. We've increased our funding to special needs students by 52 per cent since we've been in office. What was the approach of the members opposite when they were in office? They actually cut education funding on a year-over-year basis: 2 per cent, 2.6 per cent, zero, 2 per cent and zero per cent. They actually shrunk the number of dollars available for education in Manitoba. That does not only not help special needs students, it doesn't help any student.

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

Post-Secondary Education Launch of New Strategy

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, giving people of any age access to more educational options will directly translate into a better trained workforce that's ready to adapt and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow and keep Manitoba growing.

We want young people to encounter no wrong doors in their education, and students want to see universities and colleges work together to provide more opportunities in a more seamless post-secondary education system.

Will the Minister of Education please inform the House of the new post-secondary strategy announced today by the Premier (Mr. Selinger) that would give students more options and prepare them for rewarding careers right here in Manitoba?

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

I was pleased today to be with the Premier at Urban Circle along with our partners in the educational system to unveil a new post-secondary education strategy that will give our students opportunities to take online courses, access e-textbooks and have an easier time transferring credits.

Mr. Speaker, our objective with this strategy is to create a seamless post-secondary education system where there're no wrong doors, no dead ends, multiple pathways for student success leading to good jobs here in Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, contrast that with the Leader of the Opposition. When he was in government, tuition skyrocketed by 132 per cent and enrolment declined by 8 per cent. I've said this many times and I'm going to say it again: The greatest threat to the education system in the province of Manitoba is the Leader of the Opposition and his—

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

Wildlife Management Areas Accumulation of Refuse

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, in early May I made the minister aware of at least one wildlife management area that has been transformed into a garbage dump, and I'll table pictures to remind

the minister of what it looked like. The minister said at the time that he was well aware of this area and that he promised, quote, swift action.

Can the minister outline what steps he undertook to transform the area from wildlife dump back to its near natural state, as promised?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Acting Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, members on this House have been humoured by the opposition's feigned interest in the environment lately. I think we heard a speech about climate change the other day in the House and conclude—we concluded that to Conservatives, climate change means wintering in Costa Rica.

But, Mr. Speaker, on this issue, I think it's important that all members of the House blow the whistle whenever there's a degradation of our natural areas.

The Mars Hill Wildlife Management Area is a very important area. It has very special features, Mr. Speaker, which is why there has been a new development, a new approach, to making sure that access is better controlled, which is one of the actions that has been taken very recently as a result of the complaints of the member.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, the whistle was blown two months ago and nothing was done to change the situation. All that's changed is the grass is a little greener and there are more discarded mattresses and televisions, and I'll table some pictures that were taken this past Sunday.

Can the minister explain why Manitobans are paying more but getting less under his watch?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it's important to draw to the attention of the members of the House that over the last number of years there's been about 20,000 kilograms of garbage removed from this wildlife management area. This is unacceptable. It's unacceptable to every member of this House.

Now, when it comes to dealing with how to prevent that from happening in the first place, first of all, there is increased restriction of access to areas of the wildlife management area. That's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. Second of all, this government will be doubling the maximum fines for illegal dumping in Manitoba to send a stronger deterrent message. As well, there have been efforts working with the

municipality to determine how we can both prevent this and clean it up when it happens. That's action.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, perhaps this minister doubled his effort instead of the fines, we'd see more done.

Almost two years ago—almost two months ago, Mr. Speaker, the minister waxed eloquently about how wildlife management areas are, and I quote, fundamental to the survival of our ecosphere and our natural spaces, end quote. Between now and then, all he's offered up is nonsensical statements and empty promises.

Can the minister explain how discarded mattresses, furniture and old electronics dumped in our protected spaces is, quote, fundamental to the survival of our ecosphere and natural spaces?

Thank you.

Mr. Mackintosh: If the members opposite were interested in protecting ecosystems, Mr. Speaker, they wouldn't have moved amendments in committee to undo the powers of our natural resource officers.

Mr. Speaker, the—every year this wildlife management area benefits from the volunteer efforts of many, many people that go in and clean up this garbage that's been dumped there by people that have no respect for Mother Earth and this very valuable area. That effort is being mounted again this year and, as well, the natural resource officers have gone in there. I understand, in fact, they've done 32 patrols in there to enhance the oversight of the area.

That's the kind of action we're taking, but every Manitoban should be outraged by this treatment of this wildlife management area.

Election Promise Tax Increases

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, in the last election in 2011, every member opposite went door to door and said that there'd be no tax increases, every single member.

Then the member from Brandon East went out to a meeting in my area, in Warren, to be specific, and this local paper reported that it was a very tough decision. Many members opposite said they didn't even have part of that decision, but he takes full responsibility for it. Then he goes on to say, even though it was a tough decision, provided significant revenues, but not for transportation or infrastructure or municipal government.

I'll table this for the minister and have his response.

Really, what was it, just a sludge fund?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): It—I'm always happy to stand in the House and speak to the infrastructure investment that our Province is making.

We're halfway through a \$5.5-billion infrastructure investment in this province. There are roadways being constructed throughout this province.

On our tour throughout Manitoba over the last couple of weeks, when we were meeting with officials from the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, every single day we were held up by pilot vehicles or flag people warning of work ahead on the roads throughout the province of Manitoba, on the Trans-Canada Highway, on the Yellowhead Route, on Highway No. 2, on Highway No. 10.

Everywhere in the province there is money being invested in roads, bridges and infrastructure—

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

Home-Care Services Private Agency Nurses

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, there are many nurses from private agencies working in home care in Winnipeg. According to a freedom of information, over \$2 million were spent on agency nurses working in home care last year.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us why there is such a big need for private agency nurses working in home care in Winnipeg.

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

Anyone who's ever spent time with a sick loved one knows how important nurses are and—in providing compassionate care every day, and this year we actually have more active practising nurses than ever before, more nurse training seats than ever before, more filled nursing positions than ever before and more positions available for nurses than ever before.

*(14:20)

And, in fact, CIHI's regulated nurse numbers show that for the first time in 20 years more Canadian nurses left the profession than entered it;

however, Manitoba beat that trend. And these gains are because we have expanded nurse training seats throughout the province, stuck to ambitious recruitment and retention initiatives such as the Nurses Recruitment and Retention Fund that we've established. And, again, as of 2014, data from the nursing colleges show that we have 2,419 nurses registered to practise in Manitoba since—

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

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister has missed the whole point of this.

We have a lot of private duty nurses, agency nurses that are working in home care in Winnipeg. Over \$2 million was spent on that last year in Winnipeg in home care.

I would like to ask the minister: Is she privatizing home care by stealth?

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

Unlike members opposite, we don't privatize home care or health care, anything.

In fact, we joined with nurses and signed a new contract that respects the 'wurse'—work that nurses do every day. Nurses voted over 90 per cent in favour of that contract, and in addition to paying nurses more, it reduces the use of overtime. It's about working together to reduce the use of agency nurses, a better balance of full-time and part-time positions.

We're working with nurses. We're growing the complement of nurses. The only people with a fixation on privatization are on that side of the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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

Condition of Arthur-Virden Highways

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to speak out regarding the deplorable condition of our provincial highways in Arthur-Virden constituency.

For the 16 years of this NDP government, our highways in Arthur-Virden have deteriorated so much it has become the crisis in regards of safety in our residence and our industry.

For the last 16 years our oil industry and agriculture industry generated so much revenue for the provincial government. This NDP government has used its revenue for spending—for their spending addiction instead of investing portion back to our local highways.

Does this NDP government realize our highways are—in Arthur-Virden are not made for heavy equipment for both the oil industry and the agriculture industry?

When we moved to Arthur-Virden back in the mid-1990s our roads were in great shape, while the Saskatchewan NDP highways were in terrible condition. Sixteen years later Manitoba's NDP government—now Saskatchewan makes fun of our highways. Four years from now I'd like to see the condition of Alberta highways.

If this NDP government would have spent what they budgeted for infrastructure under this—they underspent more than \$2.3 billion in the last five years—our provincial highways would be in much better condition.

What is—what has this NDP government done for the extra revenue from the increase in the PST? They sure haven't put this into infrastructure.

Now Arthur-Virden is in a crisis of dangerous highways, ER closures, doctor and nurse shortages, and lack of qualified paramedics to transport patients safely to longer distances. Many Manitobans have died—how many Manitobans have to die before this NDP addresses this crisis?

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this NDP government has failed the residents of the province for the last 16 years with the failure of the conditions of our highways—of provincial highways, our health-care system, our child and family services, and our education system.

This province needs real leadership and a government they can rely on, and they're not getting it from this NDP government.

Thank you.

Donna Lagopoulos

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, joining us in the gallery today are Donna and Basil Lagopoulos and friends, the owners of the iconic Desart store in Osborne Village. Desart is more than just a gift store; it's been a fixture in the Village for

almost 50 years, and on July 1st it will close its doors for the last time.

Desart's name is a portmanteau of design and art and had a simple mandate: they would sell anything that was well-designed and could fit through the door. When Donna and her husband Basil opened Desart, neither of them had any experience running a retail store. It was a new learning experience for them both. Recognizing the success of Desart and many other businesses over the years, it's clear they learned every lesson well.

They believe it was their customer support that helped carry them through. Many of their early customers still frequent the store today, and it's saying goodbye to them that makes closing the store so challenging.

I remember the first time I visited their store—I was 17, visiting older friends who had moved here for university. Desart was the first store where you could find a wedding card for two brides or two grooms. I made my last visit there last week, picking up a much-loved robot for my son and a stuffed mouse for my daughter.

For Donna and Basil the neighbourhood has always felt like home. They raised their own kids there and still live in the Village today. This is why they have been so committed to helping develop the community.

One way they did this was by starting the Osborne Village BIZ, only the second business improvement zone in Winnipeg. In May, Donna and Basil received an award from Mayor Brian Bowman for their work with the Osborne Village BIZ.

Thank you, Donna and Basil. Your passion has helped make Osborne Village one of the best neighbourhoods in Winnipeg and the country. We wish you a wonderful retirement with time for travel, art and grandchildren. Enjoy. You've earned it.

Charleswood Rotary Club 30th Anniversary

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I rise today to congratulate the Charleswood Rotary Club on their 30th anniversary. I was privileged to join them in this celebration in April.

Although the Charleswood Rotary Club is considered a relatively new club, it has achieved many accomplishments. I also note with interest, that when the club began in 1985, it had to have 23 men to be chartered; women were not admitted at that time. Since women have been included in 1989,

there have been six women presidents. Of the original group who started with Charleswood Rotary, there are still five charter members.

One of its main activities is custodianship of one of the largest urban green spaces in North America, the Assiniboine Forest. The club also supports literacy activities for both new arrivals to our country and those at risk of losing those skills over the summer months.

Recent international projects undertaken by the club include wells and sanitation facilities, providing wheelchairs, helping to build schools and supporting Rotary International's efforts to eradicate polio.

For many years, the club has hosted exchange students and sent some abroad. Partnerships have always been fostered by this group, both within the community and with other rotary clubs. They have shared the success that they have had with their annual lobster dinner with other clubs. Charleswood has also produced three district governors from their club.

Charleswood is very fortunate to have such an active, hard-working club in our community. They have earned the respect of others in Charleswood and are well known for their efforts and have touched the lives of many with their accomplishments. They are a vibrant and active club that emphasizes participation and leadership. They truly exemplify the motto, service beyond self.

On behalf of the constituents of Charleswood, thank you to this dedicated and committed group of community members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Westwood Jazz Groups

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): In Kirkfield Park, we have many groups of talented young people, two of which are the Westwood Collegiate National Vocals Jazz group and the Senior Jazz Ensemble. Both of these groups have earned gold medals for their performances at MusicFest Canada. The festival provides an incredible opportunity for students to showcase their talents in front of their peers. This year, the Westwood Collegiate, National Vocal Jazz group and Senior Jazz Ensemble both had the opportunity to showcase their skills at the festival.

The Vocal Jazz group was only formed at the beginning of this school year and they weren't sure if they would receive the national recommendation

necessary to compete at MusicFest Canada. All year the group worked hard with choral director Alice Russell, practising whenever they could, giving up their spares and coming in on weekends, and having grown up with Alice, I am not surprised that her dedication and passion helped inspire them to work towards their goal.

When they sent in their first video submission to MusicFest president Jim Howard, they didn't receive the national recommendation, but that didn't stop them. They worked even harder to bring the group together. Their commitment and dedication finally paid off on their second submission when they received their coveted recommendation.

At the festival, the Senior Jazz Ensemble and their band director, Greg Edwards, were shocked to meet the composer of one of the pieces they were about to perform. While they were warming up for an event, Jason Grossman, the artistic director of the Toronto Jazz Orchestra, walked into the room. It was stressful for them to play in front of everyone, but was made—but it also made it more exciting for them to perform it in front of the composer.

So congratulations again to Westwood Collegiate's National Vocal Jazz group and Senior Jazz Ensemble for winning gold at the national MusicFest Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that we include all the names of the students and the teachers who are part of the national vocal jazz group and senior group ensemble to be placed in the Hansard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dalyn Flatt

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): It's important to recognize Manitobans for their accomplishments because it generates goodwill and bolsters the province.

* (14:30)

Today I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge RCMP Officer Dalyn Flatt. Just 27 years old, Dalyn was named the Mounties' top shooter in June of this year. He won the prestigious Connaught Cup after going through a rigorous set of shooting competitions with his fellow Mounties. In order to attain the award—this award, Dalyn had to beat off three other officers in a shootout, who were in a four-way tie in the finals.

The Connaught Cup is 102 years old, making it the second oldest trophy in Canada. Every year,

RCMP divisions across the country send their best shooters to compete for the cup. Dalyn's accomplishment is especially significant because the cup has not been won by a Manitoban since 1957, making him the second Manitoban in history to win this award.

Prior to joining the RCMP, Dalyn had a successful career as a hockey player. He played on several different teams and was eventually drafted to the New York Rangers, but ended up returning home to Manitoba for a career in policing. As a former resident of Teulon, we are very proud of Dalyn and his accomplishments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Concludes member statements.

Now time for grievances.

Seeing no grievances, before we get to orders of the day, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members, as we have traditionally done in this House, to the fact that we have some of our pages whose last days it is. And today it is the last shift for our page, Nicholas Warsza. And Nicholas is presently in grade 12, attending the Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, with an average of 93 per cent.

Nicholas will be attending the University of Winnipeg in the fall, and his goal is to gain a degree in political science, and would like to either—to enter politics and become a member of this Assembly.

Outside of school, Nicholas enjoys the outdoor with activities such as hiking and camping and, for recreation, he enjoys jogging.

On behalf of all honourable members, Nicholas, thank you very much for your service to the Assembly, and we wish you well in the future.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day. The honourable Government House Leader, on government business.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution [*inaudible*] consider next Tuesday will be put forward by the honourable member for Concordia

(Mr. Wiebe). The title of the resolution is Government Action on Parks and Protected Spaces.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in keeping with rule 130–31(8), that the private member's resolution that would be considered next Tuesday will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Concordia, and the title of the resolution is Government Action on Parks and Protected Spaces, for information of the House.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might 'roove'—move to debate on second readings of Bill 22.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 22—The Red River College Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call debate on second readings of Bill 22, The Red River College Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to put a few words on the record today on The Red River College Act.

There's a few things that I know that I'm looking forward to seeing this bill move to committee and to hear from the public on why exactly the government has chosen now to come up with this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that this is something that the college has requested and has wanted to some—to a degree.

The Minister of Education, I know—the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Allum), I know, is probably in behind the scenes—have brought this bill forward to hide the fact that they have not done their due diligence as a government to make sure that the people put in charge of Red River College has been accountable and as transparent as they possible could've. And so this is bringing in some other rules and regulations in regards to an auditing and finance committee position now, which is different from The Colleges Act. I know that the minister, maybe when he stands up to put a few words on the record in regards to this bill, Mr. Speaker, maybe he'll share with the House when the last standing college, with The Colleges Act, Assiniboine Community College, will be moving towards their own individual act as well.

I know that some of the other provinces within this great country of ours have separate acts, one for the university and then one for the—or one for the universities and one for the colleges within the provinces. And so it is interesting that this government is going to this, to these steps, Mr. Speaker.

There's also a couple other points within there. I mean, I've already mentioned the fact that this government is trying to distance themselves from the bad press that was in the papers the last few years within some of the spending and the finances from Red River College. So they're trying to again distance themselves, as far as the minister goes, from the fact that, you know, the president had gone ahead and made some expenditures that were not seen favorable from a taxpayer's standpoint, from a student who would be attending the post-secondary institution as well, from their standpoint: a lot of their hard-earned student dollars, as far as summer student employment goes into these tuitions, and then they're expecting that a lot of their hard-earned dollars are going towards proper programming and services.

And then, when some of the expenditures that come out into the public, then right away, as typical NDP fashion—the new delay or deflect party—they don't know; it's got nothing to do with them. It comes down to, oh no, that was the president's and the board's decisions; it was not, had, did not have anything to do with this government. And that's typical of this government. They seem to stand up and take the photo ops when the news is good, but then deflect the—sort of the bad press when there is something negative coming down the pipe.

So it is going to be interesting when this bill does get to committee to hear what the public has to say in regards to it. I do believe that Red River College has been asking for it. I think some of the moves in the—and the things that have been put into the bill are, have some really good merit.

A few questions that I'm going to have, and I guess we'll debate it, I'm not even sure if it's appropriate for me to ask leave to ask some questions right now to see if I can get some answers from the minister; it might help to clear this up and to speed it up and see if we can get it to committee.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask leave to ask the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning some questions in regards to this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) to ask questions regarding this matter to the Minister of Education? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Ewasko: I'm not sure if I have to stand when I'm asking questions, but I guess we'll go.

So I'm asking the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning, in the bill it does show that some of assets and the buildings and all of that will be transferred over to Red River College. And I'm wondering, because it's part of MIT and part of the government's assets and they're the ones who own it and they operate it, has there been some dollars put into the budget to help with the purchase from Red River College's standpoint paid back to the government to purchase those buildings?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I thank the member for the question. It is a good question. In fact, Red River has been asking us for some time to engage in that kind of transfer of the buildings. We will have contemplated that in the budget, and, of course, we'll move forward with the proper due process, proper conversations, proper dialogue between ourselves, MIT and the college to make sure it's done correctly.

* (14:40)

You know, Mr. Speaker, as I said to the member many times, our obligation here is to ensure that Red River operates in a way that is responsive to students and student needs. We want to make sure that this college is as strong as it can be. This is a move that we're thinking will only enhance the ability of the college to do the kind of work it needs to do in order to educate our young people, make sure they're prepared for a good job in the future.

Mr. Ewasko: I thank the minister for getting up and answering that question.

We on this side of the House as well, Mr. Speaker, we want to see that our post-secondary institutions are being accountable and transparent to the taxpayers of this great province as well as the students. So I'm going to ask the minister: Have they gone and done an assessment of all the buildings that Red River College is going to have to then purchase from the government?

Mr. Allum: At this stage of course, we're, the government, of course, is always on top of the value of the buildings and of the, of their condition. Of course, there would need to be, as I said earlier, an

ongoing dialogue with the college about the, about how we work out the actual details of the transfer, that the member asked, well, of course, although we have numbers in place, it, of course, will be done to ensure that there's a proper assessment done and so that the deal is fair for both government and for the college.

As I said earlier, we want to make sure that the college is in a position to move forward with a strong agenda, be in a position to provide the kind of training and education those young people need in order to go on and get a good job here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), with further questions.

Mr. Ewasko: So, then—so this bill was coming forward and then if it gets to committee and then passes through committee and then through third reading, those assets and that are going to be then moved over to Red River, so I'm assuming then—and I know that I shouldn't assume this—but I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, I had already asked about the appraisal or the assessments of those buildings, but what is the dollar figure that this government, that this minister, whether it's MIT or this minister, expecting to get back from Red River College, and what are going to be the payment schedules in regards to when that amount of money is going to be transferred back into the government's coffers?

Mr. Allum: And it's—these are good questions coming from the member, and I appreciate from them. Of course, we need to pass the legislation first in order to pursue the line of, course of action that he's asking about.

Those details, of course, will be figured out in due course. At this stage we're trying to get the legislation passed. We believe it has broad support among not only at the college but among many stakeholders, and we certainly think that as we go through, there'll be additional dialogue, additional conversations. We'll do it in good faith with our partners, and we'll make sure that we arrive at the proper assessment to ensure that Manitobans are protected but at the same time that the college is in a position to proceed.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, with a further question.

Mr. Ewasko: I'm not quite sure if I'm feeling that warm, fuzzy feeling here, Mr. Speaker, because when you go shopping for a car and you're going to go buy a used car or whatever else, and the owner of

the vehicle doesn't come to you and say, well, you know what, just sign the dotted line here and we'll work out the details later on. Please trust us.

I am hesitant here, Mr. Speaker, thinking that Red River College has wanted this act, so I'm assuming, then, that the price points or the assessments of those buildings and the assets that are going to be transferred over to Red River College, I would think that those prices or those assessments would have been established before that this, before this legislation is being passed; I'm assuming that the minister has had conversations with Red River's board and that that should have been done.

So I'm asking the minister: Is he telling the House, then, that they have not appraised or assessed the value of those buildings and they're going to wait 'til after the fact that this act is passed?

Mr. Allum: Well, Mr. Speaker, I, you know, not sure what the member is driving at. I said earlier that the—and, by the way, many of these questions probably more properly placed for the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) as they have responsibility for the assets currently at Red River. But I would say that, of course, the government has a good handle on the assets currently on campus at the—at Red River College. He needs to remember that we've invested quite considerable sums of money into those campuses, not only at Notre Dame but at the Princess Street campus downtown that has made an enormous contribution not only to the college itself but, of course, to downtown.

I used to work at City Hall. I often went over to Red River College, the Princess Street campus; it was a beehive of activity, students were engaged, faculty were excited, staff were happy to be there. We, of course, do have an assessment of what those assets are currently, of course. But I am not sure if the member just doesn't believe in dialogue, or he doesn't want us to continue the conversations so that we can arrive at a kind of negotiation and deal that's fair for both sides and in the interest of Manitobans, as well as ensuring that the college is well placed in the future to go forward.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, with a further question.

Mr. Ewasko: I am trying to be as respectful and asking the questions so that, again, the government's being as accountable and is transparent as they

possibly can with the actual intent of this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So, I guess, my question is, within the budget, the Red River's budget for this coming year, 2015-2016, what was the dollar amount that was set aside for when this act was passed so it could be transferred over into—whether it's the Department of Education and Advanced Learning or to MIT or just into the treasury, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Allum: Well, as I said, Mr. Speaker, earlier, that these questions really are more properly directed to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), but I appreciate the member asking about it.

Of course, just because the bill passes, it won't automatically mean that the transfer will happen. There will be additional conversations, additional dialogue, additional negotiation, if they come to that—if it comes to that. What the act really does is it enables the assets to be owned by Red River College, but that's not—it doesn't actually mean a transfer of those assets.

And so I want to be—member to recognize that what we're trying to do here is to enable the college to act, through the bill, to act in a way that is responsible for the public dollars that they get, that it's accountable and it's transparent. And we want to be sure that at the same time, that the college is enabled to provide the training to give students the kind of skills and knowledge they need to not only have—be successful students but to go on and get a good job.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the first thing's first here; it comes first. Is the—for us to, as a Legislature, as all members of this House, to support this bill, to make sure that Red River is positioned to continue to be a leading college in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), with a further question.

Mr. Ewasko: I guess, when we get moving towards committee, some of these points will come up. And one other thing I'm thinking for the minister to take back and to consider is also the—and this isn't a question, I'm done questioning, Mr. Speaker, so I appreciate the opportunity and the minister as well for the answers—but also what is going to be happening when the, not transfer, but when those assets are purchased by Red River College, and they are the owners of those properties, the assets, there's also some efficiencies that come with when the

government still owns. So, whether we're talking about engineering or some sort of breakdown in some of the buildings whether it's architectural or whatever else, they've got access to their own engineers, which could then save a considerable amount of money.

I'm just wondering if that dollar amount equivalent is going to be then put into Red River's budget and then we've got other facilities, post-secondary institutions within the province, that I'm sure are sort of wondering the same thing, Mr. Speaker.

So I am willing to—we are willing to move this to committee and to look forward to hearing what the public and other stakeholders within the province have to say about this act. And so, with that, Mr. Speaker, I end my comments for now.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to put a few words on the table here. This—

* (14:50)

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question? No further debate?

Question before the House is debate on second reading of Bill 22, The Red River College Act.

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

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Thursday, June 25th, at 6 p.m., to consider Bill 11, Bill 17, Bill 22.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Thursday, June the 25th, 2015, at 6 p.m., to consider the following bills: Bill 11, The Public Health Amendment Act (Prohibiting Children's Use of Tanning Equipment and Other Amendments); Bill 17, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; and Bill 22, The Red River College Act.

That's for information of the House.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), oh, pardon me, let me start again.

Mr. Speaker, we are studiously working on a number of issues related to rules in this Chamber, and to be—well, I should have given credit to the people at the, in the Chamber who have done outstanding work in order to accommodate these measures. And I'm,

we have discussed and have indicated that because of the hard work done by people who work at the table, that we require time in order to put together some of the rules. *[interjection]* Not doing a motion?

Is there leave, Mr. Speaker, to call it 5 o'clock?

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 23, 2015

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