

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated.

Routine proceedings; introduction of bills.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 35—The Municipal Conflict of Interest and
Campaign Financing Act
(Various Acts Amended)**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill No. 35, The Municipal Conflict of Interest and Campaign Financing Act, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable minister for intergovernment affairs, seconded by the honourable minister for Agriculture and Food, that Bill No. 35, The Municipal Conflict of Interest Campaign Financing Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

Mr. Ashton: This bill, Mr. Speaker, this very important bill, will introduce increased accountability in terms of municipal government. It follows from the Auditor General's report, and it brings in transparency and disclosure in terms of municipal conflict-of-interest declarations.

It also, Mr. Speaker, will bring municipal elections in line with provincial and federal elections by banning union and corporate donations, restricting contributions in elections to residents of Manitoba, setting maximum contribution limits that reflect those in the city of limit—city of Winnipeg limit and also providing disclosure for campaign contributors. It reforms both conflict of interest and our municipal elections act. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Petitions.

PETITIONS

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba's Premier and his NDP government have not recognized the issues of public concern related to Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The WRHA is building an administrative empire at the expense of bedside care.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority needs to be held accountable for the decisions it is making.

Health-care workers are being pressured into not being able to speak out no matter what the WRHA is doing or has done.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP government to call a public meeting, or call a meeting of the standing committee of the Legislature and to invite representatives of the WRHA to appear before it.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by T. Phillips, L. Mossop, E. Mossop and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

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

Long-Term Care Facilities—Morden and Winkler

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition.

Many seniors from the Morden and Winkler area are currently patients in Boundary Trails Health Centre while they wait for placement in local personal care homes.

There are presently no beds available for these patients in Salem Home and Tabor Home. To make more beds in the hospital available, the regional health authority is planning to move these beds to personal care homes in outlying regions.

These patients have lived, worked and raised their families in this area for most of their lives. They receive care and support from their family and friends who live in the community, and they will lose

this support if they are forced to move to distant communities.

These seniors and their families should not have to bear the consequences of the provincial government's failure to ensure there are adequate personal care home beds in the region.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to ensure that patients who are awaiting placement in a personal care home are not moved to distant communities.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider working with the RHA and the community to speed construction and expansion of the long-term care facilities in the region.

This is signed by Jacob Dyck, John Wiebe, Leonard Lern and many, many others.

PTH 15

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba made a public commitment to the people of Springfield to twin PTH 15 and the floodway bridge on PTH 15, but then in 2006, the twinning was cancelled.

Injuries resulting from collisions on PTH 15 continue to rise and have doubled from 2007 to 2008.

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) stated that preliminary analysis of current and future traffic demands indicate that local twinning will be required.

The current plan to replace the floodway bridge on PTH 15 does not include twinning and, therefore, does not fulfil the current nor future traffic demands cited by the Minister of Transportation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate twinning of the PTH 15 floodway bridge for the safety of the citizens of Manitoba.

Signed by bus driver, Pat Hollingshead; bus driver, Ernie Hadaller; Brian Acott and many, many other Manitobans.

Photo Radar

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for the petition:

It is important to protect the safety of construction workers who are on the job by having reduced speeds in construction zones when workers are present.

Provincial government handed out tickets to thousands of Manitobans who were driving the regular posted speed limit in construction zones when there were no construction workers present.

A Manitoba court has ruled that the reduced speed zones in construction areas were intended to protect workers and that the tickets that were given when no construction workers were present were invalid.

The provincial government has decided not to collect unpaid fines given to motorists who were ticketed driving the normal posted speed limit when no construction workers were present.

The provincial government is refusing to refund the money to many hardworking, law-abiding Manitobans who are already paid the fine for driving the regular speed limit in construction zone when no workers were present.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Attorney General (Mr. Chomiak) consider refunding all monies collected from photo radar tickets given to motorists driving the regular posted speed limit in construction zones when no workers were present.

This petition is signed by Jack Folkett, Gertie Omilanow, MaryLou Michalyshen and many other fine rural Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Twinning of Trans-Canada Highway

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The six-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway passing through Headingley is an

extremely busy stretch of road averaging 18,000 vehicles daily.

This section of the Trans-Canada Highway is one of the few remaining stretches of undivided highway in Manitoba and has seen countless accidents, some of them fatal.

In its January 2009 budget, the federal government indicated it would work with the provincial government to cost share the improvements to this stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway.

In the interests of protecting motorist safety, it is critical that the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley be completed as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) consider meeting as soon as possible with his federal counterparts to finalize the cost-sharing arrangements needed to move the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway forward in order to ensure that the federal monies available for this important project do not lapse.

To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation consider making the completion of the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley in 2009 an urgent provincial government priority.

And this is signed by Barb McCulloch, David White, Darren Glowatski and many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Petitions; committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Third Report

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following—

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- *November 21, 2005 (4th Session – 38th Legislature)*
- *October 25, 2007 (1st Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *December 19, 2007 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *June 1, 2009*

Matters under Consideration

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the November 21, 2005 meeting:

- *Mr. AGLUGUB (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. BRICK (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Mr. HAWRANIK*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mrs. MITCHELSON*
- *Mr. PENNER*
- *Mr. REID*
- *Mr. SCHELLENBERG*

Committee Membership for the October 25, 2007 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*

- Ms. HOWARD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. JHA
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Mr. SWAN

Committee membership for the December 19, 2007 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. CALDWELL
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Mrs. ROWAT
- Mr. SARAN
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER

Committee Membership for the June 1, 2009 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. BLAIKIE
- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. JHA (Vice-Chairperson)
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MCFADYEN
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. SELINGER
- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Mr. WHITEHEAD
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the November 21, 2005 meeting:

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the October 25, 2007 meeting:

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the December 19, 2007 meeting:

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the June 1, 2009 meeting:

- Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006*

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007*
- *The Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008*

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), that the report of the committee be received.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Member for Transcona, seconded by the honourable Member for Radisson, that the report of the committee be received. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Tabling of reports.

* (13:40)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following report: the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, the '09-010 Revenue Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: 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 from Border View Mennonite Church youth group who are the guests of the honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

And also in the public gallery we have from Border Valley School 50 grade 4 and 5 students under the direction of Ms. Margaret Bergen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

And also in the public gallery we have from St. Maurice School, we have 14 grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Shaun McCaffrey. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable minister for Healthy Living.

And also in the public gallery we have from H. C. Avery School, we have 25 grade 7 students under the direction of Ms. Val O'Leary. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Attorney General (Mr. Chomiak).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you all here today.

Oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1999 Election Campaign Returns

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): The—following the 1999 election, the NDP submitted a number of false election returns in order to trigger more than \$76,000 in, in taxpayer-funded rebates that the party had no entitlement to.

Mr. Speaker, almost four years later, they were given the opportunity to file amended returns, and those amended returns were filed without any auditor sign-off even though that auditor sign-off is required under the act.

Mr. Speaker, we have just learned that in addition to the amended returns that were filed almost four years after the fact in April of 2003 that there's a second set of amended returns that were filed by some MLA—some NDP MLAs. The second set of amended returns—so we're now up to three different returns filed by these NDP candidates in connection with the same election campaign.

The, the changed, amended returns, the second version, Mr. Speaker, again doesn't contain auditor sign-off, but in the case of The Pas, has a signature of the official agent, Louise Perry, which is completely different from the signature of Louise Perry on the annual return filed in 1999.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) whether he has any concern at all, as the guardian of the public purse, that his party is filing now three sets of returns, all of which are different from one another; the first set of which was false, and the next two of which have not had auditor sign-off and have different signatures for the same individuals.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will warn, I will warn the Leader of the Opposition about making, casping—casting aspersions in this House where a member is not subject to, to scrutiny—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Chomiak: —because I want to quote what the provincial election had said on these issues when asked in committee, quote: There is not a political party in this House that has not refilled a financial statement, that has not repaid reimbursement at one point, in some cases, more than once.

So this has happened in the past across the board, having not resulted in prosecutions in either cases. With respect to repayment or reimbursement and refilling your returns, this is not a politic—let's put it in some context. That is not unusual. Let's put the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: I'll table the, the documents that we're making reference to—the three sets of returns with respect to The Pas. There are other returns have been filed. In the case of all 13 candidates, now, Mr. Speaker, there are now three different sets of documents on the public record.

The last two amended returns have yet to be signed off by an auditor even though that's a requirement under the act. In the case of The Pas, we've got different signatures. In the case of other documents, including that of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), the official agent signed off on one

set of amended returns but has no signature on the other set.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance, as the guardian of the public purse, whether he has any concern about the fact that his own party now has three different sets of documents concerning 1999 on the public record and that these are the documents that are used to trigger payments from Manitoba taxpayers to his party.

Mr. Chomiak: In—the independent office that reviews this was the same independent office that reviewed the Monnin inquiry, and the Monnin inquiry found that they were not prejudiced, Mr. Speaker.

Leaving Monnin aside, in 1995 the Tories broke the election law by overspending. In '99, three Tory candidates exceeded their limits. In 2003, the Tory auditor, the Conservative Party official auditor, refused to certify the statements and amended the statement four months later. The same point by members opposite, so, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: —the, the head of Elections Manitoba is right. Every party has amended their statements, and every party—and I don't know if the Tories reimbursed the \$13,000, and I guess the member—Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) should indicate to this House whether the money was reimbursed—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: —as it was from our side—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: —when we amended.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, we do know that there were candidates following 1999 from our party who were aggressively pursued, charged and publicly named by Elections Manitoba in connection with those issues.

Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here is the fact that after 1999, his party engaged in a deliberate scheme of cheque swapping, phony invoices, false returns, in order to trigger illegal rebates to the tune of \$76,000. It's on a different scale from any of the examples that he's citing.

The requirement under the act is that if a party restates its financial statements that it must have

auditor sign-off. That is a requirement, Mr. Speaker. Here we are almost 10 years later. We have now three sets of documents on the files, no auditor's sign-off to date, and I wonder if the Attorney General can indicate whether he, as the Attorney General—as, as opposed to being a partisan defender of his party—as Attorney General, has concerns about the fact that these discrepancies exist among all of these very significant documents.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I've heard the member's opinions in the hallway and in this Legislature, and they amount to allegations of the member's opinions.

Mr. Speaker, the Tories did the exact same thing when they refiled their '95 returns, and it was only signed off once by their auditors, on March 22nd, only once by their auditors. That report was signed by the chief financial officer for the party. It was filed with Elections Manitoba, accepted, and dealt with in exactly the same fashion as the allegations made by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Elections Manitoba said: We took—we're looking at the same situation, and we did the same circumstances. We took the extra step this time. In fact, the extra step by Elections Manitoba was to say it in the Elections Manitoba report and to state it publicly, something that the Tories didn't do.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Treatment Wait List

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): We learned this morning about an alarming increase in a wait list for addictions treatment. There are currently 163 people on a wait list for AFM's methadone program, and they're waiting three to four months just for an initial assessment. Most troubling, at least three people have died waiting for help for their opiate addiction.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Healthy Living to explain why she has allowed this wait list to get so dangerously and fatally long.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): This government has taken an aggressive approach to addictions and mental health services in Manitoba. We've increased the addictions budget by 54 percent, and, by doing that, we have improved services across Manitoba.

Addictions have a cost for individuals, communities and our whole province. What we've done is we have worked with all of our partners to ensure that we are able to provide prevention,

education, treatment services, as well as after-care services to Manitobans.

DPIN System Physician Access

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, pharmacists and doctors are supposed to be able to help opiate addiction before it starts by using the DPIN system. Doctors on the front lines say that better, easier access to DPIN would make an enormous difference in the number of people abusing prescription drugs. But the Minister of Healthy Living was on the radio this morning saying that the access doctors currently have is good enough.

I would like to ask the Minister of Healthy Living: Why is she ignoring the front-line doctors and refusing them better access to DPIN so that they can properly and adequately deal with these addictions?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): The doctors in Manitoba have access through—to DPIN, through communication through the pharmacists. That gives them the access. We have worked very digi—digila—digi—diligently to support individuals in ensuring that we're able to provide and improve technology for health professionals. The electronic health records are one of those pieces that will help us continue to do this work.

But this is only one piece of the solution. The solution is to provide the prevention, the education and the treatment that's required. We will continue to work with our front-line workers as we do every day in this province to ensure that we provide them with the resources that they need.

* (13:50)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, doctors are saying it can take them hours to get a hold of a pharmacist, and they don't have hours in dealing with the addictions. The bottom line is that people are dying while they're waiting for addiction treatments in Manitoba's methadone program under this minister's watch. Three patients have died recently, and this morning, a doctor on the radio also said that others are talking about suicide because they're so desperate for help. So, not only is this minister not doing enough to combat the wait list, she's not doing enough to help prevent it.

So we have to ask her: You know, how many more addicts are out there that are going to fall

through the cracks in this system because this minister of Health is not able to do her job properly?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that we have invested money, time and support to agencies across this province. We have done some work, and we have made some—more—we have made progress. We have more work to do, and we are committed to doing that work. We have some strategies which, which we have brought together stakeholders. Our crystal meth strategy is one of those examples where stakeholders got together, identified an issue, developed prevention, education and treatment programs, and we've been able to deal with that crystal meth issue.

What we've done here around OxyContin, when the service providers came to me and talked to me about the issues that they identified, we talked to them. We ensured that we increased the supports into the m.i.n.e. program, as well as providing additional supports across the system for abstinence-based services as well.

Seniors Support Services Regional Health Authorities Funding

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): For years, the association of seniors support co-ordinators have been advocating on behalf of seniors resource co-ordinators in Manitoba, but their pleas have been ignored by this Minister of Healthy Living. The Minister of Healthy Living allocates funding to the RHAs who are then supposed to pass on the funding to the services to seniors groups who provide services like meal programs, recreation and safety programs to seniors.

Can the Minister of Healthy Living explain why the funding allocated years ago by her department hasn't yet trickled down to the seniors group and tell the House where the taxpayer money is being spent?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Seniors support service workers do amazing work throughout this province providing that support to individuals and to communities, whether it's through the congregate meal program, whether it's through supports around yard work, whether it's transportation or the important issue of dealing with isolation and providing those opportunities. We work with the regional health authorities as well as the service—the support workers to ensure that these services are available in the community.

Mrs. Rowat: But this government is cutting those support programs for these individuals. Mr. Speaker,

the minister should be able to tell us exactly where the money intended for seniors has gone, but she can't.

And these are the facts: Some service to seniors groups get funding increases; some do not. The quality of programming available to Manitoba seniors varies widely depending on where you live. The minister keeps giving the RHAs a blank cheque for seniors programs without making sure it gets past the RHA bureaucracy to Manitoba seniors.

When is the Minister of Healthy Living going to demand some accountability from the RHAs for these funds because they are not actually reaching the programs they're supposed to be, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The regional health authorities provide quality service to seniors across this province every day, whether it's through our health-care system, through our community-based services. They work—and our home care as well. They work very closely with community-based services to ensure that seniors have the supports they need, and what our province is working toward Age-Friendly Manitoba, and Age-Friendly Manitoba is working with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, as well as with Manitoba Chamber of Commerce to ensure that we are dealing with the issues of safety, transportation, health care and housing, and through these initiatives we are making a difference alongside the service support workers.

Mrs. Rowat: During Estimates, I asked the minister to look into this. There's an obvious disconnect, Mr. Speaker, and she's doing nothing about it.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Healthy Living has set these groups up to fail, and, as a result, she's failing seniors. Because of her mismanagement, programs for seniors are suffering.

I'd like to table a letter that the Minnedosa & District Services to Seniors groups received from the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority last fall. The letter states that—in the first paragraph—that their grant funding will increase. But the third paragraph in the letter states: The Resource Coordinator funding works out to be \$317 less than you received last year. Meanwhile, Mr. Speaker—and this was identified in Estimates—staffing costs at the seniors and health aging secretariat go up and have increased over \$20,000 this year.

Why is the Minister of Healthy Living more interested in bulking up her own department's

bureaucracy than making seniors programs get to the seniors who need them, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: It's very interesting that the member across raises seniors support services, when they, in the past, their, their plan was to privatize it. What would of that done for seniors of Manitoba? What would of that done?

What we have done is we've worked, we've worked with community, we've worked with the seniors—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: —and their organizations. We've worked with the seniors supporting organizations. We've listened to them. We've developed programs to ensure that, that seniors can stay in their homes as long as they want because we know that's where they, they want to be. That's—their age in a healthy way. We make sure that we provide those, those supports through transportation, through recreation. By working with all of our partners, we are making a difference in supporting Manitoba seniors.

Hog Industry Economic Challenges

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Manitoba's pork industry is facing severe economic challenges with prices at all-time low. Piglets are at \$5 a piece, take off the freight to move them; they only gross \$3 a piece. Other provinces have stepped up their—upped their help to the pork producers in this time of governments of which it needs action.

This NDP government has no interest in working with an industry that creates 15,000 direct and indirect jobs and generates millions of dollars in export sales. Instead, they're prepared to waste millions of dollars on the west-side power line.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture explain why she won't come to the table with a helping hand, with a hand up for our pork producers?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I'm very pleased that the member opposite has raised an important issue, and he talks about the pork industry. I'm very pleased that he also joined us for a barbecue at the back of the Legislature when we were showing our support for the pork industry, Mr. Speaker.

Because during a time that we were—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: –facing H1N1–

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: –challenges, the pork industry was facing the impacts, Mr. Speaker, and it was important that we have showed public support, and the members opposite, indeed, join us to show–share their support for the industry.

I can assure the member, also, that I am indeed working very closely with the industry and just as we have in the past been able to put in place supports for the industry, we continue to work with them on the various options.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, I know the Manitoba pork industry met with the minister and sent a letter to the minister in late March, and in March they–or May the 11th–they also met with the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province, along with agricultural minister, and has not heard an answer back in regards to a helping hand in regards to their cash advance–it's not a cash advance, but assistance for our producers.

Let's do the math. We have an industry that's worth investing in. We'll get a return on our investment by retraining thousands of direct dollars to direct and indirect. They're ensuring one of our key exporting industries does survive and stay viable.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture be honest with the producers today and say yes or no to whether or not she is going to help our producers?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that the member opposite talked about cash advance. We put in place programs for the pork industry last year.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about having met with them in March. I can assure him that I met with them in May. I just met with them a couple of weeks ago, and we talked about the various programs that are there.

Mr. Speaker, this is very much a national issue. We have national programs, and that is why it is important that we work together with the federal government to ensure that we do not create trade challenges.

The member opposite does not want to recognize that there are other challenges facing the por–pork industry, such as country-of-origin labelling. And that's why we continue to work on that front, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we take the nec–necessary steps to ensure that our product continues to go into that major market, to the United States.

* (14:00)

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear that the Manitoba government needs to have leadership in regards to providing an advance for our producers, one that's not repayable, one that's not a cash advance, one that's going to show a commitment along the ones that Saskatchewan and Alberta has done. The Manitoba council has asked the minister for help.

She's reviewing it. They want to know, yes or no, is this government going to provide assistance for our producers now, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, I guess, Mr. Speaker, today is a spending day. Other days they criticize us for spending. Today the member, who is back in the House, is talking about spending more money.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that there are programs. He talks about cash advance. There are ways to get cash advance, and I would encourage the member to look at the Targeted Advance that we have done in the past, as we have talked to the pork producers, that they should make application for the Targeted Advance to work within the existing programs that we have to ensure that they have cash flow.

As I said to the member opposite, we have met with pork producers. We will continue to work with pork producers, Mr. Speaker. There are many challenges facing the industry. Country-of-origin labelling, the rising Canadian dollar are all putting pressure on the industry.

Health-Care Services MRI Wait Times

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, a 15-year-old boy in Winnipeg is desperately in need of health care, because he is forced to wait to see a specialist. Tyler can't sit, stand or walk. He's been lying in bed for three and a half months. Now he is having periods of blindness. He was told he would have to wait eight to 10 weeks for a CT scan and 14 weeks for an urgent MRI.

Can the Minister of Health explain to Tyler's mom, Debbie, why her son, who can't sit, walk or stand, was told that the wait for an urgent ERI, or MRI, for him, is 14 weeks?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I believe that every member of this House, every parent in the room, knows that waiting one day is too long when your child is in pain, and I accept the member opposite's statement wholly.

Certainly on the particulars of this case, I commit to the member absolutely to investigate immediately, to be in contact with the mother, to ensure that we can get the most timely and rapid service possible. I would want that for any parent in Manitoba.

Specialist Wait Times

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, Tyler needs to see a neurologist but the waits are years long in Manitoba. Winnipeg is short 80 specialists, and I'd like to table the FIPPA that shows we have a shortage of 80 specialists in Winnipeg. Two of the neuro—two of the pediatric neurologists are missing, and we have three adult neurologists that are also missing.

Debbie was told that the wait list to see a pediatric neurologist in Manitoba is four years long. Debbie and Tyler's pediatrician have been beating the bushes in Manitoba and across Canada to find a pediatrician, a neurologist, so Tyler can be diagnosed before he can even be treated. Tyler finally got an appointment to see a neurologist, March 2010.

So can the Minister of Health explain to Tyler and to his mom, Debbie, who is in the gallery today, why he cannot see a neurologist for a year in Manitoba?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would reiterate that when you are a parent with a child that is in pain, one day of a wait is too long, and I'll commit to the member once again to investigate immediately. That kind of a wait is unacceptably long. I'm not going to deny that, and we want to investigate and find out why.

We know that access to doctors is improving in Manitoba. But, clearly, in this case—and I would want to check more information on the details of the case, but, clearly, even if the member is half correct in what she's saying, that's unacceptably long and we want to do something about it immediately.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, Debbie desperately wants help for her son before it's too late. She is terrified that Tyler's going to die. This is totally unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, 1,471 doctors have left Manitoba under the NDP. There are 80 specialists right now that we are short. The Mayo Clinic could see Tyler tomorrow so that he could be diagnosed and treated. In Canada, Debbie was told to take Tyler to an ER and sit and wait. Tyler can't sit.

So would the minister either agree to send Tyler to the Mayo Clinic where they can see him tomorrow, where they can diagnose him and treat him, and will she commit today to see Debbie after question period?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that I meet with families and parents, those facing difficulty all the time, and the member in the gallery today would be no exception. I would be happy to meet with her.

Further, I can let the member know that we will look at the specifics of this case, because there isn't a parent in this room whose heart would not break if their child had to wait one day for care. We do not have a perfect system, Mr. Speaker. I have never said that we have. *[interjection]* Members opposite seem to think that this is an appropriate time to heckle and make jokes. I wouldn't do so when a parent—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little order. The honourable Minister of Health has the floor.

Ms. Oswald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Any parent in this room would know that we want to get the quickest care that we can for children. Our system's not perfect, but we're working on improving it every single day. We're committed to do that, and this case will be no exception.

Flooding

Municipality Damage Compensation

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, when a municipality is involved in fighting a flood that requires Disaster Financial Assistance funding, they are required to pay at least 10 percent of the costs. When there is a major damage in a municipality, these costs can be prohibitively high. That has been the case in some Manitoba municipalities hit by floods this year.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs have any plans to assist

the affected municipalities in dealing with this challenge?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): The short answer is, yes, we are looking at the impact on municipalities. We anticipate fully that there'll be federal cost-sharing 'cause, certainly, there's an impact on Manitoba as well, and, indeed, we will be looking at some of the specific costs that the municipalities did incur, because I can't say enough about how our municipalities were there on the front lines, were a huge part of the emergency response and one of the main reasons that we had far less damage than there would have been otherwise.

So the short answer is, yes, we are looking at it.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, during the 1997 flood, the Filmon government agreed that no municipality would have to pay more than 5 percent of its annual budget toward flood fighting and clean-up costs. In making that announcement, the government said, and they wanted to—and I'm quoting here: to ensure that no municipality had its finances totally wiped out by costs incurred protecting people and property, end quote.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll just ask the minister if he is prepared to match that reduction to 5 percent.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, no one in this government said we were living in a flood plain, so I don't want to necessarily tag this flood event and '97. I want to indicate, first of all, in '97, there was still a significant impact on municipalities because at that time there was a far more significant cost to municipalities because it predated the \$130-million worth of flood protection that protected hundreds of homes, businesses and farms in the valley this time. I use the example of the R.M. of Ritchot, where in 1997 they put up three million sandbags. In this flood event, there were 300,000 sandbags. So there still was a significant impact to municipalities post-'97, notwithstanding the information the member brings to the House.

We are looking, Mr. Speaker, at minimizing any impact on municipalities. We've already moved on municipal equipment. It was 16 percent recovery of heavy equipment rental rates. It's now 65 percent. We're working with municipalities. We'll make a real difference.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:10)

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, flood hit municipalities are reporting costs well in excess of their budgetary abilities. They're facing huge costs related to preflood preparations, damage to roads and other infrastructure and clean-up costs.

For example, this year in the Rural Municipality of Morris, their estimated cost for, for flood-related issues are 7 to 8 million dollars, which means at 10 percent requirement under disaster financial assistment, it will cost them 700 to 800,000 dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister again: Will he commit to provide the same type of assistance to municipalities as the former government did in 1997?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I, I think this is a member that doesn't take yes for an answer. I said yes, we are reviewing the cost to municipalities.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to use the benchmark of 1997, 'cause I want to stress again that there were particulars, particularly municipal equipment, that weren't adequately covered in 1997. So we're gonna apply fairness in 2009. In fact, I took the time to go out to the affected municipality, the R.M. of Morris. I've met with the reeve in that area.

We're more than aware of the concerns, Mr. Speaker. So the short answer—again, I know the member doesn't like to take yes for an answer—but, yes, we're reviewing the cost, and yes we want to limit the cost to municipalities following the flood of 2009.

Breezy Point Government Buyout of Homes

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the government for their long-term plan for the area at Breezy Point and the area across the river on the east side. You know, there was no answer. Now, some time ago, the government bought out people on Hecla Island, and then a few years later reversed and changed their mind, and it was a total mess.

Well, I asked yesterday for a long-term plan, and the government didn't provide an answer. Breezy Point residents who have not been flooded, who spent a lot of money and flood proofed their homes to an adequate level, are now being dispossessed by this government. So people are asking why the government is wasting money buying them out without even a long-term plan.

What is the long-term plan? When's the minister gonna table it?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): Well, as I indicated yesterday to the Member for River Heights, our focus, very much, have been the people who very, were negatively impacted by lots of water and lots of ice right into their homes this past spring and in a number of springs pre-de-pre-dating this flood event of this year, Mr. Speaker.

I think we, we are correct in working directly with those people whose lives have been turned upside down by Mother Nature. I think we have to work with those folks. We have to be very sympathetic with those folks and their lot in life today, not down the road, but today, Mr. Speaker. And I think we have put a very fair, very generous pre-flood, free market value offer on the table for these folks to help them relocate and, and I think we have to be very clear—and I think I'll get a chance to be very clear in a second.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, many who were badly flooded, who've been repeatedly flooded, accept that there's a need for a buyout, but it's the people who have never been flooded, right?—who flood proofed their homes high enough that they were not flooded this year, they're asking why is the government wasting money. These are people who have invested their long-time future, have dreams, and now the government has got a gun to their head saying: move, leave behind the dreams of a lifetime.

At least Mr. Minister should give a long-term plan, and let people know that it's not gonna be another Hecla Island, that the government has a vision of some sort for what's gonna happen to that area.

Mr. Struthers: You know, sometimes, sometimes, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be very careful with the choose—the words that we choose and we—when we go to, when we go to bat for, for people in, in Manitoba. And I understand the, the need for the Member for River Heights to represent people that come to meet with him. I, I understand that, but to say that we're putting a gun to people's heads by offering a fair market, pre-flood, fair market arrangement to help these people relocate when they were in a tough situation.

And I want to add, Mr. Speaker, there were other people, people who went to rescue these folks who were put in harm's way, municipal leaders who stuck their necks out to represent their people too, just as

the Member for River Heights is doing today, people locally like the reeve, Don Forfar, who has co-operated right to the whole 10 yards in this, stepping forward and providing real leadership. We have to be very, very sympathetic to the, the cause of these folks and their plight—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Struthers: —and work with them.

Burntwood Regional Health Authority Litigation against Journalist

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has fa—failed at holding our regional health-care authorities accountable, and that's one of the reasons why we believe it's important that they come before a standing committee.

Having said that, now we have the Burntwood Regional Health Authority that is suing, Mr. Speaker, or threatening to sue, a freelance reporter because they didn't like the articles that were written. One could talk about freedom of speech, but what really offends is that you have a regional health-care authority that is using tax dollars in order to intimidate someone that's trying to uncover some truth as to what's actually taking place in health care in the province of Manitoba.

My question to the Minister of Health: Does she support regional health-care au-authorities using tax dollars to sue Manitobans because they don't necessarily like what regional health authorities are doing in the province?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe in a free and democratic society. It's part of why I'm here. And, also, I, I welcome healthy debate and, and criticism. It adds to that healthy debate, helps us go forward.

I can also let you know that there have been very serious allegations made over time, you know, words like corruption and bribery and so forth. And, and I want the, the member to know that there are processes in place for such kinds of allegations to be independently investigated. I also want to assure the member, assure the journalist, as well, that if there are evidence of such things, that, that I encourage him to bring those things forward to the appropriate authority, to the Ombudsman. I believe in free speech, Mr. Speaker.

Community Economic Development National Conference

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I have yet to hear a very, very important question from that side. For the last six years, I've been waiting for—to hear some, some, some important futuristic and positive question on—[*interjection*] Yes, it is about economy, friends. I will not use that word. But it is about economy. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, we need jobs, we need economy, we need real economic development throughout Manitoba.

Now I have to ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to give us some information on what our government is doing to give opportunities to regional economies, to develop economies in, all across Manitoba on the important—which is jobs, economy and opportunities for business development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): This week Manitoba hosts a national conference on community economic development.

While in other jurisdictions the headlines talk about major bankruptcies, here in Manitoba, with the lowest unemployment rate in the country, one of the untold stories is the degree to which community economic development in urban centres and rural centres and northern centres is part of the Manitoba model. And we're going to be sharing the success stories in northern Manitoba: the new CEDF headquarters opened this past Thursday; the success stories in rural Manitoba in terms of rural economic development; and I'm particularly proud we're going to be able to share the success stories of nor—of Neighbourhoods Alive!, Mr. Speaker, where in Winnipeg and Brandon and Thompson, now in five new communities we're seeing community economic development to the point that the highest increase in property values in the city of Winnipeg is in the core area, in the north of Winnipeg.

By working with communities, the Manitoba model is working at the community economic development level.

Vita Hospital Emergency Room Closure

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the community of Vita has joined a long list of other ERs that have been closed by this NDP government. The Minister of Health has now closed 18 rural emergency rooms. Ten years ago, the NDP

promised to fix health care in six months and \$15 million.

Will the minister tell the people of Vita why she's risking their health and safety by closing these emergency room?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): We know that recruiting in rural, and even more difficult a situation in northern Manitoba is a challenge. We know that physician shortages are not unique to Manitoba and that indeed, they are a national and international challenge.

We know that this situation isn't ideal for the community of Vita, and we're going to work with the regional health authority on recruitment efforts that involve international medical graduates and involve growing our own doctors here at home by increasing the spaces in our medical school.

I might point out that's a sharp contrast to members opposite choice; when in tough economic times—times, you just cut the spaces in medical school. I wonder why you did that.

* (14:20)

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer is cold comfort to the people of Vita, who have a long drive ahead of them when there's an emergency, all because the minister failed to do her job.

More than 1,471 doctors have left Manitoba since the NDP took office. Three doctors were supposed to be working in the Vita hospital, two have left, one—the last one—plans to leave in three weeks. When that happens, the hospital will be closed.

Will the minister tell the community of Vita: Will she have doctors in place to reopen the ER, or is the Vita hospital going to be closed permanently?

Ms. Oswald: Again, I say to the member opposite, that we're going to continue to work to provide doctors to our regional health authorities in rural Manitoba where, where it's a greater challenge.

Members opposite have an interesting habit of mentioning an exodus of doctors from Manitoba. But they never, not once, mention the number of doctors that come to Manitoba. And why do you think that is, Mr. Speaker? Well, I'll let you know. I think it's because it shows that we have had a net increase of doctors every year since we've come into office. That's a 21 percent increase in rural Manitoba, which stands in sharp contrast to virtually every year in the

1990s, where there was negative, negative, negative, negative.

We have more work to do, Mr. Speaker, but I'll put our record on bringing doctors to Manitoba against theirs any day of the week.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, that minister brought up the 1990s. There were no ERs closed in Manitoba in the 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is, the truth is 1,471 doctors have left Manitoba under the NDP, and 18 rural emergency rooms are closed today. The longer this minister is on the job, the worse the problem gets.

The hospital in Vita serves a large area and is an integral part of the community. There's also a large personal care home or facility attached to the hospital. The people of Vita don't care about the minister's excuses. They're worried about their health and their safety, and they want answers.

When will the minister fill the doctor shortage in Vita?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll say again that we're going to continue on our efforts to ensure that we have a—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Ms. Oswald: —to ensure that we have a net increase of doctors coming to Manitoba every year, in stark contrast to members opposite.

I can say to the member—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Oswald: —that he's put factually incorrect—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Oswald: —information on the record.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Oswald: The only party in Manitoba to ever close an emergency room in Winnipeg was the Conservative Party of Manitoba with Misericordia, and they had their bull's-eye and their cross hairs set on Seven Oaks, didn't they? Thank goodness that didn't happen.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Kendra's Walk for Kids

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Last Friday I had the honour of joining one of my constituents, 17-year-old Kendra McBain, and hundreds of students, family and supporters in Kendra's Walk for Kids at St. John's-Ravenscourt School.

Kendra McBain is a remarkable young woman of 17. Three years ago, she was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, a very rare form of cancer. In the last few years, she's undergone 32 chemotherapy treatments, 50 radiation treatments and six surgeries. She's overcome some enormous challenges in her young life, but Kendra wants to give something back to CancerCare and all of the people who did such a wonderful job of caring for her and supporting her during a very difficult time for her and her family.

Having spent so much time at CancerCare, Kendra noticed a need for a better space for teenagers. The existing teen room is often overrun with younger children. All teenagers need a space to call their own, and teenagers with cancer are no different. They need somewhere to relax and hang out with people their own age. So Kendra organized a fundraising walk near the grounds of her school to raise money to refurbish the teen room at CancerCare.

Kendra's efforts paid off in a big way. The senior school at St. John's-Ravenscourt, alone, raised more than \$57,000 for this very worthwhile cause, and donations were still coming in on Friday.

On Friday when she took the microphone before the walk, Kendra said that she wanted her peers to know that there is no shame in having cancer. That's a message worth repeating, especially since teenagers with cancer can so often feel isolated and alone.

Kendra also paid tribute to her family and to a very special teacher at her school, Roberta Mitchell, who has been a source of endless support and encouragement to her. I had the pleasure of meeting Roberta on Friday, and I can understand why Kendra feels so lucky to have her in her life.

Despite having spent so much of her high school years undergoing treatment for cancer, Kendra has chosen not to let the disease define her. Her high school legacy is not that she has cancer. Kendra is a woman whose hard work, dedication and compassion

will make a difference in the lives of countless young cancer patients who will now have a place at CancerCare to truly call their own.

Kendra is an inspiration to all Manitobans. I'd like to ask all members of the Legislature to join me in thanking all those who supported Kendra's Walk for Kids on Friday and in congratulating Kendra McBain on a job very well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tom Gallant

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, there are an amazing number of interesting and talented people living in northern Manitoba. Take Tom Gallant as a prime example.

Currently, Tom is the principal at West Lynn Heights School in Lynn Lake. On March 28th, Tom was inducted into the Newfoundland sports hall of fame for his contribution to the sport of judo. He has been involved with judo for over 40 years, having first taken an interest in, in the martial art at the age of 18. A fifth-degree black belt and a level three certified coach, Tom has made a significant contribution to the sport of judo in this country.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Tom was a founding member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Judo Association, serving as president and vice-president for 12 years, establishing clubs across the province and writing the promotion criteria for judo in Newfoundland. Tom was also a master coach and senior-ranked judo player, having coached over 3,000 athletes in Newfoundland, producing 80 Atlantic medals, four national medals and two medals at the world masters level.

In recognition of his provincial judo accomplishment, Tom was inducted into the Newfoundland and Labrador Judo Association Hall of Fame in 1993. Tom served on the national executive for Judo Canada as vice-president for eight years. He played a significant role in developing and implementing a standard for Canada's national coaching certification program, even writing a highly acclaimed thesis on the topic.

As the only national A referee in Newfoundland, Tom officiated at the senior and junior nationals, the Canada Winter Games and 1993 world championships, and the Canadian and west invitational international tournaments.

Tom has brought his talent and love for judo to northern Manitoba, starting a judo club at West Lynn Heights. He was awarded coach of the month in April 2000, by Sport Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I'm so glad Tom has made his home in northern Manitoba. Not only is he a wonderful judo coach, he is also a passionate educator who devotes his time and talent to the young people of Lynn Lake. Thank you.

Neepawa Area Collegiate Institute Musical Production

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Madam Deputy Speaker, *Grease* was the word in Neepawa Area Collegiate Institute this past March when our talented students put on a wonderful production of the hit musical *Grease*, at the historic Roxy Theatre in downtown Neepawa.

Their three performances, from March 18th to 20th, drew a sell-out crowd with over a thousand people from the community taking in the show. A total of 117 students from NACI participated, with 41 in the cast and the remaining 76 involved in production, lighting, sound stage, set painting, make-up, stage crew, pit band and the many important roles needed to put on a musical.

Tremendous time and energy went into this musical with students auditioning in late October and rehearsals beginning in mid-November. In the leading role, Steven Anderson played Danny, while Lacey Tremaine was Sandy. Other notable cast members included the Pink Ladies: Alyssa Dreger, Rachel Quelch, Kaitlyn Zechowski and, and Angela Gower; and the T-Birds: Marseu Gordon, Eric Beaumont, Sefo Gordon and Aaron Martin.

The creativity exhibited by the students was remarkable and it was plain to see that every member of the cast was having tremendous fun on stage, from learning to hand jive to energetic chorus, chorus line kicks. There were a few moments of levity as well: the stage crew was spot lit while doing a conga line in the middle of a set change; later, the crew acted quickly to retrieve a cast member's shoe that fell behind the piano.

The show runner, Blair Chapman, had been producing musicals in Neepawa for the past nine years. Putting in over a hundred hours of preparatory time, he truly goes above and beyond the working students to bring out their talents and ensuring that they have positive stage experience to add to their high school résumés.

While students do not receive academic credits for participation, they do receive extracurricular points that count towards their Beautiful Plains credits, a special program in the Beautiful Plains School Division. Taking part is a major boost to the students' self-esteem. They realize they have hidden talents that they themselves were not aware of.

My own children were involved in major productions at NACI, and I am excited to see this fine musical theatre tradition continuing into the next generation. I congratulate the cast and crew of *Grease*, and I am already looking forward to next year's musical production. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (14:30)

Opaskwayak Cree Nation RCMP Detachment

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to speak to an event I attended at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation last month. On May 14th, the new RCMP-First Nations Community Police Service detachment was officially opened. This new event—this event has been long awaited welcome addition to the Opaskwayak Cree Nation and the north service area of the RCMP in Manitoba.

The presence of this new detachment headquarters underscores the government's continued commitment to provide front-line professional policing in First Nations communities in the north. It also functions to enhance the relationship between First Nation governments and their people. This new professional work environment is critical to the RCMP if they are going to provide the best possible service to the community. However, the success of this endeavour was determined long before the official opening of the detachment.

Without the commitment and support of OCN and the town of The Pas, this detachment would never have been possible. This new development is part of an ongoing commitment to expand our relationships and our understanding of one another. It is symbolic of the fact that when we work together we can achieve a better understanding of each other's history and culture. We are moving into a new era where we can plan together and work together. It is in this exciting direction that we are working to take policing in the north.

With the support of both the town of The Pas and OCN, we were able to work out an agreement that benefits all people, both near and in the surrounding region. This co-operative in—initiative is

an example of the positive change that we can bring to our communities by working together for safety and harmony.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the communities on this impressive new facility, and wishing the men and women that serve this new detachment the very—the best for the future. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Randi Toews

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Recently a constituent of mine from Winkler was nominated for the Women of Distinction, Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise. Randi Toews, a grade 12 student from Garden Valley Collegiate, was nominated for this award because of her involvement in the community. Recipients of this award are required to be a grade 12 student who is a role model for young women, has shown scholastic achievement, significant contribution to her school and community, and shows promise of becoming a woman of distinction. This year, 18 students were nominated for the award.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Randi Toews has a passion for sports, and has demonstrated involvement in sports such as volleyball, basketball and swimming, both as a player and a coach. However, her main interest involves teaching young people in her community. Ms. Toews started her own dance classes for 12- and 13-year-old girls in her community so that young girls have the opportunity to learn dance in a fun environment that's close to home. She also—she has also started her own swimming lessons for young people, which has doubled in enrolment in only one year.

Randi Toews is committed to providing youth in the region with many extracurricular activities. Along with teaching dance and swimming lessons, Ms. Toews also teaches Sunday school at her church and is a camp councillor at Red Rock Bible Camp. Her experiences as a teacher have convinced Ms. Toews to take up teaching as a career, as she plans to go into education next year at the University of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Randi Toews for being nominated for the Women of Distinction, Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise. Ms. Toews has become a role model for many young girls in the community, and all who know her are grateful for her dedication to volunteering and teaching. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for the Lakeside, on a grievance?

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lakeside on a grievance.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to try to put a thi—a few things on the record in regards to the pork industry that we had talked about earlier in question period. And I know that it's a significant importance to the economy here in Manitoba. We're talking about piglets now bringing \$5 apiece, with freight of \$2 in order to get them to their various marketplaces, which leaves them a gross of some \$3 apiece.

When I asked the minister in regards to whether or not they were going to offer up some type of an advance in, in regards to assisting those producers, we weren't talking about a cash advance per se as in the form of a loan, but an advance that's going to be able to help them sustain their industry.

This industry creates some 15,000 direct and indirect jobs and it creates millions of dollars in export sales, and when we look at the overall impact, when we look at the electrical business, the lumber business, the gas business, the trucking industry, the tire industry, the list goes on and on, the impact that's gonna affect the overall economy of this province.

As agriculture makes up 25 percent of our—Manitoba's economy, it's significant when we look at just one sector in regards to the pork industry as we see it yet today. And we know that in Saskatchewan, they offered some \$20 for the, the, the bigger pigs and \$10 on, on the weanlings, and Alberta offered a similar program to help their pork producers in a time of need, and we know that even though that there's gonna be a need for help—and, in fact, I know the Canadian Pork Council has asked the federal government for thir—some \$30 per pig in aid, in order to see that that this industry does stay alive and well.

And we know that the Manitoba Pork Council originally had come to the government and said that Saskatchewan was wrong and that maybe it would cause a trade barrier that would come up against us, the United States, in regards to trade, and we know that that didn't come about as a result of that. Manitoba Pork has since changed their position and wrote the minister in March of this year, Mr. Speaker, asking the provincial government to have a

look at whatever they could do to assist the producers in this province to see that their, their business can be sustained. The minister took that letter as notice, and, again, through no fault of their own, we had a swine flu which was retrovly changed to H1N1, and what it should have been called in the first place, but that cost our industry some 3 to \$4 million per day.

We've had significant losses and the minister talked about things like country-of-origin labelling, a downturn in the markets. Country-of-origin labelling alone, we knew and started advising the government a number of years ago—in fact, two and a half years ago—that we need to be ready for this country-of-origin labelling. We've seen a downturn not only in the hog industry but also in the beef industry, which I'll hopefully get to at the end of my, my grievance, Mr. Speaker.

But in regards to the country-of-origin labelling, we, we need to, to have been looking at and need to look at, in the future, other markets where we can expand our processing facilities within the province of Manitoba, look at those markets, that we're able to sustain this wonderful product that we grow right here in Manitoba, plus that meat in a way that's gonna be able to meet that demand in the marketplace in those other countries where we need so vitally to be without having to rely just on United States as our meeting tra—major trading partner. So we've encouraged the government to do that. We're onside with that and whatever we can do to ensure the fact that, that those markets, in fact, do indeed get met.

But in order to do that, we need to sustain the industry and our producers are not asking for a handout; they're simply asking for a hand up to get past these challenges. If we look at the math in regards to this particular initiative, this investment is certainly one that's worth looking at. The return we're gonna get on that investment is, as we talked about earlier, the direct and indirect jobs, because it is such a large part of our industry, and we need to make sure that, in fact, it is sustainable. The pork producers and, and the banking industry, the feed industry, they all have just been waiting for this government to either say yes or no. In fact, a number of them have been hanging on by the threads of their, the last bit of financial input that they be able to put into this, this hog industry, and they need to be having some clear guidance from the governments in regards to whether or not they're gonna step forward,

in fact help the producers in a cash injection into this particular industry.

I know on May the 11th, right after the barbecue, the minister had talked about, the Pork Council did meet with the Premier (Mr. Doer) of the province and the minister. That's almost a month ago. In regards to timing, every day is a very important day, whether it be in the House or on a weekend or a weekday. Those people are indeed waiting for answers and they need to get an answer in a very timely manner, Mr. Speaker. They need to know what the government's financial commitment's going to be in regards to ensuring that the industry will be sustainable. I know the Manitoba Pork Council, I talked to 'em as early this morning, and they are also very concerned. They're meeting with their counterparts, as I speak, in Ottawa, and I know that they have been asking and pressuring the federal government for their share of the contribution, but we need to show the leadership similar to that what was happening in Saskatchewan, and that was where they injected a cash injection into their industry in order to ensure that that industry will be sustainable as well.

* (14:40)

Now, Saskatchewan's also made it very clear they're open for business, and when we talked about Bill 17, we were worried that we may lose our industry to Saskatchewan. We certainly don't want to see that happen. I know the government don't want to see that happen, and if we don't do something very soon, we may in fact see that industry exit this province.

We know that, that the hog industry is also under heavy environmental regulations, that they're, they're trying to meet in a way that they also can put money for feed, money from improvements to their barns, improvement to feeding system, improvements to scientific data, which they're able to try and obtain in order to make sure that they have a safe product for the markets and for the future.

In regards to the manure management regulations, that again is another cost that's been passed on to them. As a result of that, they're going to have to have a cash advance or cash injection into that particular sector in order for them to be able to, to meet those requirements as well.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's imperative that, that we, we try and encourage the government in any way we

can in order for them to make sure that they do get back to the pork industry in a very timely manner.

I talked about earlier in my comments in regards to the other factors that were, that were affected in, in regards to the livestock sector and that's the beef industry as well. We have not asked for a cash advance there or a cash injection. The cash advance is a replayable payment that has to be paid back to the government. They have not asked for anything other than the cash advance, but most producers—and, in fact, I know the hog producers—can't afford any more loans. In fact, I know the beef producers can't afford any more loans, but they've both been affected through no fault of their own, through either one thing or the other, and, and in regards to the country of origin or in regards to processing of their particular products in the marketplace.

We've seen the industry, as far as the meat processing plant and beef industry, see a percentage go down from 80-some percent of processors within the province of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In fact, Saskatchewan just closed down their plant in Moose Jaw for the cow-processing plants because there's a shortage of, of slaughter, slaughter cows. And unfortunately, as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, we, we've seen the opening here of, of a plant who's provincially inspected, Keystone Processors. We certainly wish them well. We know that they're attempting to try and get federal status in regards to processing meat, and whatever we can do in this province to encourage consumption of those products, whether it be beef or pork, we know that we have a lot to learn from other jurisdictions, and when we can pass that information on in order to ensure that we do have those markets for not only our pork but our beef, and I know that whenever we'll look at an increasing slaughter capacity within the province of Manitoba, we have another, a few other processing plants that are looking at becoming federally inspected as well.

So we're trying to make sure that we do, in fact, encourage those processors who do have a great quality product within the province of Manitoba to look at markets outside the province of Manitoba. In fact, in this House, it's now only two years ago, we brought forward a motion in regards to provincial trade where we asked for those boundaries within one province to the other being nullified so we're able to have meat that's bought in Saskatchewan and brought into Manitoba, processed meat that's in Saskatchewan brought into Manitoba and vice versa.

I think it's very important that when we look at these, these different alternatives, that we look outside the box, not only to further markets but within our own, our own province's as well. So I think it's also very imperative that we look and move forward on some of those programs that's so important to keeping both the hog and pork industry here in the province of Manitoba.

The poultry industry's, on the other hand, has done a great job. I mean, they've, they've made sure that, that their products are able to go within from one jurisdiction to the other. In fact, they—most of the—all the plants, in fact, federally inspected, and we have a lot to learn from them. So with that, I want to leave this on the record, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Business; orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just pri—I'd like to indicate that pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick), and the title of the resolution is flood workers.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's been announced pursuant to rule 31(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one put forward by the honourable Member for St. Norbert. The title of the resolution is flood workers.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I, I would propose that you call for debate on second readings bills in the following order: Bill No. 25, The Statistics Amendment Act; Bill No. 27, the gaming control act; Bill No. 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act; Bill No. 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act—Loi sur le Centre culturel franco-manitobain—and Bill No. 7, The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act.

And I will have further announcements later, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day. The orders of business will be, we'll resume debate on second readings in this order: 25, 27, 28, 32 and Bill 7.

And there'll be a further announcement coming later in the day.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 25—The Statistics Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: So, right now, I'm gonna call second reading on Bill No. 25, The, The Statistics Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Carman.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will—[interjection]—to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 25, The Statistics Amendment Act. And this bill has forced significant changes to The Statistics Act—that's a tongue-twister—but it clarifies the role of the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics it in—its inclusion now of voluntary surveys, currently there are only mandatory surveys. It also conforms The Statistics Act to The Freedom of Information Act and the public health information act.

However, it continues to fall short on privacy protection which the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), Member for Morris has been—it also updates and increases fines for both the employees of, of the bureau and for those companies who do not conform to the mandatory surveys. And, of course, it also includes general gender-neutral language.

The mandatory and voluntary surveys—prior to this bill, any survey issued by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics was a mandatory survey that required by law to be completed by the respondent, and this bill now allows MBS, if I can use that term MBS for Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, to issue voluntary service—surveys where a respondent can choose not to respond to the survey and still face no legal penalties.

An example, it would be a wide-ranging survey in which a single respondent's response, response, will not greatly affect the quality of the data, and it has been indicated by the department that to date no penalties have been issued by MBS for non-compliance of MBS surveys which were compulsory up till now.

So, they haven't, they haven't enforced the penalties to date. We hope they, they keep it that way. We don't need the heavy hand of government prying out information that, that respondents feel is, is privity only to them.

The MBS will still conduct mandatory surveys when required, and an example of this would be mandatory survey be conducted whereupon a failure to answer would leave a significant disruption in the

data seeking to be collected. And we have been given no particular example of how this, by the department of, of the cause for a mandatory survey.

* (14:50)

There is, there is no objective formula which outlines surveys that are to be considered mandatory and which ones are to be considered voluntary. So, clearly, we have no set distinction how the department or how MBS will determine what is a mandatory survey and what shall be a voluntary survey. And, and again, it leads us to questions.

So, when the—when MBS is sending out their requests for surveys, we would only hope that, that these are, are being, they are being—this is a mandatory survey or a voluntary survey. So we need some clarification on that when they are indeed sending out their requests for surveys.

The penalties, and there's always penalties, and the people whose actions breach the MBS oath, that's employees within MBS, the fines can be up to 50,000, so—\$50,000, pardon me—so they, they are significantly increased. And this is under the, the direction that increased fines—that the risk of increased fines will certainly deter anyone from releasing this information who should not be doing it.

People who falsely—who give—who falsify, pardon me—people who falsify information or fail to answer required schedule—this fine's up to \$1,000. And again, we're looking for clarification on just when these fines would come in.

Failing to grant access to documents or obstruct the execution of a duty under The Statistics Act, fines up to \$1,000, and falsely representing MBS, fines up to \$10,000. And, of course, in this day of, of so much information being available out there, that we really do need MBS to be—make sure that no one is out there representing them and obtaining information, personal information, under false pretences. Of course, the bill goes through with gender-neutral language and that's normal for any bill that's going there.

We do have—well, we generally will support the bill; at least we won't necessarily oppose the bill. There's always a concern about the information being gathered, whether it's, whether it's being contained and not being released to areas where it shouldn't be.

This bill—it's important to ensure that government policies and programs are properly

tailored to the demographics and that the information that the MBS is collecting is indeed relevant to Manitobans and to expedite government's role in the province. The question then always becomes, just how much information do we really need.

And I think that, that the department should have gone back on this bill and really sat down and figured out how much of this is a duplication with Statistics Canada. We all know that Statistics Canada is out there gathering a lot of information. We've heard recently in the last months where StatsCan has released information only to have MBS come up and say, well, no, this information is not correct. So maybe there should have been—there should be more co-ordination and there can be more co-ordination between these two organizations. Although you have to—that is not the goal of this bill because there is nowhere in this bill where they do, where they do actually say that they will co-ordinate with StatsCan. So that's certainly a failing on this bill, where they could have certainly been a little more proactive and a little more wide-ranging on their, on their future goals with it.

But we also know that with this government, cost is never an issue so they, they would have no, no reason to look at co-ordinating with StatsCan in order to save some money because they have a penchant for spending.

The government has the obligation, when dealing with private information, to protect its citizens, to protect this information. And, and the member from Morris has been very vocal and very knowledgeable on the subject of privacy, and in our bill briefing she pointed out again how the FIPPA and PHIA legislation is lacking. And I believe she will be putting some comments on the record about it's short—the shortcomings of this bill again and gathering these vital statistics and in protecting it from unscrupulous use.

The inclusion of voluntary services is a positive step, but, but, actually, we're not really certain how it will be used. Again, there is no, no lack of information out there, and so are they doing this—and a good example of this voluntary surveys that they could be doing is in the apprenticeship act. The minister is very vocal and very proud of his record of advertising on *Hockey Night in Canada* and on the television program, *CSI*, and, yet, when I asked him in Estimates, are you doing any survey work to go back and find out are any of these apprentices actually—are actually coming into the program

because of—based on your advertising, and he said, no, we don't do any follow-up.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

So perhaps that is somewhere where, if you must have MBS there, perhaps that is a place where you could be using it. But we'll see on that. I think it would be a much—again, I know they're not going to do it, but I really would question the use of public taxpayer money to advertise on these programs with no end results from it.

There's also always the concern about gathering personal health information. This information is very sensitive, and the government must take every provision possible to ensure that this information is never collected unless needed and, then, to maintain the utmost in its security when collected. In the bill briefing, we did have the MBS staff telling us about how their security system was in—impenetrable, but nowadays it is—there is so much information floating around, it continues to be a concern and its—and what are you doing with this information when you do have it and how are you dis—how are you disposing of this material once you—it's no longer relevant, once you no longer need it. And that's—continues to be concerns with us.

We know that this, this, this government is—goes to great lengths to collect all kinds of information for its own use. We're, we're hoping that MBS is not another one of those at—government agencies where they're using this for use for within their own party connections. We would also—we know that if you, if you—again, if you must have MBS there, then perhaps they can use it to measure the effects of the downturn in the Manitoba economy.

Again, I was quizzing the minister in Estimates about the tradespeople that have left the province to go to other provinces to find work. There's no tracking of that. There's no tracking of people coming into the province which—what trades there, what qualifications, what skills. So you really—you have no, you have no idea on the movement of people in and out, and while we say it somewhat cautiously, we, we never want to pry too much into personal lives, but still it would help this government track our potential work force coming into the province, and, certainly, it would help track the, the work force that's left this province to find different and better jobs, other province.

So, again, Madam Deputy Speaker, while we won't oppose the bill, it's always a concern. It always raises concerns about privacy, about relevancy, duplication of services, and so while this bill is an update to what's currently on, on legislation right now, this bill, it will pass in this current session, and we hope that the government makes wise use of their funds and their resources rather than the wasteful spending that we've seen in the past.

So, with that, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm pleased to just speak a few words here on Bill 25, The Statistics Amendment Act.

And I think that what this bill is intending to do is just clarify and, as the bill itself states, it's, it's to strengthen protection of privacy and confidentiality of information collected, maintained or disclosed by the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. And, again, what we're talking about in this bill is information that's collected in the public sector. So when you're talking about information in the public sector, that would be government agencies, government bodies, school boards, universities, that kind of in—in—information would be protected under the provincial legislation like FIPPA and PHIA, so that if there was any breach of, of confidentiality that a person would have recourse.

Now, with, with any kind of bill that you're talking about collection of data, statistics, the basis of statistics and data is personal information, so in no way should any of this information be able to be traced back to an individual. If you're talking about collection of data, numerical data, to just use for totally statistical purposes, that's one thing, but being able to track back this information to individuals is problematic. Now there are always checks and balances with the legislation that we have with the FIPPA and the PHIA. We have rules that talk about how information can be collected, how it can be used, how it can be disclosed, what you need to do to protect it and what you should do to dispose of it. So, when you, when you're talking about legislation affecting public bodies, yes, there are guidelines there. There's legislation there to protect the information—personal information of people.

However, when you go into the private sector, there is not the same protection because in Manitoba we don't have private sector privacy laws unless

you're doing a commercial activity, and then that is covered under the federal legislation.

Now, when we were having a briefing with the minister, and, and we'll fault the provincial statistician, they brought up an example. If they wanted to go out into the private world and ask—and the example that we were talking about was what if you wanted to find out how many 56-year-old carpenters a company had. So I raised the question, well, supposing this was information that the 56-year-old carpenters didn't want shared, and supposing the employer shared that information. Now, the minister said to me, well, they could just go to the Ombudsman, but, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is absolutely not the case here in Manitoba. You cannot go to the Ombudsman because the Ombudsman has no jurisdiction in the private sector. She only manages the FIPPA and PHIA legislation. So what recourse that person would have would be to hire a lawyer, send them to Ottawa to the federal Privacy Commissioner, which would be very costly and, and a lengthy process.

So there are some loopholes in this legislation that do not really provide the checks and balances that should be there to protect people in the private sector when their employers share information. Now, when—supposing an employer was asked for information about the people in his company for statistical reasons and the employer said, well, you know, here, here's the files you, you have a look at them, I'm too busy. There's no legislation that tells the employer how he must provide protection for the information that he's providing, what he should provide, what is too much to provide, and the care of duty that he has over that personal information. So, even though many businesses in Manitoba have privacy protections in place because they recognize that it is just good business to do that, many still are unaware that personal information is something that needs to be protected, and, and there is a care of duty to, to be careful with that information.

So, when we, when we have this legislation being brought forward which actually could expand voluntary surveys into the private sector where private sector individuals could inadvertently provide more information than might be needed, then there's no recourse for an individual to say to anyone, well, I didn't like the way my employer shared that information even though it was to the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. They may have provided too much information or information that was not required and, therefore, disseminated personal

information without consent of that person, and, ultimately, that person, should they feel that their privacy has been violated, they would have to take that up with the federal privacy commissioner because we don't have those—that kind of legislation here in Manitoba.

So, not to be self-serving here, Madam Deputy Speaker, but my bill before this House right now, the protection of personal information provi—prevention of identity theft act, would provide the checks and balances needed in the private sector, that there is this, this, this gap in the legislation and, in fact, doesn't really adequately protect people.

Now the intent of the bill is supportable. There's nothing wrong with the intent of this bill. There is other things in there about fines for people that actually have access to this information and would disclose personal information, and I totally agree with that. If people have access to personal information, they should not—they should need to take an oath, which they do, it's a lifetime oath, and they should not be able to share that information and if they do, they should, there should be penalties for that.

So that part of the legislation is commendable and, I think, in many ways, the bill just brings The Statistics Act into closer proximity to the FIPPA and PHIA legislation, which was amended last year, but I'm wondering if it was amended actually to provide for the amendments for this act.

However, as I have said, I do think that there is a piece of the puzzle missing here. Even though I know that many businesses are very knowledgeable of what they should and shouldn't do, and what information should and shouldn't be shared, and the extent of the information that is provided. However, there are other businesses that are not aware of their duties to collect personal information with consent, to how that personal information can be used, how it can be disclosed and how they need to protect it.

And that isn't really a fault of businesses because they have not had the benefit, in this province, of a privacy commissioner who goes out and educates the public about these things. There are a number of businesses that, as I say, have privacy personnel, a privacy officer, they are called, just to ensure that the company knows how to protect personal information, but there are, there are others that don't.

And I have had interaction with a business, of late, that wanted to collect personal information from

me, and not only personal information but personal health information. A private enterprise that wanted to do this. And when I questioned why they needed it, well, there was a legitimate, valid reason why they needed it. And I asked, well, what are you going to do with the information, and they, kind of, just said, well, it's just for our information, just, just in case. So I had a bit of a discussion as to the, the duty of care with personal information, and this particular business really had no idea that, that their records could be stolen. They didn't understand that when their records were done with, that if they just threw them in the dumpster behind the business, that that would be wrong because people could have access to information.

* (15:10)

So there was, there's just this little bit of a gap in, in, in this province as to how personal information is treated. There's certainly good protections in the public sector with the FIPPA and PHIA legislation. There's certainly good protections at the federal level with the PIPEDA legislation which covers anybody that's doing commercial activity. But there are businesses that have employees, and have personal information on the employees. If the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics comes and says, I want to collect—I want to survey and I want to collect some information, we would hope that that information that's being collected would be treated in such a way that it's just statistical. It's not in any way tied to the individual, but the checks and balances are not spelled out in legislation in this province because there is no privacy—private sector privacy legislation.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I look forward to passing this bill to committee to have public input on the bill and further debate on the bill. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, want to put a few words on the record prior to Bill 25 passing. You know, there's—one could ultimately argue the public good in terms of the collection of statistical information, and there is no doubt that there's a great value to doing that. Census Canada, in co-operation with Manitoba Statistics, produces documents that assist us in many different ways, everything from economic activity to social planning activities. There is great, great public good accomplished through the gathering of information.

You know, just recently, MLAs were provided a breakdown, so there—of their constituency, and I

always said, it's amazing in terms of what sorts of information you can draw from some of these reports, and in this particular situation, you have Manitoba Stats working along with information provided, in good part, from Census Canada to be able to provide a document that really profiles a community in many different ways, whether it's the number of residents in a home to average incomes to populations, populations in certain areas.

All of this stuff becomes very important. Information is absolutely essential for many of our programs. One of the most significant programs that we have great benefit of is things such as equalization payments and transfer payments, and that is, in part, based on populations across the country. There are many demographics that are needed in order to identify, in order to better be able to service the different people in the different areas.

Well, we could talk about the good in the, and the benefits of having these organizations such as statistics Manitoba and Statistics Canada, but there's also a great deal of public concern, and I think that's something in which we also need to be giving equal, if not, some might argue, more attention to, the whole issue of privacy, especially in today's day and age in terms of computers and the technology that is out there. Virtually with a few pushes of a keyboard, a lot of information can be disseminated or acquired in split seconds virtually, Madam Deputy Speaker, and Manitobans, as indeed all Canadians, are very concerned about the whole issue of privacy.

And I guess what we have before us is legislation that will further enhance the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, and I like to think that it is taking it in both areas. In the one sense, we're recognizing the need for fines and increasing the potential fines for violations. In another way, we're looking at expanding the way in which we have surveys conducted, and so it would appear, in principle, that there seems to be some balance, but, you know, to raise the issue in terms of with the government.

As has been pointed out, there is—the member from Morris has a fairly substantial bill on the Order Paper that deals with the issue of privacy, and I think that there is a responsibility also for government to spend more time and more energy because I know first-hand just how important it is that we protect those interests.

You know, it was—I had a call just a few weeks back in which—it was from the TD bank saying, well,

your credit card has now been cancelled. No explanation or anything of this nature, the credit card's been cancelled. There was apparently, some, some, something that went wrong and had nothing to do with my credit, but something did go wrong and they had to re-issue a credit card. And as much as, as much as, you know, it was tried to play down, Mr. Speaker, from the bank, it was quite, not only an inconvenience, but it raises the issue in terms of, well, what did actually take place? And you know I, I would suggest to you that not only am I just one of many. I would suggest that that many is well into the tens of thousands or quite possibly hundreds of thousands of Canadians, many of which obviously are Manitobans that are, in fact, very concerned about security of information, the whole issue of privacy, and, you know, there is that black cloud that's over there.

So I want to take this particular opportunity in recognizing Bill 25 in general as something that's likely in principle, in the public's best interest. But equally I would argue that there is more of a responsibility for government to start doing things that are going to protect the issue of privacy of the average Manitoban, and I really haven't seen the type of, or any legislative moves from the government in the last number of years dealing with protecting that privacy to the degree in which I believe should be done.

So I would, or I should say. I have no problem in terms of Bill 25 going to committee. But I did want to just to emphasize how important it is that we have balance between privacy versus public good when it comes to the gathering of information, and when it comes to disseminating that information how critically important that people's interests are, in fact, protected. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 25, The Statistics Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 27—The Gaming Control Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: We will now move on to Bill No. 27, The Gaming Control Amendment Act, standing in the name of the Member for Emerson.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill amends the gaming and control act to require retailers to be registered with the Gaming Control Commission, that they sell lottery tickets on behalf of Western Canada Lottery Corporation or the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation.

In addition, the western Canadian lottery corporation is required to adopt and implement a responsible gaming policy. The executive director for the Gaming Control Commission is authorized to take into account the appropriateness of premises to be used when considering whether to license gaming activity and to mediate complaints by patrons about Lotteries' games conducted and managed by the Western Canada Lottery Corporation.

The executive director order-making power is expanded to allow orders to be made in respect to the lottery ticket retailer who contravenes the act, the regulation or term or condition of the retailer's registration. Madam Deputy Speaker, this, this bill was brought forward possibly, well, possibly, more especially because of insider or insider winning that's been happening or actually has been accused of happening and, apparently, it has happened in other provinces, and it has been going on for some time. I'm, I was surprised that this bill hadn't come forward much earlier as it has been addressed in other provinces over the last couple of years.

* (15:20)

Madam Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba—we have a serious gambling problem in Manitoba. Eighty-five percent of Manitobans have gambled in the last year and this number has remained high for many years.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we seem to be promoting, promoting a lot of, of the issues, the problems with gambling. We're very good at that. I will say that we're not, we're not real good stewards of the community when it comes to, to gambling. I would say that we, we actually are promoting it to, to—on every street corner that we possibly can, any outlet. We, we actually should be paying a lot more attention to what our statistics are telling us and, and

spending quite a bit more money for the rehabilitation of, of gambling than what we are today.

I might say that the, the percentage in—of gamblers in Manitoba identified as problem gamblers is amongst the highest in the country and, and we don't have a large population of people in Manitoba, and when we, when we have statements like that put forward, Madam Deputy Speaker, it certainly, certainly makes us wonder if we shouldn't be spending a lot more than what we have been on problem gambling.

Almost 50 percent of the people with moderate and severe gambling problems are uneducated about the statistical realities of gambling. This leads to a lot of other issues, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I would suggest that, that a lot of these situations, then, that arise are—that happen is that people go to the loan sharks—as I refer to them as, but the payday loan companies. They borrow the maximum that they can possibly borrow. Some of that money may well get home to buy a quart of milk, but a lot of it ends up into a casino or ends up in a lottery ticket someplace and the family goes without and creates a lot larger debt. In many cases, people end up losing their cars over this. They end up losing their homes over these type of things and, and so, again, I want to just keep coming back to the point that we should be spending a lot more money on, on the problem gambling in this province.

We shouldn't—I would suggest—be putting ATMs in casinos such as we have just most recently in a casino here in Winnipeg. I would suggest that as things are moving forward and, and the NDP government becomes more addicted to the revenues of gambling in this province, that it's quite conceivable that they will have a slot in the machine that you can put a debit card in, so that it'll be more convenient for the gambler to gamble away their fortune.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, many people sit there thinking, well, we've put this much into the machine, surely it's going to pay out; there is a percentage. We're going to hit that one on the next money that we put in. The next piece of—the next \$20 bill that we put in, we're going to hit the jackpot. But the jackpots are never hit. Most people need, need to understand that the game is loaded against them. However, they probably—not probably, it's, it's a well-known fact, that some of the people that are the more problem gamblers are the most uneducated

in how the, the gaming—revenue gaming machines work, and it's the cash-hungry provincial government that pro—that promotes it.

They promote the Atlantic City style of gambling in the province of Manitoba, where you have the rewards—point rewards system, so the more you gamble, the more points you get. And it's—a lot of people can actually, Madam Deputy Speaker, a lot of people would compare this to the Zeller points where you can go and get a big screen TV or you can, you can get some other thing that you really don't need at home. You just need to be home with your family, not away getting free meals in a casino or, or a big screen TV or some other item that isn't really necessary in, in your everyday life.

But in the bill, I will say that they, they have tightened up some of the things that the, that the lottery ticket retailers have to do, and I, I would suggest that's not a bad thing. They've, they've set up a system where one can settle disputes, and I guess there are—anytime that there's money and gambling together, you will find that there's going to be a certain amount of disputes. And I, and I have to say that they have, have tightened up the process for dealing with, with disputes if both parties consent, which probably should have been left out. It should have been just they did or that they would be settling the disputes and instead of trying to mediate a settlement.

Section 18 increases the length of time that the commission can take to hear an appeal on a licensing or registration issue or on an order made from 14 days to 30 days. I just don't really understand extending that length of time, Madam Deputy Speaker. The commission shouldn't have to take that much extra time to, to come to a conclusion of whether there has been a, a problem at a particular outlet, and they should be able to deal with it in a much quicker time than, than the 30 days that they're now doing.

The inspectors' duties haven't changed a great deal, and I wouldn't be surprised that they've hired some more inspectors. But it, it adds, generally, monitoring integrity of lottery schemes in Manitoba, and so now what we have is we have the fox guarding the henhouse. I would suggest that any time that the inspector is going to go and tell his boss that you're doing the wrong thing and you're taking in too much money out of the lottery systems or out of any gaming system, that probably the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) will take that fellow aside and

have a small talk with him. Because the Minister of Finance isn't—is addicted to the revenue that is generated by this, by this stream of funding.

Section 21 expands the order-making power of the executive director of the MGCC to allow orders to be made in respect of a lottery ticket retailer who contravenes the act. But, again, this here could take up to 30 days. One needs to deal with this in an expeditious fashion, and either, either the retailer is going to be prohibited from dealing with, with the lottery tickets or he's going to be exonerated. It shouldn't take 30 days to do this, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I would also, I would also like to point out that, that the percentage of—no, that the human impacts of problem gambling include the financial pressure that I pointed out earlier. It also impacts job loss, family breakdown, increases health-care costs, the judicial system involvement, and decreases quality of life. And here we have a government that says, we're here for the little folk; we're here for the average person. And here we're promoting, promoting gaming at an expeditious pace, and, again, going back, we have 85 percent of the Manitobans have gambled in the last year. We have the highest percentage of gamblers identified as problem gamblers in the country, and the government says, we're here for the average folk; we're here for the average person on the street; we're here to help you. It's always suspicious, and one should be suspicious when the government says, we're here to help you.

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urged the provincial government to reduce its dependence on gambling, and—as a revenue source, and yet that hasn't taken place, Madam Deputy Speaker. As a matter of fact, I've seen in the last budget that we had a deficit of \$9 million in the, in a gambling column, and we also were borrowing another \$50 million for Lotteries. So this, this leads one to believe that there's a possibility that they will use our, our Crown corporations to try and balance a budget that's a long way from being balanced, and I certainly hope that that isn't the case when it certainly appears that that's what they're planning to do.

* (15:30)

What we would like to do is we would prob—we say that this bill has moved a lot of things forward. I think it's going to be better than it was as far as the lottery retailers go and the offences that have occurred in other places or alleged to be occurred in

other places. I think that has moved that ahead, but, at the same time, Madam Deputy Speaker, we would like to see a commitment from this government to, to spend a lot more money on problem gambling and on education and prevention of, of problem gambling.

So, with those few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'll let one of my colleagues carry on.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker, on House business.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Chomiak: House business. And while I'm talking about hou—House business I want to—I just want to commend my counterparts, House leaders in the other parties, for the outstanding work and trust they have provided in putting together this House order. And over the last three years we have moved towards, we have moved towards a system of an orderly transition of the House and a movement of bills over the summer, et cetera, much similar to Saskatchewan's system.

We've actually overtly worked on that and we're actually somewhat achieving that. That's usually not recognized anywhere so I'm sidetracking it in on my announcement that a slight change in the order of debate on second readings so that Bill 32 will precede Bill 28.

So following conclusion of debate on Bill 27 we'll go to Bill 32, then Bill 28, then Bill 7. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The order of the bills has been changed. After Bill No. 27 will come Bill No. 32 and then No. 28. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed.

* * *

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable Member for Inkster, on Bill No. 27.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's with—actually one could say a little bit of disappointment in a sense that I would of liked to have seen some other changes to the gaming and control amendment bill or the gaming control legislation that's, that's there.

You know, over this last couple of months I've raised a couple of issues, a couple of issues that I thought were very important and I think that the government might want to, to reflect on some of the things that it is actually doing within the gaming in the province of Manitoba.

Recognizing what it is that this bill is actually doing in terms of with the Gaming Control Commission and requiring those that are selling lottery tickets, and so forth, to now become—ensure that they are, in fact, registered with the appropriate authorities. You know, that's, that's, that's a good thing. You know, I don't have a problem with that. There are a number of good things that no doubt are taking place within the legislation.

I wanted to, however, comment on an issue that, that I have raised with the minister and I would of liked the minister to have brought in or incorporated into this le—legislation. And one could of said or one could of classified it as a consumer, protecting our consumers here in the province of Manitoba.

And what I'm referring to, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the scratch-and-win tickets. It's an issue in which I've raised on a couple of occasions and the minister did have the ability to make some changes to the legislation that could of addressed that issue, at least in part or if not in whole, had the government had the interest of the consumer at, at heart as opposed to just Manitoba's Lotteries and collecting more money.

And I appreciate what the member—how the member spoke before me about some of the problems of gam—of gambling and the gambling policy that this government has ventured into. But with the scratch-and-win policy that's currently there, you have to appreciate the fact that we have many Manitobans, on a daily basis, that will go to these lottery outlets, and they will take a look in hopes of being able to win an instant \$25,000, or an instant \$50,000 by the, the scratch tickets, Madam Deputy Speaker.

What, what many of them do not realize—and some might argue, including myself, that most do not realize—is that, quite often, the grand prize has already been won. And sadly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government is aware of many grand prizes that have already been won, but they allow the tickets to be sold to the consumer still. Yet the consumer believes that the grand prize has not been won. Well, what is, what's the government's official response to it? Official response: consumer beware,

go to the Internet, find out whether or not what scratch-and-win tickets have actually wo—the grand prize for those tickets have been won. And as long as the consumers did that, they had nothing to fear because we will post it on the Internet, that the grand prizes of whatever ticket has, has been won.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government knows full well that that's just not good enough. It's not practical. You know, if—there are other jurisdictions in North America that have come to that conclusion and have taken action to protect the consumer and when asked a question why this government hasn't, has not done likewise. I would like to think that when we bring forward legislation of this nature that the government would have given some serious consideration to the issue that I have, that I have raised. I would suggest to you if members checked with their constituents that they would find that, indeed, it is not appropriate for government to allow this to continue to take, to take place.

And at the very least—and I would suggest, if you wanted to use it as an example—if you have two scratch and wins where there's a grand prize of \$25,000 in, in each one and the moment that one is actually claimed and then you put a sign. Imagine then if you put a sign on the one that has been actually won. I would suggest to you that the people that are coming to scratch and win will stop purchasing that ticket in favour of buying the ticket in which they know that the grand prize has not been won because what they're doing is they're purchasing in hopes of, in hopes of getting that, that grand prize.

So some might argue that you are stealing the dreams from some of these Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. You're misleading Manitobans by allowing it, so why not? Why not have something that's a little bit more protective of our consumers and how—and a change in this legislation. When you bring forward legislation of this nature, you might have been able to deal with that issue. Sadly, the New Democrats have chosen to, to ignore it.

On the ga—gaming front, the type of actions that we have seen is the ATMs now in casinos and, and we have seen a complete reversal of the policy of the New Democrats on this particular issue. Earlier, I talked about the former minister, Mr. Smith, back in January 21, 2004, where a press release was issued and in it, he, he clearly states ATMs should not be in casinos. And Mr.—Madam Deputy Speaker, Minister Smith back then was right. Today, we have a new minister, a new era, it's the, the new New Democrats

who have now said, no, it's okay to have ATMs in our casinos.

And you know what's really insulting, Madam Deputy Speaker, is how they tried to sell it to us, how they tried to justify the action to Manitobans. Can you imagine what they say to the North End constituents? Can you image what they're saying to the people in the North End, North End, Winnipeg?

The reason why we're putting ATMs beside the VLTs inside our casinos is because we're concerned about your safety: we don't want you to get raped crossing McPhillips; we don't want you to get mugged crossing McPhillips, Mr. Speaker. You know, this is the reason why we're putting the ATMs.

Well, what a bunch of hogwash, Madam Speaker. If they're that concerned about the crime on McPhillips and, yes, it has gotten worse, but it hasn't quite gotten to that degree that we need to keep people inside the casino in order to prevent horrific accidents or crimes being bestowed upon them. Well, this particular bill seems to be a, a bill that does make some modifications, but it doesn't go far enough in terms of what we within the Manitoba Liberal Party believe. We believe that there is a need to cur-protect our consumers. We believe that there is a need for responsible gaming policy in the province of, of Manitoba.

And, and with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

* (15:40)

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Yes, thank you very much Madam Speaker, and I do wish to speak to Bill 27. Never before in the history of this province have we seen the growth and the exponential blooming of, of gambling—gambling that we have seen take place as we have in the last 10 years under this NDP government. Never before have we seen a government so addicted to, to the, to the unfortunate revenues of, of gaming as we've seen with this NDP government over the last 10 years, and when you, when you travel the highways and byways and the communities and neighbourhoods of, of, of our cities and our province, you will find that there is a price that is being paid.

There is a carnage in our, in our communities and those are the victims of the gambling, the gaming policy of this government. We have seen a proliferation of the one-armed bandits like never before. And we're not talking about individuals

wearing a balaclava and a club running our streets. No, no, they come in the form of an NDP politician, who, who put more, more one-armed bandits, more slot machines into casinos than ever before, and worse, worse yet, they're putting the ATM machines right, basically, next to the one-armed bandits. So what we have here is, basically, a picture whereby we have NDP politicians basically pulling a balaclava on, taking their club and looting the population of their hard-earned money to one armed bandits, and that's very unfortunate.

We have called on this House numerous times, and I used to be the Lotteries critic for PC caucus, and I, I appreciate the efforts being put on by our new critic, and we have, we have called upon a moratorium on the expansion of gaming, of gambling in the province of Manitoba, and let's do a proper study on the social and economic impacts of all this gambling on our population.

I can remember that during the, during the days when responsible gamin—gambling was brought into Manitoba, it was not meant to be pitched to our local population. It was meant to be, be pitched to those who wanted to come to the province, have a little bit of an outing, come for a three-day tour, do some Folklorama, have a little bit of fun at a casino, and then go back home, and, thus, wouldn't become addicted. It was not meant to be advertised to our local population. And there was, there were two ads: one was on a bus and one was outside the Hotel Fort Garry, that inadvertently were put up. And I can remember then, the Leader of the Opposition, the, the Member for Concordia, the now Premier (Mr. Doer), in 1999, after he was elected, talking about how horrible that was and how terrible that was, and turned around not even six months later and started the largest onslaught of gambling, of, of, advertising gambling on our own population that we had ever seen in the history of this province. Never before had gambling, had gaming been rammed down the throats of our population like under this NDP government in the last 10 years.

And then we wonder, and then we wonder why we have such high crime rates. And then we wonder why we have problems in society. And then we wonder why they've got to move the ATM machines into the casinos to protect the gamblers because there is such a problem with crime around these because people have lost their money. And, and the government scratches its head and says, well, the way to fix the crime problem isn't to deal with the criminals, isn't to deal with the problem gambling,

it's to put the ATM machines into the casino. If that isn't just the worst logic you've ever seen. If that isn't just the most disgraceful thing you've ever heard. Those, those ATM machines should be placed further away from the casinos, further away from the one-armed bandits. That's like saying, that's like saying you go into high-crime area and you throw wallets around the street and hope that somehow that would prevent crime, and that's how this government is trying to deal with this issue.

We have a serious problem with problem gambling in this province, and I have had individuals sit in my office and in tears tell me how they ended up spending time in jail, and telling me in tears how they have to drive by hotels and have to put a hand over their face so they don't look at the hotel because the impulse to go in and start gambling is so strong. It ruined their lives. It ruined their families. I, I've heard of where, where a woman came home and found the collection agency at their door, and they were told you don't own the house anymore, and they said, how could this have happened? Well, their spouse had gambled it all away, and without telling, telling the wife, had mortgaged and mortgaged and mortgaged, and the house was gone.

We know that there's a problem, and why this government didn't do the responsible thing with Bill 27 and put a moratorium on gambling, put a moratorium on one-armed bandits, take off the balaclavas, put away the club and do the responsible thing and have a, a study done on the social and economic impacts of this, this terrible thing that we're doing to our society, and let's find out.

Folks, in this Legislature it's about time we faced the truth. If there is a problem, if we are actually losing money on the, on the one side because of what it's costing us to, to rehabilitate individuals, what it's costing us in social services, in health care and all the rest of the departments, if it's costing us more than what government's taking in, then maybe we should be looking at doing things differently. There's a saying—we've all heard it—how do you define insanity? Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Well, that's what we're doing with, with this NDP government. That's exactly what they're doing with their gaming policy, and it is just an offence to those of us who see what's happening to our communities, to individuals, men and women.

I mean, I've had individuals tell me, you know, when Christmas came there were no gifts for the

kids. There was no money. It was gambled away, and gambling is a disease. It becomes, it becomes an addiction and these people need help. They don't need ATM machines closer, and my colleague from Emerson said, the next step we're going to get under this NDP government is they'll just put the ATM machine right, right underneath the table of the one-armed bandit, and you just slide the car in—card in and just play until all the money is gone out of your account. Isn't that just a disgraceful approach to take on issues like gambling and crime in our city, in our province?

And I would like to call on the government to look at this bill one more time and maybe put a few more amendments into it, and I would suggest to them, put the amendment in that we do a proper study, that we look at the social and economic impacts that gambling has had on our province, because, really, I mean, in, in the history of this province it's a fairly new phenomena, and we've seen it grow not just in Manitoba; we've seen it grow across North America. Isn't it time that we paused and looked what impact it has on us, because I know other jurisdictions have done it. Other provinces have done it, and they've been horrified. They've been absolutely horrified of the economic and social impact.

And the other thing is we should put a moratorium on. Let's put a moratorium on until we know the facts, and then, and then we'd be making decisions, and then we'd be going forward on this topic. At least we'd have something in front of us that we could debate with, because until then, really, we're all speaking in a vacuum, because I don't know what the full impact is. I know what it is anecdotally from those individuals who have come into my office. I know what I've heard out in the community. I know I hear from different family members, but that's not a scientific study and we need a proper study to know what the impact is.

So I would recommend to this House that there be a few rec—a few more changes made to this, and let's think of those individuals who come home and find out that the furniture has been taken 'cause the collection agency came, took the furniture. They come home and find out there's no family vehicle anymore because the collection agency came and took the family vehicle, and the worst, the most shameful is when the woman came home to find out the house had been repossessed because her husband

had gambled it all away. He had the illness called compulsive gambling.

I would suggest to this House that a few more changes be made to this bill, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 27, The Gaming Control Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 32—The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: We now move on to Bill No. 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act, standing in the name of the Member for Minnedosa.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): It's a pleasure to rise today and have the opportunity to speak on Bill 32, and in my discussions with the minister as well as with the executive director of the centre, it—they have both confirmed that this is a modernizing of the bill and it will inevitably do good things for the centre, and it's important that we continue to preserve and, and foster the centre's growth here in, in Winnipeg as well as, as throughout the province by allowing this culture to grow.

* (15:50)

Over the last few years, the, the centre has seen growth and many new developments, all of which have necessitated many of the amendments brought forward in this bill. Of course, the amendments brought forward before the House cover three key areas or sections. One of them would be increasing the board size from 10 to 12 members, and the second point would be to update the current financial practices of, of the centre. A line of credit offered to the centre can exceed \$100,000, and the third section would be the remuneration of expenses of board members.

And it's important that we, we show our support for Franco-Manitoba community, and that in doing so we also recognize the significant or the important

contributions of the many diverse cultural communities here in our province. The CCFM has been very active in Folklorama, and I can say in the years that I've been elected official and attending Folklorama yearly and prior to that, probably as often as I could, living in—from—being from rural Manitoba, but what I always found at the centre was its, its ability to embrace and include so many communities that were not just French Manitobans; they were also the Caribbean or the African community and others. So I, I give the centre credit, and, and, and recognize the significance of their support in the province in recognizing other cultures.

The CCFM is located in the heart of old St. Boniface, and it's a, it is a heritage centre charged with the mission to maintain and encourage support and sponsor by all available means, all types of French language cultural activities and to make French-Canadian culture accessible to all residents in the province.

In 1898, the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary received this site from the Archbishop of St. Boniface and built the first St. Joseph's Academy, and the fathers that purchased the building in 1913 use—utilized that building as a, as a family, as a place to learn. It was demolished in 1971 to permit the construction of the new centre and according to the plans of the architect Gaboury, the centre was established.

The CCFM, a Manitoba Crown corporation, was incorporated in 1972 and opened its doors on January 25th, 1974. Today, the Francophone community makes up roughly 4.4 percent of the total population in Manitoba and the Franco-Mani—Francophone population of Manitoba has remained quite relative since 1991. The population actually fell in 1996 from 50,000 to 49, and today there are over 48,000 Franco-Manitobans living in the province.

The Francophone community of Manitoba is largely comprised of adults. Approximately 12.3 percent of the population is under the age of 15. Bill 32 intends to replace and modernize the current act, which establishes the centre, and the bill claims to enable the corporation to take advantage of the best business practices enjoyed by similar facilities in the Crown corporation sector. And in visiting with the executive director approximately a month ago to just go over the bill and, and asking her what the vision was of the centre in, in incorporating the changes, she was pleased to show or speak to the different things that were occurring within the

facility and, and the expansions that were occurring at the centre, and I think that I would like to commend the executive there for embracing and encouraging various sectors to be under their roof, and I think that it just speaks to the inclusiveness and the, and the importance of, of that centre.

As I had indicated earlier, there's some key components to the bill that I just would like to touch on. The board and staff: presently they're—the board has—is not to have a composition of more than 12 at that point in all, all, but, but that has been revised and, and can be increased up to 12. And I know that with various organizations in the province, you always look for people with various skills that can actually complement the strength of a board and, and we're looking often for accountants or people with legal backgrounds, people with a strong sense of, of, of planning events, and that type of thing.

So I think that in speaking to the executive director, she spoke about the need to enhance the board and the skills that are required in various areas and the need to make sure that the composite of the board reflects the needs of the community. And on that note, what they ask for was that all board members must be able to participate in the conduct of the board's business in the French language, which, I believe, is significant for, for that centre.

Another area of the bill spoke about the remuneration of the board members and I think that, that is something that obviously the board of directors will have to work through with, with the Province. And I believe that, that this is something that, that I think is important to ensure that individuals who do play a role on a board are, are recognized for those, for their efforts.

Financial matters—the borrowing power that the corporation will have. Just looking at the changes that have occurred at the centre and understanding that they are going through various transitions in, in expansion. I know that in discussions with the executive director, we spoke about the challenges in, in getting authorization just to change the carpet or to create—or start negotiations on the fa—facility expansion. I think that by giving them more authority in borrowing power, is, is something that will definitely help in ensuring that this organization can continue to grow and expand.

There is a, there is a question that was raised, I think by one of the members in debate earlier that

there's no mention of any cap or maximum amount in the amendment and, and you know, this is something that I think, you know, the government and the centre can discuss in detail. But I think that, you know, what I've seen from the activities at the centre, you know, they are led by a very strong group of people, community people who have a strong interest in ensuring that the centre continues to be an accessible and important place to, to entertain.

The centre is constantly undertaking new projects and developments as I indicated ear-earlier. And, I think the centre works very diligently throughout the year ensuring that the Francophone community, as well as our cultural communities, are well looked after and supported. As many members of this House know, the centre is not only a pillar of the French community of our province, but it is also key, as I said earlier, to Folklorama and other community gatherings. So we need settings that foster the thriving culture communities of our province and our city. And I think that by being an active partner as the centre is, within Folklorama and other arts events, this will continue to, to happen in that community.

Another area of the legislation was talking about protection from liability. No action or proceeding can be brought against a member of the board or an officer or an employee of the corporation for anything done or admitted to be done in good faith in the exercise or intended exercise of a power or duty under this act. And the issue was raised earlier by a member within the House during debate in second reading was, with regard to the question of accountability and the possibility of liability, what should be included where there is gross incompetence. So, a change to this section is necessary as it would ensure as much accountability as possible.

* (16:00)

A member of the board who holds office on the coming into force of this act may be reappointed in accordance to this act. And we know that there are a lot of boards out there that have individuals serving on them and, and are reappointed. And, I guess, you know, the member from River Heights, I think, discussed this point, and I think that in any corporation there are limits placed on the number of terms that board members are permitted to serve, but there's also reasons to continue to have individuals serve on boards.

So I believe that when I met with the minister in a briefing on this, they were, they were cognizant of the fact that there is board members that are appointed at, for various numbers of years and there's a transition of individuals from serving new on the board to ones that have been there for a while. So I think it's a good balance and I think it allows for the rotation of new and old board members, allowing fresh perspectives and new ideas to influence the board every so often, and I think that that's a healthy mix within, within the board structure.

So, I guess, more or less, in closing, I just want to speak to the significance of this bill, modernizing an act that needed that to happen. I think that this an organization that should be commended for their visibility and the significance they place or emphasize on cultural and multiculturalism, and I think that we continue—we need to continue to support and fund the centre as it is one of our founding nations, and all peoples must be made aware of the historical founders and influential builders of our province and our country.

So, in closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that we, on this side of the House, support Bill 32 and the modernization aspects of it, and we look forward to continuing to attend events at the centre, and we want to congratulate the executive director and the board for all the good work that they do for all Manitobans. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 28—The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: We now move on to Bill No. 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act, standing in the name of the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Shall, shall the bill remaining standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No. Okay.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I just want to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act, as brought forward by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I just want to say, first of all, that our side of the House certainly is commending of the work being done in the province by security guards and by private investigators, and they play a very important role in the protection of our society and the protection of our culture, in this province, Mr.—Madam Deputy Speaker. And I believe that, that the government is trying to bring forward an amendment here or a bill, rather, in this process, to try to strengthen some of the areas around private investigation and security guards, but I, I, you know, we, I have a couple of questions and concerns that I want to raise in my comments today.

Audio system failure

* (16:10)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It would appear we have our sound back. I'm just checking. Can, can we hear? All right, bring the House to order and we will continue, and if we could indulge your patience, if you wouldn't mind starting over again, the Member for Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Maguire: Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to put some words on this Bill 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act for the second time today. I thought I was doing fine when the sound went out in the first go-round here but I, I think that this is an important bill.

My colleague from Steinbach has certainly indicated that, that this is a bill that would require some concern, but, perhaps I have a few my—of my own, and one would be in regards to some of the fees and subjective issues around control and who makes the decision about what an opinion is by some certain individuals. But, but I think mainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the biggest concern that we have on this side of the House is the fact that this government has failed to provide safety and security for the people of Manitoba because vandalism and violent crime have increased under the NDP.

And one of the key areas that's mentioned in this bill is that the fact that, that the protection of

property and the security of persons should be one of the fundamental protections that government provides for citizens. And I think that's part of the reason why they tried to bring it forward, but that's also why they failed, because they failed to do both, Madam Deputy Speaker, in regards to providing more safety and vandalism. We've seen more graffiti. We've seen attempts to try and remove graffiti from buildings across the city and the province. We've seen situations where they've tried to perhaps deter from the fact that they are the murder capital of— you know, that they've been, at least, the murder capital of Canada, not just western Canada.

We've had thefts that have put us at the top of that list at different times as well. Car thefts, and we've seen this province be recognized as the break-in capital on Canada as well, Madam Deputy Speaker, and so I want to speak in favour of the work that's done by private investigators and security guards in spite of the fact that the province hasn't been able to control the issues of violent crime and vandalism and that's why there is such a growth in this area. There needs to be—we need more security guards and private investigators to have that opportunity.

Now, the Province must realize that because they're, they're actually putting them into the situation where they are having to be licensed more so. I don't have a problem with people being registered to do their work in those areas, Madam Deputy Speaker, as much as, as I do with the fact that it may be just another cash grab from this province in regards to the licensing fees, 'cause that sort of thing, every time you go to another licence or registration, it seems the government wants to up the fees that have been charged, and that's partly been a—as I stated many times under the economic statements that we've made in this House, a reason for this government to sort of say that they've been able to hold the line on some and reduce other taxes, which is, of course, we know that they've collected more overall than any government in Manitoba's history by increasing the PST and other areas that I've talked about before.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it's a, it's certainly an issue that, that security guards play a very important role in ensuring that property is protected and monitored properly in this province, and that as the bill outlines, that's Bill 28, outlines, security guards are not police officers but they still play an important role in monitoring property and

alerting police services of, of possible criminal activity. These people, as I say, they're, they're not policemen. They're not meant to be policemen, but they are registered under the, under this bill, and their job is to alert people, try to protect individuals, and they do that by observing what's going on through private investigation or on-the-spot security job guard policing, or police type of work, and alerting the police service of any deviance that would be considered to be criminal or of a, of a non-honest nature.

And the role of these occupations is important, particularly as crimes against businesses, in many cases, can be deterred by simply having personal— personnel present to monitor the property and alert any suspicious behaviour, and that's what I've said, Madam Deputy Speaker, in regards to this bill. Just, it is a big deterrent to have people on site in a number of cases, you know. Some people put up a fence and provide protection by policing-type dogs or that sort of thing inside compounds, but it's not always possible to do that, and so we've got a situation here where it's very necessary, unfortunately, in this province to have more security guards and private investigators working in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba, we need more of these people to deal with the increasing crime, the increasing rate of crime that I've talked about, and for many companies, graffiti and other forms of vandalism can become a significant burden and can be result in, in, in great, greater cost being incurred by their companies. For many of these companies, these costs may place significant stress on their bottom line, and in a time of recession, every dollar counts in this type of an economic climate.

We've seen reports of depression in the newspapers today, and we know what's happening across the country in regards to economic activity and private businesses, as well as others, are having as much of a struggle in, in Canada as most other places. Although I agree with Mr. Ted Menzies, the secretary of the finance committee in the House of Commons, when I heard him on a radio show on Sunday morning, indicating that Canada's role in the top of the G7. In fact, he indicated, as a leader in the G20 in regards to our being the most well positioned to come out of this recession in, in good shape, Madam Deputy Speaker, and, and I certainly know of Mr. Menzies' expertise in this area, and certainly his words were very credible in regards to the

outcome of where Canada will be when this recession is over.

* (16:20)

Going through very tough times at the present time, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that's why I think it's so very, very important to provide opportunities for our businesses who employ many, many workers in Canada and whether they're large or small, and we know in Manitoba over 80 percent of the business activity in this province is from small business, or the job creation, rather, is from small business.

And each of those small businesses, if they have to provide more security on their own sites or hire private investigators to track down people that have stolen things from their property, Madam Deputy Speaker, it just adds to their bottom line, and it's a, it's a shame when we've got a government that gives lip service to being harsher, more harsh on crime that, that our crime rates and vandalism continue to grow in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I've said, crime has become not a random occurrence, but a reality of living in their neighbourhoods and, and gangs have taken root underneath this government, and I—a prime example of that would be the development of the Hells Angels in this province as they came in in the early 2000s. Hells Angels are, are not an organization that you'd want to have promoting examples for our young citizens. They, they are leaders in drug dealing and a number of circumstances that have been recorded and a number of times and across the country.

But, but, Madam Deputy Speaker, the issuance of this kind of a crime and the fact that this government has allowed it to grow under their watch over the last 10 years is not concerting for the citizens of this province. It's not comforting for any of us.

Recent crime has shown that these gangs are recruiting children, as I've said, to carry out their tasks. This in and of itself is not only unacceptable, but it's also devastating to future generations. I mean, we need to make sure that future generations have an opportunity to avoid these types of criminal activities, to not be taken under the wing, if you will, of, of these Hells Angels. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government just simply needs to do a better job of ensuring that children do not become entrapped by these gang lifestyles, whether it's in drugs or consumption of them or in the trafficking or

in other activities to promote themselves as gang members.

One of the alarming realities of crime in Manitoba is the prevalence that a lot of these crimes go unreported, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I think this is one of the most concerting—

An Honourable Member: Disconcerting.

Mr. Maguire: —disconcerting facts that I've seen in, in Manitoba's history. Statistics Canada has said that 88 percent of the sexual assaults in this province, 69 percent of household thefts, and 60 percent, over 60 percent of physical assaults go unreported. They don't even get reported in this province.

And so think of how harsh the realities are, Madam Deputy Speaker, if our courts are already full with the types of activities that are taking place, and we've got 88 percent of sexual assaults, 69 percent of household thefts, and 60 percent of physical activities going unreported. There are more victims of crime than is typically reported and this need, this needs to be acknowledged.

We must remember that security guards play an important part in alerting the police and reporting crimes so that these crimes can be properly investigated, Madam Deputy Speaker. With an increase in these crimes being reported, we'll get a better sense of the reality of crime in Manitoba and what should be done to combat it.

And, of course, the government has done very little to try to get to the bottom of finding out what these numbers are, and it's up to Statistics Canada to unleash and report these kinds of numbers, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd just like to say that, you know, in closing, that this NDP government is—seems to be fine with the status quo and does not admit that there is a crime problem in this province. They—until the government wakes up and aggressively tackles crime with the—the problems in our communities will only continue to rise, putting at risk both personnel safety—personal safety and the safety of our property.

And I just wanted to say, in closing, that, you know, we've been recorded in the past as the murder capital of Canada. Here, in Winnipeg, we've been reported as the car theft capital, the break-ins that I've just alluded to, Madam Deputy Speaker. You know, they've brought forward some legislation in the past that—in fact, we've got a bill before us now to

eliminate smoking in vehicles for persons 16 and under, or under 16, and Bill 5, the one that I'm responsible for as the critic to the minister as well, and I look forward to that bill coming before committee tomorrow evening.

But you know one of the most disconcerting areas as well is in the cash grab that's taken place under photo radar, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the photo radar that I'm referring to, of course, is that of on construction sites when there's no workers present and where these individuals have not gone over the posted regular speed limit. And the government has considered that it's more necessary and more important to grab \$10 million out of these unsuspecting individuals than it is to put their efforts in towards eliminating or reducing crime in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that one of the areas of the bill is the fact that on this side of the House, from those having to be registered and licensed to be in activities that allows individuals, companies, not to have to be the ones licensed any more, but it puts the onus on the individual to become a licensed investigative person or security guard as well, private investigator or security guard. And once they have that licence in the province, then they are, have a little more freedom in regards to who they work for and in regards to the private companies that, or individuals who may be out there today making a business of providing security personnel for the province of Manitoba.

There's a couple of concerns about the, about fees that might be there, because, of course, there's no-no company may hold out providing security guards or private investigators unless they possess a valid licence, which has a fee attached to it, as I've said before. And I guess, so in the recording stages, both security guards and private investigators must report to the registrar within 15 days is the time limit there, Madam Deputy Speaker, and provide the names of persons' addresses for service, the charge laid against that individual if they have a crime that's committed as well, and also for the conviction against the person of a crime. So if you're, you know, if you're involved in these kinds of activities, of course, you would have to declare them to the registrar, and I think that that's a matter of more common sense than, than may have been required in the bill. But, but it's certainly a circumstance that, that we on this side of the House see as, as a matter that can be dealt with.

And, with those few words, I would allow Bill 28 to be, to move on to committee. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 7—The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: We now move on to Bill No. 7, The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act, standing in the name of the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck). No?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Unanimous consent has been denied.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Thank you, Mister Deputy Chair. *[interjection]* Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to put these various words on the record about Bill 7 in regards to The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act. The primary focus of this legislation is to ensure that food products originating from Manitoba are safe from the time they leave the farm gate to the local processing and retail sectors and ultimately reach the consumers' plate.

There certainly is a growing level of public awareness found around food safety, particular in light of instances such as Maple Leaf, Leaf, listeriosis cases, E. coli contamination of lettuce, and the discovery of salmonella in peanut products, to name a few examples.

* (16:30)

Bill 7 has targeted people who own and operate commercial premises where food is grown, produced, processed, or sold. Owners and operators of approved premises will be required to be licensed, and a public registry of licensed food premises will be established. Food premise operators will be required to re-visit—report food safety risk, and, without fear of retaliation, employees, food premises,

can report food safety risk. The amendments will give inspectors from Manitoba Agriculture the power to issue orders requiring owners and operator premises in producing food to prevent, eliminate or otherwise deal with food safety risk. This could include issuing orders to destroy or dispose of food that does not meet food safety standards.

Provisions of Bill 7 allow for recall orders. Orders are to establish control area or contain food safety risk should one arise. Public health inspectors will continue to have responsibility for inspection at the restaurant and retail level.

The staff from Manitoba Agriculture and public health division of Manitoba Health and Healthy Living is expected to work co-operatively to ensure that food safety issue at any point in the food system are addressed. For *[inaudible]* sort of standpoint, Bill 7 provides the power to impose fines up to \$50,000 or six months in jails for individuals and up to \$500,000 for corporations that fail to comply with food safe regulations.

The act also incorporates amendments that will allow the minister to plan for and deal with disruptions of Manitoba's food supply caused by major emergencies such as a pandemic. Manitoba consumers, rightfully, and expect that their food products they purchase will be safe and not endangered to their families. We believe that is important that the various levels of government including and regulating our food products work closely with Manitoba food processors, producers to come up with reasonable laws and regulations to ensure that food safety is safe and their food supply.

It is also very important to remember that consumers might also bear personal responsibility when it comes to a matter of food safety. Consumers have a duty to ensure that they store, prepare, cook food products in a safe manner otherwise all food safety measures that are taken by the producers and processors could be undone due to negligence on the part of the consumer.

For example, at a news Web site meatingplace.com recently carried out a story about types of food safety precautions that American take while handling food. The information arose from a food healthy-health survey conducted by an international food information council. Although U.S. consumers were surveyed, there are likely some similarities when it comes to practices Canadian consumers use when handle their food.

The survey found that food, food safety precautions use actually declining in a number of areas from previous surveys. For example, 87 percent washed their hands with soap and water versus 90 pre-92 percent in 2008; 77 percent washed cutting boards with soap and water or bleach versus 84 percent in 2008; 71 percent cooked food to the required temperature versus 76 percent in 2008; 63 percent separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from ready to eat products versus 70 percent in 2008.

The research also found that only 50 percent of Americans who were surveyed use a different or freshly cleaned cutting board for each product they were cooking with. In other words, consumers bear a lot of responsibility when it comes to getting food on the table that is safe to eat. Consumers do not have the right to blame the primary producer or producer if they do not—if they get food poisoning because they failed to properly store or cook a food product. They have a personal responsibility when it comes to food preparation.

The minister has indicated to us that she has consulted with a range of stakeholders on this legislation from commodity groups to food processor. She noted her department examined food safety legislation in other provinces like Ontario and British Columbia when drafting Bill 7.

During second reading on Bill 7, the minister noted this bill includes, and I quote, broad regulation making powers to ensure food safety including establishing standards and requirements of food and food premises, food safety programs and tracing, end of quote.

As they say, the devil can be in the detail when it comes to regulations that accompany Bill 7. We asked the minister if her and her staff would work very closely with affected stakeholders when developing these regulations. She has indicated her commitment to do so and this is very important issue, Mr.—Madam Deputy Speaker. These stakeholders have extensive experience when it comes to ensure Manitoba consumers receive safe, high quality food products.

During the briefing on this bill, the minister indicated that the inspectors provided for under Bill 7 would come from within her staff of the Department of Agriculture. We asked that these staff be thoroughly trained in various aspect to food safety so they can fulfil their responsible duties. And again we encourage that trained and MAFRI inspectors be done in consultation with the affected industries so

appropriate knowledge can be shared with the inspectors.

While most of the feedback we have heard since Bill 7 was produced has been positive, a few red flags have been raised by some producers. Some primary producers have expressed concern that give the bills, the Province, the sweeping powers to come into their farm operation, seize their products, thereby infringing on their rights. For example, one—some comments have been talked about protecting producers' civil liberties. One commenter said of Bill 7, and I quote: "The civil rights infringements are unreal."

Another Internet commentator said of Bill 7, and I quote: It may be the rapid construction dismissal of local producers and roadside markets, organic food co-operators, buying food clubs and simple markets like the buyer direct market. These distribution vehicles do not have the funds or annual licensing and resources and other equipment to ensure that no contamination has taken place, et cetera. End of quote.

While these options may seem strong and strident in some, they indication how strongly people feel about their right to produce food or to market food.

Another most frequently cited concern we have about Bill 7 is potential impact on community fundraising events, such as fall suppers, barbecues, and community events, the like. The minister and staff has indicated these types of events will not fall under this legislation, but instead they will fall under The Public Health Act.

Some primary producers who also produce food on their farms have raised questions about biosecurity issues. For example, they want to assure—assurances that inspectors who visit their farm operations will follow the proper protocols to ensure potential contaminants are not carried from one operation to their operation. We know that staff at the Manitoba Agriculture are familiar with these types of concerns and do take tapes—steps to mitigate these risks.

Producers and processors also want assurances that their privacy will be protected and that the records from farm operations will not be shared with parties that are not, not entitled to see them. The government has assured us that the normal provincial privacy legislation will be followed, and we'll hold them to their word on this issue.

These are just a few of the comments and concerns I'd like to put on the record in regarding to Bill 7. Hoping to ensure that Manitobans have access to safe local food supplies is a very important public policy. As I've stated earlier, all the key roles to ensure your food that gets to our plate is safe—be primary producers, processors, retailers, restaurants or at home—cooked meals feeding our families.

We look forward to hearing from the affected stakeholders when this bill goes to committee, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Also, we note that—also for the record—that this has a, a significant impact in regards to the dairy industry, and in the comments that's been handed down from the minister in regards to the briefing note that—I had it presented to the minister—I understand that she has been in consultation since that time with the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, also other stakeholders. We know that it's important that we do the consultation on these issues. It's so such an important issue that when we draft legislation that we have those stakeholders at the table and make sure that their voices are heard.

We look forward to moving this on to, to the next stage, to the committee level, and hear from those stakeholders, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I, too, wanted to put some words on the record in regards to Bill 7, as it is an important bill that's going to have a fairly significant impact in, in two ways.

First and foremost, for at the end of the day the consumer, ultimately, it's there to ensure safety of food products for the consumer. Therefore, there is a great deal of benefit whenever we have the opportunity to be able to take actions that will ensure that the quality of food, at the end of the day, through a consumer's point of view, is, in fact, healthy and, and safe to eat. The higher the standards, no doubt, that we have, the, the stronger our position to be able to even sell many of those food products, whether it's within the province of Manitoba or, in fact, Canada or internationally.

* (16:40)

And I think that in the past, Canada has been recognized as a country that, in essence, produces good, good quality food, whether it's produce or, or animals, Madam Deputy Speaker, and, in part, I believe that it is because of, of having good regulations and good laws to protect the industry as a

whole, and that covers the entire gambit in terms of the stakeholders that provide these valuable resource to the consumers that, that consume.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the other issue is that of those that are the producers of food and, and how this bill will in fact have a very real impact. One needs to be and should be concerned about regulations and the amount of regulations that are put into place and that these regulations—because even though we pass the legislation, we don't necessarily know the intent or to what degree the intent of the regulation will be intrusive and potentially cause other issues within industry stakeholders. I know I have often heard, as I'm sure other members have heard, of regulations and bureaucracy, if it could be put, put simplified to that degree, quite often causes problems for the entrepreneurs. And I think there is some merit to that and you know sometimes I think that we've got to be very careful that we're not overburdening good businesses and entrepreneurs that are out there, that are not only trying to make a living but also providing food for a nation and beyond.

So, when I look at this particular bill, I see a bill that has an attempt to try to protect the integrity of the system. I am concerned in terms of the regulations, and I think that the minister has a responsibility to ensure that prior to passing regulations, that there—that she, in this case, is working within the industry stakeholders to make sure that the best interests are in fact being served, always keeping in the back of the mind the importance of the safe foods for our consumers.

Last year I had the wonderful opportunity to be able to get a better appreciation of our, of our hog industry, and it started by a tour of Starlight Colony. And it was very impressive in terms of the way in which, the way in which they actually, the way in which they actually, you know, from the piglet—a pig being born all the way up to the point in which it's put onto the truck. And one of the things that I thought was really interesting was is that, you walk in and you have to take a shower before going into the facility and then you have to shower upon exiting the facility. And they provide you coveralls in which you can actually go in amongst the hogs and get that much better of an appreciation in terms of just what takes place. But what I thought was interesting is, not only the shower in, shower out, but also the use of computer technology. And the way, the way in which computer technology is used in terms of bringing and raising pigs to a certain weight prior to,

ultimately, their shipment and they've got it down to, to the week.

Well, you know, I applaud those that are involved in protecting and providing pork, not only to Manitoba but to, to Canada and the U.S. where I suspect most of this pork is going to. Actually I understand a great deal of it actually goes to Japan. They had chunks of pork fat, in particular, that I can recall, that actually sent—I believe it was to Japan.

Having said that, I went from there to Brandon, and the MLA from Brandon West was very generous with his time and made some arrangements so that I would actually be able to have a tour with a few others of the Maple Leaf processing plant. And it was very much appreciated I must say to the member from Brandon West. And it was, you know, a valuable experience and, you know, I was amazed in terms of to the degree in which you have this huge facility and just how clean it is. And, you know, the workers, again, there's a great deal of safety precautions that is taken in order to protect the integrity of the pork product.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is an industry, if you look at it from that point of view, that has created, literally, hundreds and thousands of jobs. I shouldn't say hundreds of thousands, but hundreds, going into the thousands, of jobs for the province of Manitoba, both directly and indirectly.

When you look at Bill 7, you kind of get a sense of just how important a bill of this nature can be in terms of right from the farm to the processing centre and why it is so important that we have good regulation that can really make a difference and add to an industry. And, I suspect, that, you know, good governance would ensure that these industries are, in fact, being protected.

So whether it's a pork farm or it's a, you know, a vegetable farm or whatever other type of food product that is out there where industries are developed in the province of Manitoba, I trust and have confident that the bureaucracy is not going to overburden but rather work with ensuring that the product is safe for human consumption and providing orders where it's necessary and not necessarily cause the type of additional bureaucratic red tape that's going to cause problems for our industry. And that's where we look to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and others to ensure that, that the producers are not going to be overburdened by regulation.

So the principle of what it is that they're talking about within the bill is something in which is, in short, positive. We look forward to the bill going to, to the committee stage, Madam Deputy Speaker, and just give tribute to the many individuals involved in producing and marketing and processing our food products here in Manitoba. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 5—No. 7, The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the following bills will be referred to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs on Thursday, June 4th, at 6 p.m.: Bill 7, The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act; Bill 25, The Statistics Amendment Act; Bill 27, The Gaming Control Amendment Act; Bill 28, The Private

Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act; and Bill 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It's been announced that the following bills will be referred to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs on Thursday, June the 4th, at 6 p.m.: Bill 7, The Food Safety and Related Amendments Act; Bill 25, The Statistics Amendment Act; Bill 27, The Gaming Control Amendment Act; Bill 28, The Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act; and Bill 32, The Centre culturel franco-manitobain Act.

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Mr. Chomiak: Insofar as we will be reconvening in committee of the House in an hour and 10 minutes, I—perhaps I'm recommending that we call it 5 o'clock.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills			
		DPIN System Driedger; Irvin-Ross	2537
Bill 35–The Municipal Conflict of Interest and Campaign Financing Act (Various Acts Amended)		Seniors Support Services Rowat; Irvin-Ross	2537
Ashton	2531	Hog Industry Eichler; Wowchuk	2538
Petitions			
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Lamoureux	2531	Health-Care Services Driedger; Oswald	2539
Long-Term Care Facilities–Morden and Winkler		Flooding Taillieu; Ashton	2540
Dyck	2531	Breezy Point Gerrard; Struthers	2541
PTH 15 Schuler	2532	Burntwood Regional Health Authority Lamoureux; Oswald	2542
Photo Radar Borotsik	2532	Community Economic Development Jha; Ashton	2542
Twinning of Trans-Canada Highway Taillieu	2532	Vita Hospital Graydon; Oswald	2543
Committee Reports		Members' Statements	
Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Third Report		Kendra's Walk for Kids Driedger	2544
Reid	2533	Tom Gallant Jennissen	2545
Tabling of Reports			
Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2009-2010 –Revenue Estimates		Neepawa Area Collegiate Institute Musical Production Briese	2545
Selinger	2534	Opaskwayak Cree Nation RCMP Detachment Whitehead	2546
Oral Questions			
1999 Election McFadyen, Chomiak	2535	Randi Toews Dyck	2546
Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Driedger; Irvin-Ross	2536	Grievances Eichler 2547	

**ORDERS OF THE DAY
(Continued)
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 25—The Statistics Amendment Act

Pedersen 2549
Taillieu 2551
Lamoureux 2553

Bill 27—The Gaming Control Amendment Act

Graydon 2554
Lamoureux 2556
Schuler 2558

Bill 32—The Centre culturel
franco-manitobain Act
Rowat

2560

Bill 28—The Private Investigators
and Security Guards Amendment Act
Maguire

2562

Bill 7—The Food Safety and
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