

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 18—The Public Schools Amendment Act
(Safe and Inclusive Schools)**

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I move, seconded by the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief), that Bill 18, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Safe and Inclusive Schools); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (milieux scolaires favorisant la sécurité et l'inclusivité), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Allan: This bill amends The Public Schools Act. The bill defines bullying. The definition recognizes that bullying can take a variety of forms, including— including cyberbullying. School boards must expand their policies about the appropriate use of the Internet to include social media, text messaging and instant messaging.

The bill also requires each school board to establish a respect-for-human-diversity policy. The policy is to promote the acceptance of and respect for others in a safe, caring and inclusive school environment. The policy must accommodate student activity that promotes the school environment as being inclusive of all students, including student activities and organizations that use the name gay-straight alliance.

We will continue to work with our education partners and our community partners in our collective efforts to provide safe and inclusive learning environments so that all of our students feel protected, feel accepted and can reach their full potential.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Thank you—

Mr. Speaker: Oh, pardon me. Before I recognize the honourable minister, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Sorry. The honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

**Bill 2—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act
(Respect for the Safety of Emergency and
Enforcement Personnel)**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill 2, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Respect for the Safety of Emergency and Enforcement Personnel), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ashton: Workplace safety, health is important to Manitobans. When it comes to our emergency providers, whether it's police officers, firefighters, paramedics and others dealing with emergency situations, their workplace can often be on our highways, on the side of our highways providing assistance to people in distress, enforcing our laws.

It's been very clear, Mr. Speaker, that we need enhanced protection for them, and, in fact, this bill will bring in provisions that will reduce speeds to a specified speed limit. In fact, where it's 80 kilometres or greater, this would bring it down to 60. When it's under 80 kilometres, down to 40. It would also, for the first time, require people to slow down on the other lane in the reverse direction outside of where there's a divided highway. It does mandate firefighters to direct traffic.

The bottom line, though, very clearly what it does is it provides a much safer environment for our police, for our firefighters, for our paramedics and for other emergency service providers. They're there for us, Mr. Speaker. We need to be there for them. That's why we've introduced this bill, and I encourage all members of the Legislature to support it.

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

**Bill 203—The Participation of Manitoba
in the New West Partnership Act**

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I move, seconded by the member of La Verendrye, that Bill 203, The Participation of Manitoba in the New West Partnership Act, be now read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Graydon: The bill requires the government of Manitoba to contact the governments of BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan to begin negotiations to join their economic partnership, known as the New West Partnership, within one year after the bill receives assent, Mr. Speaker. And if we were to—if we would think in accordance with the member for—the minister responsible for government, saying that the municipalities would be well advised to join and be forced to join for benefits, economic benefits, I would suggest that that same—the same thing would apply for Manitoba to join with the three richest provinces in western Canada.

So I would urge all members in the House to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? [*interjection*] Order, please.

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

Any further bills? Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

PETITIONS

St. Ambroise Beach Provincial Park

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the reasons for this petition are as follows:

The St. Ambroise provincial park was hard hit by the 2011 flood, resulting in the park's ongoing closure, the loss of local access to Lake Manitoba, as well as untold harm to the ecosystem and wildlife in the region.

The park's closure is having a negative impact in many areas, including disruptions to the local tourism, hunting and fishing operations, diminished economic and employment opportunities and potential loss of the local store and decrease in property values.

Local residents and visitors alike want St. Ambroise provincial park to be reopened as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider repairing St. Ambroise provincial park and its access points to their pre-flood condition so the park can be reopened for the 2013 season or earlier if possible.

And this petition's signed by M. Allard, D. Garnhan and J. Turner and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Vita & District Health Centre

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Vita & District Health Centre services a wide area of southeastern Manitoba and is relied on to provide emergency services.

On October 17th, 2012, the emergency room at the Vita & District Health Centre closed with no timeline for it to reopen.

This emergency room deals with approximately 1,700 cases a year, which includes patients in the hospital, the attached personal care home and members of the community and surrounding area.

Manitobans should expect a high quality of health care close to home and should not be expected to travel great distances for health services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Health consider reopening the emergency room in Vita as soon as possible and commit to providing adequate medical support for residents of southeastern Manitoba for many years to come.

This petition is signed by K. Fedoruk, I. Perun, M. Perun and many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Road 433

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Provincial Road 433, Cape Coppermine Road, in the rural municipality of Lac du Bonnet has seen an increase in traffic volume in recent years.

New subdivisions have generated considerable population growth, and the area has seen a significant increase in tourism due to the popularity of the Granite Hills Golf Course.

This population growth has generated an increased tax base in the rural municipality.

Cape Coppermine Road was not originally built to handle the high volume of traffic it now accommodates.

* (13:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation recognize that Cape Coppermine Road can no longer adequately serve both area residents and tourists, and as such consider making improvements to the road to reflect its current use.

This petition is signed by M. Wiebe, K. Dodd, D. Gauthier and hundreds of other fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Provincial Trunk Highways 16 and 5 North— Traffic Signals

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The junction of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north is an increasingly busy intersection which is used by motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Town of Neepawa has raised concerns with the Highway Traffic Board about safety levels at this intersection.

The Town of Neepawa has also passed a resolution requesting that Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation install traffic lights at this intersection in order to increase safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider making the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of PTH 16 and PTH 5 north a priority project in order to help protect the safety of the motorists and pedestrians who use it.

This petition is signed by D.G. Abbott, H. McConnell, L. Warnock and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—Steinbach

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The city of Steinbach is one of the fastest growing communities in Manitoba and one of the largest cities in the province.

This growth has resulted in pressure on a number of important services, including personal care homes and long-term care space in the city.

Many long-time residents of the city of Steinbach have been forced to live out their final years outside of Steinbach because of the shortage of personal care homes and long-term care facilities.

Individuals who have lived in, worked in and contributed to the city of Steinbach their entire lives should not be forced to spend their final years in a place far from friends and from family.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health ensure additional personal care homes and long-term care spaces are made available in the city of Steinbach on a priority basis.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by H. Dyck, J. Bateman, P. Porter and thousands of other good Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to table the Civil Legal Services special operating agency 2011-2012 annual report.

And I'm also pleased to table the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, or JCC, 2011-2012.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Senator Carolyn McGinn from Kansas, Representative Dan Kelley from Iowa, Representative Carolyn Laine from Minnesota, and Ilene Grossman, assistant director of Midwestern Legislative Conference.

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here today.

Also, seated in the public gallery today we have with us Orlo Sukkau, Jesse Sukkau and Derrick Klassen, who are the guests of the honourable member from Morden-Winkler; and Jennifer McKinnon and Joel Tetrault, teacher advisers for the école Béliveau heroes and social justice club, along with eight students, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. Selby).

And also seated in the public gallery we have from Fort Rouge School 12 grade 4 students under the direction of Ms. Sherri Millard, and this group is located in the constituency of the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Public Construction Projects Mandatory Union Membership

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans know that the NDP government used the Red River Floodway expansion as a union recruitment exercise. The result was a delayed project that was scaled back and that—and the result was costs that were driven up by approximately \$65 million. And this also took away the freedom of 70 per cent of Manitoba's construction workers who are not unionized from participating in an historic project in their own province.

Now, we also know that the NDP wrongly took over \$1.4 million from nonunionized Manitoba construction workers during this floodway expansion union drive.

Will the Premier today admit that he strong-armed nonunionized workers to curry favour with union executives, and will he promise not to do this again?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question, because once again it demonstrates the misinformation he's put on the record in the House. The floodway came in on time and on budget in Manitoba.

He's—the Leader of the Opposition has alleged that non-union workers would be forced to pay union dues on the floodway project. Such was not the case. They paid into a fund that provided them with health and pension benefits. What does the member opposite have against ensuring that working people in Manitoba have access to health and pension benefits in this great province of Manitoba?

Mr. Speaker, we listen to Manitobans, and when we listen to Manitobans, we act on the concerns that they would like us to follow up on. How does the Leader of the Opposition approach governance? He says, we want to engage Manitobans—

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

The First Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: One would think and one would hope that a Premier that spends so much time living in the past would learn from it, Mr. Speaker. Such is not the case here.

Here we go again. He made a \$65-million mistake, a \$65-million mistake on the floodway expansion, and now he's made union membership mandatory if you want to work on the east-side project or the Bipole III line as well. These are even bigger jobs than the floodway, Mr. Speaker, and even bigger injustice.

Now, the NDP is demonstrating here the worst kind of discrimination. Even strong union supporters are saying this is unbelievable. Union members know it's unfair to exclude Manitoba workers from bidding on work in their own home province and forcing work to other provinces as a result. They know it's unfair to choose one union over another on the basis of which one the NDP prefers.

Now, why is the NDP so against worker freedom? Why doesn't the NDP mind its own

business and let Manitoba workers decide how to organize themselves?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, Brian Mulroney built the Confederation Bridge to Prince Edward Island with a labour-management agreement. Mike Harris built the 401 Highway in Ontario. Mike Mr. Conservative Harris, Brian Mr. Conservative Mulroney built the 401 Highway in Ontario with a labour-management agreement. Mr.—the Leader of the Official Opposition, the member for fort right, is to the right of Brian Mulroney and to the extreme right of Mike Harris.

Duff Roblin, the former premier of Manitoba, pioneered labour-management agreements for hydro projects in the 1960s. They've been done ever since. They provide no lockouts on the part of employers. They provide no strike provisions on the part of unions. They require that the project get built on time and on budget, just like we did with the floodway.

What's he got against progress in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, this is hardly right and left. This is about right and wrong. That's what this is about. The Premier who lives in the past fails to learn from it again.

The labour climate in Ontario or Prince Edward Island is entirely different from this one. The Premier's invited to list all the work stoppages throughout the history of Manitoba for the House today, and he'll find there's never been one. And this insurance contract he's asking us to all pay for, with the coffers of union members being propped up as a consequence, is unjustified.

Now, the discrimination against nonunionized workers is bad enough, but the fact is that this government is actually forcing union workers to pay dues to unions they don't support. They made them support one of 17 as part of the Burntwood/Nelson Agreement; now, on Hydro, one of only two, just two.

Now, why should Manitoba workers, union or non-union, have to pad the coffers of unions they don't support under threat of not working at all? We believe it's unfair to all of the workers in this province for the NDP government to—

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

The leader's time has expired.

* (13:50)

Mr. Selinger: The Leader of the Opposition didn't hear my answer on the floodway. There was no requirement to join the union. Their fees went into a fund that provided them with health benefit and pensions. I do not know what the member of the opposition has against Manitobans having a pension. I do not know what he has against them having additional health benefits, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we believe it's important to listen to Manitobans and Manitobans have told us hydro is our oil, and we need to build it. They've told us that they want Manitobans to have good wages which is why we can pass the construction wages act.

The Leader of the Opposition has said the following—the Leader of the Opposition has said the problem—the following: The problem has—this is a quote from the Leader of the Opposition—the problem has been, I think, in part, that we engage a little late, which makes it harder to get your new ideas out there and to get people—give people the time they need to discuss them, embrace them and feel like they're their own ideas.

He wants to force Manitobans to accept his ideas. He wants to impose his ideas on Manitobans.

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

Before I recognize the 'dess'—next member for a question, I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members to keep the level down a little bit, please. We have many guests that are visiting us here this afternoon. I'm sure they want to go away with a good impression of this Chamber.

So the honourable member for Charleswood, on the next question.

Provincial Sales Tax Increases Impact on Women

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, it's really disheartening to see discrimination at any level. However, sadly, this NDP government doesn't seem to have a problem with it. They discriminate against workers through forced unionization, driving up costs for Manitoba taxpayers.

And in the last budget, they discriminated against women by adding taxes to women's haircuts and spa services six months after promising not to raise taxes.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance to tell women why he put a service on haircuts and spa services specifically for women. Why did they target women in their last budget?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have said all along and we underscored in Budget 2012 that we would have a balanced approach towards bringing down our costs and, of course, making sure that we have revenue there sufficient in order to offer the kinds of services to Manitobans that we do, in order to protect health care, in order to protect education, in order to provide daycare opportunities and, very importantly, to strategically invest in growing the economy so that our—not just the budget can look better, but so it can work for Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue this kind of an approach. We don't discriminate when it came to giving out \$1.2 billion worth—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, it's a discriminatory tax. I have petitions signed by 1,000 women who feel that they were unfairly targeted with this tax and they are very, very angry about it.

Susannah Simes, a small business owner, started the petition, and her question to this NDP government is: Why were women unfairly targeted by the NDP in their last budget?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, that's a question that has just come from a person who sat in this House while her government—and her new Leader of the Opposition—while that government attacked health care, fired nurses, reduced spaces in medical institutions that would have provided for more doctors in every one of our communities across this province.

She has no reason to talk about discriminatory acts. They—when they were government, took the PST and extended it—extended it—and now she gets up and she talks about it here.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue with a balanced approach towards raising revenue. We're going to continue to protect services such as health care and education. No amount of their advice will

knock us off the balanced approach that we have for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Taxation Possible Increase

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, 1,000 women don't agree with the weak response from that Minister of Finance—1,000 women.

Mr. Speaker, by adding PST to haircuts, it's HST one haircut at a time. It's HST by stealth, and the NDP are so desperate for money that they're sneaking it in and they snuck it in in their last budget with this tax grab against women.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance to tell us: Are taxpayers going to see more tax grabs like this in their next budget to pay for their spending addiction?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, when she talks about a—the number 1,000, what I think of is a thousand nurses that your government fired out of this province. And then add—then, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the response to the question posed by the honourable member for Charleswood. I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please allow me to hear the response from the Minister of Finance.

If there was a breach of the rules, I'm sure you'd want me to rule on that, but I can't hear the minister with the commotion that's going on in the House, so I'm asking for your co-operation.

Mr. Struthers: And after they fired a thousand nurses, they drew—drove out another 573.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would care to answer the question from his seatmate when he won't answer the question about whether they would put in place the harmonized sales tax or not—the HST.

Wouldn't you think that they would be concerned about the implementation of the HST in this province? If they're concerned about this, they're not—don't seem to be concerned about the federal government putting the GST on the same items—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

**Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry
Responsibility for Missing Documentation**

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Since 2003, Winnipeg Child and Family Services has been a branch that reports directly to the Minister of Family Services. That would include the time of Phoenix Sinclair's murder in 2005. The CF workers were her direct employees. Ultimately, the Minister of Family Services in—is in charge of the department, and she must answer for what happens under her watch.

Yesterday, I asked the minister a very simple question, which she did not answer. So I'll ask again, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister set the record straight? When did her government know or become aware that the case notes were missing on the Phoenix Sinclair file?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I think, as I said yesterday, the inquiry that is going on is an inquiry of course that this government called because we wanted a full airing of what happened in this case because we wanted to be able to learn from this tragedy. And we want to see the recommendations of the commissioner so that we can continue to work on the changes to the system that have begun to happen.

I did have an opportunity to look at the regulation that is used, that the—all agencies abide by in terms of the storage of records. It was interesting for me to learn that that regulation was brought in in 1997, Mr. Speaker, and it is the regulation that remains in place today.

Mrs. Rowat: Well, we're seeing a partial inquiry based on the lapse of memory from this minister and her department staff.

Yesterday, the Minister of Family Services showed a clearly offensive lap in memory with regard to the missing case notes within her department. She indicated she didn't recall when she knew of the missing files. In addition, the caseworkers cannot recall specific details related to Phoenix's time in care. With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, what an incompetent mess.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has read the many reviews that were done. In 2006, one component considered the services provided to Phoenix Sinclair and her family.

I ask the minister: Were the important notes and files missing at that time?

Ms. Howard: I think, as I said yesterday, there are in place regulations—very clear regulations—and standards that speak to how records should be handled and how they should be stored. As I also said yesterday, there has been an exhaustive search for the notes that are being asked for, and we remain ready and willing and able to assist the commission and their counsel and the commissioner in any way we can to provide the information that they require to do their job.

I wish that all of that information was available, because I want as much as anyone in this House to have a full picture of what happened here so that we can go on to make the changes we know are going to be necessary.

Mrs. Rowat: Clearly, Mr. Speaker, if these regulations and standards were in place, then obviously this minister failed Phoenix Sinclair. Clearly, the confusion created by this NDP government and the CFS department has existed from the time Phoenix was first taken into care to present.

The files were part of this minister—department's records. She did nothing—nothing—to protect the integrity of the files, which she knew would be an integral part of the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask again: Why did this NDP government fail to ensure these documents were sealed and protected? It is her responsibility. It's this government's failure that is creating a partial inquiry on this situation.

Ms. Howard: Well, I will say again that it is our government that called the inquiry. We called the inquiry because we knew that it was going to be important for there to be a full airing of what happened in this case so that we can learn from what happened so that we can make the changes that were necessary. We are making the changes.

As I said earlier in my response to the member opposite, the regulations that I have followed in regards to records, the regulations that agencies follow, the regulations that I'm accountable for, are regulations that her colleague the member for River East brought into place in 1997.

**Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry
Responsibility for Missing Documentation**

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): In 2003, Winnipeg Child and Family Services became a part

of the Department of Family Services responsible directly to the Minister of Family Services. Mr. Speaker, those changes were made, and when the case files were reviewed on Phoenix Sinclair, those documents were child and family services 'departmental' documents.

Mr. Speaker, how did they disappear from this minister's department?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I'll say again for the members opposite that the staff of the department, the staff of the agencies involved and the authorities have been working with the commissioner, with the commission counsel, to make any information, all information that is available, available to them. The notes in question, there has been an exhaustive search for those notes. We remain ready and willing and able to assist in further searches should those become necessary, should there be other information about where those notes may be.

I wish that they were available. I want them to be available because I want all the information to be made available so that we can get a full airing, a full picture of what happened here so we can make the changes that we know are going to be necessary to help protect women and children.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The minister can wish all she wants. They're her files that are missing right out of her department.

Mr. Speaker, the section 4 review, the internal review that was done into the death of Phoenix Sinclair, was done by the minister's department. The files that were reviewed were part of the minister's files.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us today how long the search has been going on for the missing files from her office, from her department?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think, as I said before, this government called the inquiry. The people that the members opposite are talking about who did the reviews are going to be called to testify at that inquiry.

I'm not going to testify on their behalf. The inquiry is going to happen in the inquiry. It's not going to happen on the floor of this Legislature, and it's important that that inquiry be allowed to continue, be allowed to do its job fully and completely and be allowed to hear from everybody who had a role to play in this case and who reviewed

the case, and we are going to look forward to the completion of that inquiry and any recommendations that they have to improve the system.

Mrs. Mitchelson: What incompetence by a government and a minister who called an inquiry to get to the bottom of the issue and then lost the files that were within their own department.

Mr. Speaker, when was the search for the files begun and why haven't they been found? They were part of this department's records. How could they go missing?

Ms. Howard: My understanding is that the department, of course, has been working closely with the commissioner, with the commission counsel to provide them the information that they require. I think in the course of that, when these files were asked for, they were looked for. When they couldn't be found there were searches to try to find that. That search can continue.

We stand ready to work with the commission, to work with the commissioner and to work with their legal counsel to provide any and all information that they require, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, because at the end of the day the important thing here is that we get recommendations from this commission that are going to help change the way child and family services are delivered in this province so we can do a better job for the kids who need us.

Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry Responsibility for Missing Documentation

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Well, Mr. Speaker, in 2005 when Phoenix Sinclair died, we questioned the then-minister of Family Services, the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick). We were relentless on her. We demanded, day in and day out, that she call a public inquiry over this. That's why the government ended up calling this inquiry.

At that time, in 2006, that minister knew or ought to have known that that information would be integral to the information necessary for this public inquiry, yet she did nothing to protect that information.

Why was she so negligent, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, I get that it is perhaps good politics to throw around accusations. I understand that.

The reality is that the same system that was in place under the members opposite to secure and store those records is the system that's in place today. There have been some improvements to that system in terms of training for people, in terms of documentation, in terms of their responsibilities, in terms of making sure that records are safe and secure.

But we called this inquiry because we want to find out what happened and what more can be done, and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that we should lose the reality in this situation, that a little girl was murdered. This happened under the watch of the member for Riel. That is the reality.

And, Mr. Speaker, this was all several years ago now, and at that time the minister said she had concerns that at that time, when the previous reviews were done, that there was issues around the documentation. That should've been a real red flag to ensure that these documents were protected.

Mr. Speaker, by law the government must protect personal information and personal health information that would be contained in these files right in her own department.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to interrupt the member. Her time has expired.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is important to remember what this inquiry is about, and it is about the tragic life and the tragic death of a little girl who was killed by her parents.

And, you know, it's interesting that earlier this morning I sat in this House and I listened to the member who just put this question chastise my members because she thought that we were being a little bit too accusatory with them, and yet she has no problem standing in her place and accusing members on this side of no less than murder, Mr. Speaker. So I would encourage her to take her own advice to heart.

As I have said before, Mr. Speaker, the rules, the practices that are in place in terms of the storage of these documents are the same that were in place prior to us becoming government.

We have searched for these documents. We continue to be available to work with the commission—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, that minister is ultimately responsible for the care of children in the child welfare system. She cannot get away from that fact.

This government's record on caring for children is abysmal, Mr. Speaker. There are over 9,000 children in care, almost double that when Phoenix Sinclair died under this government's watch.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: Are there any case notes missing in any other files in the over 9,000 children in care, or is this the only one?

Ms. Howard: You know, I take that responsibility very seriously, the responsibility to the children in this province. And when members opposite stand up and say there are 9,000 children in care and there shouldn't be that many, I ask them, which ones would you have left being abused and neglected?

*(14:10)

St. Boniface Hospital Obstetrics Unit Workload

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: We were doing pretty good.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler has the floor to pose his question.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, information has been received from a front-line worker about a dangerous situation at St. Boniface Hospital. Nurses and doctors are speaking out about unsafe conditions in the obstetrics ward where they're currently delivering 400 more babies than the facility's staffing, space and funding allow for.

Why has this NDP minister not dealt with this dangerous situation?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question. It's my belief that all members of this House want to—probably not hear the answer, but do indeed want to care very deeply

for our expectant mothers and babies that are on the way.

I can inform the member that, indeed, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of births in the Winnipeg health region. We're very grateful to those that are working so diligently on the front line to provide that care. I can tell you that we are seeing more mothers opting for St. Boniface Hospital because of renovations that have been done there by our government to have more private rooms.

I want to assure the member and all members of this House that the Winnipeg region is working closely with St. Boniface and HSC to smooth—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously they're not working closely enough, because nurses and doctors are citing dangerous conditions.

Mr. Speaker, a CBC news report shows that nurses in neonatal and obstetrics are reporting medication errors, missing patient vital signs and other work-related problems. Eighty-four heavy-workload reports have been filed by nurses in a period of only four months. Our sources say that reports are identifying insufficient staffing levels, burnout, exhaustion, overcrowding, and they fear for the safety of patients. The nurses have gone to this minister; the minister has done next to nothing. Eighty-four heavy-workload reports is an undeniable measure of stress on a system.

Why has the NDP minister refused to address the situation?

Ms. Oswald: And just to assist the member, I'll correct the record and let him know that indeed we have addressed a number of challenges by hiring an extra nurse so that indeed there are two triage nurses working 24-7 specifically in St. Boniface obstetrics. I can let the member know that representatives from both hospitals are redirecting patients back to HSC to ensure that we balance those numbers. A new, permanent eight-bed unit at HSC is opening to help take on this extra load. It's going to be up and running very shortly. I also can let the member know that the new women's hospital will have capacity for 6,000 additional births. We know that the Birth Centre, against which they've spoken at every turn, can manage 500 births—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

The honourable member from Morden-Winkler has the floor.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, the minister says the Birth Centre can handle 500 births. She said only a week and a half ago, it's only doing 100 at this time.

Mr. Speaker, front-line workers have even circulated a petition on the ward calling for something to be done to deal with their staffing, space and funding issues. That petition is calling this a dangerous and unsafe environment for patients and staff. Over 70 nurses and doctors have signed this petition saying that they aren't able to cope with the situation. They've gone to the minister; the minister has not resolved the situation.

Why has the minister not acted as this dangerous situation has gotten worse and worse?

Ms. Oswald: And, again, I would correct the member by letting him know that we have added staff to the system; we've added beds to the system. We've listened to those nurses when they have told us that the workloads are heavy and we have added staff.

In addition, and just as a point of interest, Mr. Speaker, I might actually let you know that Manitoba's infant mortality rate actually got worse in Manitoba during the 1990s. Today, we know that our rate is much, much improved. There's more work to do, but we know that under their watch that rate got worse; under ours it's much improved. More nurses, more doctors, more facilities, more babies.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights. *[interjection]*

Might I make a suggestion to members that wish to have a conversation. We have a loge to my right and a loge to my left. Please take advantage of that if you wish to have a conversation.

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Crocus Investment Fund Government Knowledge of Mismanagement

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 2000, Jack Dalgleish, a decent man, an experienced financial auditor, was brought in to help with the Cabinet submission on the Crocus Fund. He warned the Premier and senior bureaucrats that the Crocus Fund was in big trouble and would likely fail in the next few years. It crashed in 2004, leaving tens of thousands of trusting investors

stranded. The Premier, then Finance Minister, had continued to promote the fund even in 2003 knowing full well it was about to crash. The media have a recording of this.

I ask the Premier: In 2003, why didn't he publicly notify Crocus investors that the NDP-supported Crocus Fund was using new funds, raised Ponzi-style, to pay out exiting—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the item that the member raises relates to a request for an additional tax break to the Crocus Fund which our government decided not to make available to the Crocus Fund. And we make no apologies for not making another \$10-million tax break available to the Crocus Fund.

Mr. Gerrard: Of course. Mr. Speaker, Jack Dalglish warned the NDP government about Crocus. He paid the price with his career. The NDP demoted, intimidated and warehoused him until he retired.

This last summer, Mr. Dalglish met Tim Sale by chance and then emailed him, copying some PC MLAs and myself, to share his story and the fact that the NDP government still hasn't fully acknowledged their culpability in the Crocus fiasco. I met with Jack and then organized a meeting between Jack and CBC's investigative team to ensure that Crocus investors knew the full story.

I ask the Premier: Why do you intimidate and punish whistle-blowers of the NDP like you do Jack Dalglish?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, when the member had the opportunity to be in government at the federal level, there was no whistle-blower protection legislation. When the members opposite in the official opposition were in government, there was no whistle-blower—whistle-blower legislation.

Under this government, I brought forward a bill for whistle-blower legislation in Manitoba. That legislation gives full protection to anybody that wants to be a whistle-blower in this province on a matter that they think is maladministration of the way we handle funds or any other matter in the government of Manitoba. They get protection and they have the right to go to the Ombudsman of Manitoba and they have the right to remain anonymous. They have the right to remain anonymous and bring their complaints forward and

have them fully investigated without any fear or favour of reprisal from any person—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier acknowledging he made a mistake?

You know, ethics are an essential part of good governance. Jack Dalglish did the ethical thing and he warned the NDP about the looming crash of the Crocus Fund. His memo was referred to in the scathing Auditor General's report about Crocus. The Premier was the Minister of Finance during the NDP's Crocus fiasco. The Premier let the board take the fall for the Crocus fiasco just like he let Jack Dalglish's career take the fall in a Crocus cover-up and just like he let investors take the fall for the Crocus Ponzi scheme.

I ask the Premier: What do you have to say today to Jack Dalglish and the tens of thousands of Crocus Fund investors?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, that was a long list of misinformation that the member from River Heights put on the record. This government refused additional tax breaks for the Crocus Fund which would have cost all Manitobans up to \$10 million.

* (14:20)

This government and myself as the lead brought forward whistle-blower legislation in this province. That whistle-blower legislation is available to individuals such as the member for River Heights mentioned. Any public employee, as well as members outside of the government that do business with the government, if they see any maladministration, any fraud, any kind of negative activity with respect to government resources occurring, have the right to bring that complaint forward to the Ombudsman of Manitoba anonymously, without fear or favour. They can bring that complaint forward, and it will be reviewed and investigated. This is the first government in the history—

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

Vehicle Purchases Consumer Protection

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I know that on our side of the House, we're consistently look—working on fantastic ways to improve the lives of Manitoban families. The minister of healthy living and consumer affairs made

an exciting announcement yesterday to help people when purchasing a new vehicle.

Can the minister update the House on this announcement and the recent incentives that the government has taken to help the pocketbooks of Manitobans?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): I'm pleased to let the entire House know that we're—put in regulations—we're putting in regulations that on car advertising, the price you see is the price you'll pay, and this is very, very important. We want to make sure people aren't misled in advertising. They know what's out there.

And this follows upon my predecessor, who did Let's Make a Better Deal, which is focusing on payday loan protection; the cellphone contracts, to make sure that they're in plain language and they're fair, and people can get out and they know what the terms are. It follows the automobile repair legislation, where it's talking about repairs are there, people get an estimate and they know what's going on, and the New Home Warranty Program.

So I'm pleased on this side of the House we believe in consumer information and protection. We believe in appropriate disclosure and good—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Minister's time is expired.

Student Financial Aid Information System Implementation Timeline and Costs

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, the student financial aid information system was tendered in 2009. The—in Estimates in 2011, the minister promised this program would be in place by November 2012.

I ask the minister: Is the full SAIAS program in place, and if it isn't, why the delay?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Acting Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's actually quite delightful to get a question even vaguely related to advanced education from the other side.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as is the case with roads and bridges and that kind of infrastructure, there comes a time when information technology infrastructure, like the student financial aid information system, becomes dated and is in need of being replaced. And it has been a long road. When we began the renewal plan a few years ago, it became clear that it was

necessary to make life easier for Manitoba students when dealing with student aid.

The first phase of the renewal plan was successfully implemented. In November 2011, it replaced the old credit union banking system and, Mr. Speaker, I can report that came in on time and on budget. And the replacement of the current online service portion has been more difficult than one might expect. The hope was to have it up and running by the timeline of June—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time is expired.

Mr. Briese: The SAF AIS program had a projected budget of some \$14.3 million. In Estimates in 2012, the minister indicated the cost had escalated over the projected budget.

Mr. Speaker, it's almost four years since the F—project was tendered. We recently FIPPA'd a request for the total amount spent to date on the project and the total budget of the project.

That request was refused. The taxpayers of Manitoba have a right to know how their money is being spent and the NDP government refuses to release the information.

Mr. Speaker, is this government so incompetent that they have no idea what the costs are or are they embarrassed about the mismanagement of yet another project in their long history of failures?

Mr. Swan: You know, I can advise the member opposite that the challenges, which we've admittedly had in Manitoba are not unique to the province of Manitoba in experience by provinces across the country, and because of the challenges we've seen in other jurisdictions in getting their new IT information systems up and running, we decided in Manitoba to make sure that we do it right—to pursue carefully in getting the new system together. And in the spring we initiated a quality assurance and business review of online service portions of that project.

And, frankly, Mr. Speaker, we're concerned with the findings of the reviews. While we're pleased with phase 1 of the contract and the product that was delivered, we've suspended the contract with the company to ensure an independent third-party review of the second phase to guide us on the next steps. So we are moving carefully, we're moving intelligently on this difficult project. Again, I can advise other jurisdictions have had challenges. We're doing a—

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NorWest Co-op Community Health

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Health care remains a top priority for Manitobans and for our government. We are working to ensure that Manitoba families are able to access the right care at the right time, and the new NorWest clinic at Bluebird is an important part of our plan.

With a focus on primary care, NorWest at Bluebird provides a range of services to patients and families in northwest Winnipeg, particularly in the Weston and Brooklands communities. This community-based clinic offers area residents improved access to quality care closer to home, with a team of dedicated health-care professionals including physicians, nurse practitioners, primary care nurses, dietitians, diabetes educators, a fitness motivator, a clinical pharmacist, an Aboriginal health social worker and a community mental health worker, among others.

The new NorWest clinic at Bluebird is helping us meet our commitment to ensure all Manitobans have access to a family doctor by 2015. We committed to building 22 more clinics as part of that plan, and NorWest at Bluebird is one of five already open. Seventeen more clinics are on the way, including more QuickCare clinics, community clinics, mobile clinics and access centres, in addition to 38 primary-care sites we have built since 1999.

The NorWest clinic at Bluebird is a satellite clinic of the future Access NorWest, which will offer even more health and social services at one safe and convenient location to serve the diverse needs of the area residents. In addition to primary care, Access NorWest will provide other services that are vital to the community, such as immigrant women's counselling, Aboriginal health outreach, child daycare, seniors' health and supported living, employment and income assistance, and much more.

Thank you to everyone involved in these exciting new initiatives, including the wonderful staff at NorWest—

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to complete his—*[interjection]* Has leave been

granted to allow the member to conclude his remarks? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Marcelino: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll start from the beginning of that paragraph.

Thank you to everyone involved in these exciting new initiatives, including the wonderful staff at NorWest Co-op Community Health, whose partnership has helped make these clinics possible. Through NorWest at Bluebird, your efforts are already helping to improve access to quality care and services for patients and families in northwest Winnipeg and will continue to do so well into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Jeff Stoughton Team

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Jeff Stoughton and his teammates Jon Mead, Reid Carruthers and Mark Nichols, who many of you already know claimed a 4-3 victory over Ontario's Glenn Howard in the men's final at the Canada Cup of Curling which was held in Moose Jaw this past weekend.

It was an extremely important win for Jeff Stoughton as it guarantees his team a spot in the Canadian Olympic curling trials, the Roar of the Rings, next December 2013, at our own MTS Centre, and a shot at representing Canada at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Being an avid curler myself, I can only imagine the feeling of joy and relief as he can now continue the rest of this season feeling a little bit lighter with that trial spot secured. It is an accomplishment that I, along with most curlers in this House and of course around the world, can only dream of.

Jeff Stoughton competed in his first Brier in 1991 and since that time has competed in a total of nine Brier competitions where he has earned three gold medals plus one silver and one bronze. He has also earned two gold medals and one silver medal at the world curling championships. However, the highly acclaimed gold medal in the Canadian Olympic curling trials has eluded Jeff, Jon and Reid, bringing home a silver in 2005 and a bronze in 2009.

* (14:30)

Their new addition of Mark Nichols tasted Olympic gold curling for Brad Gushue and is obviously hungry for another. Even if you never played or watched curling, it would be hard-pressed to find a Manitoban who hasn't heard the name Jeff

Stoughton. Though his team has changed hands over the years, Jeff Stoughton remains an icon in the curling world, skipping his teams to many victories and some defeats, but always as a true ambassador for the sport of curling and for his home province of Manitoba.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jeff Stoughton and his team on their recent victory, and I am looking forward to cheering them on during the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Movember Events

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, now that I've grown my facial hair back, I would like to take this time to thank all those who participated in Movember this year. As many of us know, during the month of November, people around the world take part in Movember by growing a moustache to raise awareness about men's health.

Every year across Canada, Movember teams are formed to create awareness about many men's health issues. This year, I was honoured to be part of the Flin Flon fire department's team, headed by Darren Romo, along with members of the Flin Flon Reminder and Northland Ford Sales. On November 1st, we came together in Flin Flon fire hall to shave off our facial hair and spend the month changing the face of men's health.

As spokesmen for men's health issues, those participating in Movember challenge promote attending regular doctor checkups while raising awareness about issues such as mental health and cancer.

As an MLA and a Movember spokesperson, I am proud to say that the government of Manitoba has pledged that, by 2015, every Manitoban will have access to a family doctor. I am also proud that our government is providing cancer patients free cancer-care drugs, as well as following a five-year strategy to help catch cancer earlier and aid families who are going through the difficult struggle.

Mr. Speaker, although prostate cancer is the most common cancer affecting men globally, it is also the most curable when diagnosed early. In fact, my father is a cancer survivor. Years ago, my father was diagnosed with prostate cancer. When his doctor told him the news, my father began preparing for the worst. It was the extremely emotional time for my family, but we all stood together. And, by standing together, he was able to overcome this terrible disease.

Movember is a cause very dear to my heart and to my family—as well, to many families across Manitoba, Canada and the world. I don't want to—I want to thank all those who participated in Movember to raise awareness for this important cause.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Siloam Mission

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, on November 20th, 2012, a number of MLAs from both sides of this House joined long-term supporters of the Siloam Mission at a gala evening to celebrate 25 years of service to those less fortunate.

A connecting point between the compassionate and Winnipeg's less fortunate, Siloam Mission is a Christian humanitarian agency offering programs and services at no charge to those experiencing homelessness.

Siloam Mission alleviates the hardships of the poor and homeless, assists in transitioning them into self-sufficient and successful lifestyles and advocates nationwide on their behalf.

When it began, Siloam Mission was a soup kitchen open just a few days a week, and now the shelter feeds more than 500 people in Winnipeg daily and offers more than a hundred beds in addition to employment programs and health-care centre.

In 25 years, Siloam Mission has touched countless lives. Siloam has provided meals, clothing, accommodations and health care for the most deprived members of our society.

Siloam Mission not only provides necessities to those in need, but it provides hope.

The many programs keep individuals—help individuals to meet their urgent needs and develop the skills for a most—more self-sufficient lifestyle. It is through the programs and compassion of others that have made positive changes in the lives of men and women.

Siloam Mission provides daily nutritious meals, clothing and hygiene items, drop-in centre, emergency shelter, a health-care centre, employment training programs, referral services, transitional support, prayer and spiritual guidance, arts programs and volunteer opportunities.

Siloam Mission is now looking to the future and hopes to ramp up its housing development and

employment projects to 500 homes and 500 jobs for those in need over the next five years.

I am sure every member of this House would like to join me in saluting Siloam Mission for 25 years of service to the less fortunate.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank Harvest

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to address the Assembly on a matter of great importance, global food security. In fact, as I speak, 13 million people are still in urgent need of food assistant in central Africa.

This creates an opportunity for Manitoba farmers, concerned citizens, religious organizations alike to rise and address the global challenge. Indeed, on September the 14th, this, in fact, did happen in Vidor, Arborg, Riverton and surrounding communities.

With the total help of local farmers, 109 acres of donated canola seed was harvested in a record one hour and 10 minutes using 10 combines. Producing over 4,000 bushels of canola, the Canadian food banks, an organization indebted with collecting and converting grain products, is expecting to raise approximately \$57,000 from the harvest. This is well above the 40 to 45 thousand initial projections. This \$57,000 will be matched four times over by the federal government, equating to well over \$200,000 in relief.

According to Lorne Floyd, an active farmer and volunteer, the program has gone not only to help feed families, but create infrastructure opportunities abroad, such as flood assistance projects that developed a dike system in India 20 years ago.

Furthermore, in addition to providing food and financial support overseas, the Canadian food banks—bank—also highlights education, and on September the 14th harvest included a field trip with over 60 students from Morweena School who earned about dire needs of people living in other parts of the world and how Manitoba can help create alleviating some of those global 'panademics'.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, the Canadian food bank has programs operating all across Manitoba and, since 1983, managed to provide 1.1 million tonnes of food to vulnerable global communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Continuing with—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): We'd like to spend the afternoon considering condolence motions, and we would like to start with a condolence motion for Mr. Albert Driedger.

MOTIONS OF CONDOLENCE

Albert Driedger

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I move, seconded by the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that this House convey to the family of the late Albert Driedger, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

Mr. Selinger: I speak and rise today to honour the memory of Albert Driedger.

Mr. Driedger had a record of public service that spanned over three decades and remains today a highly esteemed former member of this House. He also served as the reeve of the Rural Municipality of Hanover from 1968 to 1972. He was first elected to the Manitoba Legislature in 1977 as the Progressive Conservative member for Emerson. After the boundaries changed in 1990 he became the member of the Legislature for Steinbach.

Albert rose to prominence in the Filmon government serving in a variety of Cabinet posts, among them Highways and Natural Resources. He had a reputation as a straight shooter and was admired across party lines. While he was in Cabinet, the members on this side of the House nicknamed him Honest Albert. They felt he was just more forthcoming than his own party's political staff might have preferred. Albert retired from politics in 1999 having served as an MLA for over—for a total of 22 years.

Outside of politics, Mr. Driedger, true to his straight-shooter record, served in a variety of jobs deeming none too small for him to do. He delivered bread. He shovelled coal for the railroad and worked as a real estate broker and a farmer on his family farm in Grunthal.

Upon retirement, Mr. Driedger continued to volunteer for his community advocating for better services for seniors and health care. He never stopped serving the community.

Albert is survived by his beloved wife, Mary, five children, 13 grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and five siblings.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House, I want to offer our sincere condolences and appreciation for the life well lived of Albert Driedger.

*(14:40)

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Premier for his kind words in remembrance of my friend Albert, and our friend, a wonderful public servant and a wonderful man.

We offer our condolences, of course, to Mary, and to his family. The Premier has outlined, in his comments, a number of accomplishments of Mr. Driedger. I'll recap a couple, and I'll add a few personal reminiscences, if I might.

He was, prior to his time here, of course, a public servant, as well, Mr. Speaker, in serving as the reeve of—for five years—of the RM of Hanover, from '67 to '72, and then served as an MLA for 22 years, from '77 to 1990, representing Emerson, and from '90 to '99 representing Steinbach. In opposition, he served in a—numerous critic roles. He was the critic for Manitoba Public Insurance, Natural Resources, Government Services and Business Development and Tourism, as well, under previous premier Sterling Lyon.

He served as the Highways Minister initially, and that was—it was at that time that I had my chance to meet Mr. Driedger for the first time. I was elected in a by-election in 1992 and decided that I wanted to interview each of the current colleagues at that time, and I called Mr. Driedger and asked for a meeting.

And I asked each of the members of the Legislature in turn, when I had these interviews, for advice and, of course, Mr. Driedger was no exception, and his advice to me was clear. He said: Nothing is more important than your constituency, son.

And each of us, I'm sure, has had different advice from different veterans of this place, but I try to always carry that piece of advice forward as a part of my workday and of planning my activities as a public servant.

He is a person who had a twinkle in his eye a lot of the time, very easy man to like. Honest Albert was someone, though, I must admit I had a little resentment of, and I want to be frank about that. When I first went to his office, and I was a bit of an athlete in my day, and I wanted to stay fit, but around here that's not always easy; there aren't a lot of facilities in this building, as we know. It's a beautiful building, but it lacks certain amenities. However, there is one office in the Legislature that has a shower, and it's Albert Driedger's office at that day, and he was using it to store boxes. And I did resent that. I won't say what was in the boxes; I'll just say that it was definitely not soap and a towel in that area.

The reality of Albert's life is that it was a wonderful and varied life, rich with family, rich with friends, certainly, a man who had a great joy for life and for living and who lived well. He—I think back to his time travelling up north, and he travelled with our former colleague and past friend, Harry Enns. I believe it was the York Factory area on a canoe trip. I think all of us would have enjoyed it. If a documentary production could've been done of that trip, it would've been thoroughly entertaining to see those two gentlemen trying to keep their cigarettes dry on that trip.

But I know Albert also had a wonderful balance in his life, and I recall on several occasions when I was meeting with him and he would get a call, and he would always take a call from Mary when it came, and he always finished it with, I love you, which was, I think, particularly appropriate because he was a man who certainly loved the people around him. He was very open, very considerate, I think, of all members in the House. Because of that, I think he had a great rapport with the members opposite. Perhaps sometimes we resented it, as it was alluded to, because it was the result of his great openness, and that sometimes could cause a wee bit of embarrassment for members of the government, but, nonetheless, an openness that we respect in people, and we have tremendous respect for Albert.

We offer our condolences, of course, to his family and many friends who had the joy of having him in their lives. We will miss him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to stand and pay respect to Mr. Albert Driedger, who, I think, was a very fine and upstanding member of this Legislature, who

served his constituents very well. And I do want to say that I appreciated the good humour of Albert.

I was newly elected in 1995. I was the critic for Natural Resources, and Albert was the Minister of Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, I remember one time a constituency group of mine made the trek from the Dauphin area all the way down to the Legislature, and they, with very little notice, demanded that they were going to meet with the Natural Resources Minister. I felt that the Natural Resources Minister could have fairly easily said, you know, that's not much of a warning, that's not much of a heads-up; I'm not sure I want to meet with you. But no, not Albert. Albert walked out onto the front steps of this Legislature. He met with my constituents. They, I will say, were fairly rude. They were fairly demanding. They were not very nice in terms of their reception of Albert Driedger. Then they informed us that they didn't have a place to stay overnight. Now, do you know what Albert Driedger did? Albert Driedger looked at me and he says, well—and this is after the abuse he took, he said to me—he said, I can arrange to have your constituents—we can open the doors to the Birds Hill park and they can stay there overnight.

I thought, gee, there's a good guy. I thought he very easily—after the catcalling that was in the speech that he made to him, he could have very easily walked back up those steps and went back into his office. Albert didn't do that. I was quite taken, as a new MLA, and quite impressed with this guy who was so open-minded and so, so receptive. He understood that these constituents had a—had the right to say what they said. I don't think he appreciated, kind of, some of the things they said, but he understood they had a right to do that, and he was—he did not hold that against them and he actually went out of his way to help them.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Fort Whyte said that Albert had a twinkle in his eye. He sure did. He invited me one time as the critic to come to his office to get briefed on an issue, and I was skeptical. I thought this Conservative minister from across the way was setting up the rookie, and I wasn't so sure I wanted to get lured into this. I wasn't so sure I wanted to go into his office to be briefed, but I think he understood that. And he looked at me across the desk, and his assistant was there, as well, and, with a twinkle in his eye, briefed me on an issue. I learned through that experience that now that I had been briefed it was a lot harder to get up in opposition and pound my fist righteously and get after the minister.

He took away one of the complaints that quite often we had as opposition critics and that is that the minister wouldn't meet with me. I always knew Albert Driedger was going to meet with me; I knew that I couldn't use that as an excuse. Sometimes he gave me some good stuff to ask him in the House—that was true. But, you know, I think Albert saw that as a way to enhance the democratic process. I think he took that very seriously and that he understood that I had a job to do as his critic and he was going to make it as easy as possible for me to do that job.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) used the words straight shooter to describe Albert, and, ultimately, I think, more than anything that described Albert Driedger in this House. One time I got up in the House and I made some assertions in my opening question and a couple of supplementary questions and Albert Driedger announced to the whole House that the member for Dauphin had better learn that a little information can be dangerous. His point was that I didn't have all the facts and I only used some of them, and I can remember feeling, as I sat down, that I'd just been taught a bit of a lesson by somebody who had a lot more experience around this House than what I did back in the day.

My uncle was assistant deputy minister of Highways in the Manitoba civil service and worked a lot with Albert Driedger and I want to say that my uncle Doug thought as well that there was no better Highways Minister than Albert Driedger. Albert one time even told me that he'd much prefer to be the Highways Minister even than the Natural Resources job that he had.

He loved to get out and check out different parts of the province. He loved to get out and do road trips checking out where the potholes were and what bridges needed fixing. And I know my uncle accompanied him on many of those tours as technical advice, but they had fun, Mr. Speaker. Albert Driedger was a fun member of this Legislature, and one who, I think, took his responsibilities very seriously.

* (14:50)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I learned a lot working across the aisle from Albert Driedger. And I want to say that I have a—I gained a lot of respect for a man who took his job very seriously, served his constituents well in the Steinbach area and, I think, was involved in a lot of things in this House that he and his family, Mary and his kids and grandkids, can be very proud of.

So I want to express to Mary and to his family our family's condolences and our family's respect for a man who really worked hard in this Legislature on behalf of his constituents and the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): What an honour it is to rise and put a few words and remembrances on the record of my friend, Albert Driedger. I want to leave you with three lessons that Albert left for me, but before I do, a little bit about how I got to know Albert.

It was the 1990s and I was working in this building in different capacities, and I was sort of tired of politics in a way and was looking to do something else. Had an opportunity to work with the Steinbach Credit Union, I was thinking about going to law school—both things I would ultimately do in future years, Mr. Speaker. But an opportunity came up to go and work with Albert and I decided to do that, to put those other things off and to spend some time working with Mr. Driedger. Some people questioned that; Albert had a bit of a gruff exterior sometimes, I know, just a little bit, and if you didn't really know him well, you'd think he might not have been the easiest person to work for. And so a lot of people wondered why it was that I decided to take that on.

But, for me, really, it was probably among the best political and personal decisions that I've ever made in my life. Politically, of course, Albert helped me get connected into my community and into the region in a way that I hadn't before. He was very gracious and helpful in doing that personally. Albert was just a great person to work for. His gruff exterior hid a very, very soft heart and his incredible sense of humour blended with a very strong will to get things done. But he always had trust in his staff to do the job. He would always allow you to do your work and if you didn't do it well, he would let you know; there was no doubt about that. But he gave you enough latitude and leeway to do your job, to make it enjoyable.

My time with Albert really reinvigorated my joy of politics and my interest in politics, and I certainly thank him for that. I know that some of the former staff who've worked with Albert would also feel the same way: Hollis Kinsey, Dennis Guenther, Erna Taylor, Sherwood Armbruster, Henry Dyck, and there would be more who would feel the same way. In fact, Sherwood Armbruster, who now works with the City, asked me to just read something that he has

sent me. He said, when I remember Albert, I think of a man who was faithful, hard-working and candid. He provided these—he proved these three qualities by the way he loved his wife, Mary, knocked on every door in campaigns and somehow blended his frank approach with a unique sense of humour. And that's very true, Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Armbruster has said about Albert.

Albert enjoyed, I think, both the constituency work as has already been mentioned, and also his time here in the Legislature. As time went on, though, I remember him telling me it was closer to the end of his career here in the Legislature. He said, you know, I've done this for almost two decades and the faces change here in the House, governments change, but the debates start to sound an awful like the same after a while and they all sort of blend into one. And so I knew that he was probably coming closer to the end of his career than the beginning. And it wasn't a surprise to me on July 17th, 1998, when he walked into my office and he handed me a handwritten note.

He didn't use computers, never—I don't know if he ever turned one on in his life, but he handed me a handwritten note. I kept it, actually; it's been 14 years, I put it aside and put it into a little bit of a binder. And he had said, I, Albert Driedger, am announcing that I will not be seeking the nomination for the Steinbach PC association for the next provincial election. After five years as reeve of Hanover and over 20 years as the MLA, I believe it's time to step down. On behalf of my wife, Mary, and myself, we want to thank the people of Emerson constituency and the Steinbach constituency for their support and friendship for these many years. It is my intention to continue to serve as the MLA for the Steinbach constituency until the next provincial election. And I hung on to that thinking that it was important to me, and I did a statement for him after that, and he announced a few days later that he would be moving on.

There were, after his retirement, a number of tributes to Albert in the community: one in Niverville, one in Steinbach. They were both well attended and very much they showed the love that his constituents had for him. Many stories were told at those events, and the Leader of the Official Opposition, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), mentions this canoe trip with Harry Enns. The way Albert said it actually is that he went on the trip because he was sort of the pastor of the group, and he wanted to make sure that nobody got in

trouble when they were out on this canoe trip. That's how he described it, at least, at the event, but then he also went on to describe, in very vivid detail, about how they nearly lost their lives on that trip and he never thought they'd make it back. But he often talked about that and many other trips that he had.

I think Mr. Filmon actually, at the event in Steinbach, gave a bit of a story. It was him or another of our ministers, former ministers, that talked about when Albert was Highways Minister early on in the Filmon government, and the government was looking to make a decision to change how parking was done in a community on a highway that went through the community, that it would become parallel as opposed to, I guess, perpendicular on the highway. And this caused quite an uproar in the community, and Albert had to go out to the community to try to explain to people why the government was making this decision in the early days of the Filmon government. And there were a number of people, I guess, to protest the decision and to show how draconian the decision was, had hoods on, had white hoods on outside of the hall, and Albert, being Albert, rushed up to these individuals and shook their hands and the cameras went off. And, as the story went, Mr. Filmon was quite concerned about the early days of the Filmon government, trying to look and be a moderate government, to have the pictures in the paper of Albert shaking hands with people wearing white hoods. But that is who Albert was. He always wanted to try to win people over and always wanted to get people over to his side.

The three lessons that Albert left me, Mr. Speaker: One is that politics is about people. He very much believed that you had to shake people's hands, that you had to knock on every door, that you had to look them in the eye and make a personal connection with them. We tried to put a computer on his desk one time, and he told us if we left it there, he'd throw it out the window. And we were on the third floor so we took him at his word, and I think he would have done it, so we didn't put a computer on his desk.

But he was also flexible. In the 2000 campaign to elect Vic Toews as the new Member of Parliament for Provencher, Albert was the honorary co-chair. I was the director of communications and it was the first real ID campaign, sophisticated ID campaign, at that time that we'd ever run in the region. And when Albert toured the campaign office, I could see in his eyes that he thought all hope was lost because there was computers everywhere and lists and phone

banks, and he looked at me and he instructed me to get all the computers out and to bring down all the phone banks and to take away all the technology, that Vic would win this by going home to home and farm to farm.

We convinced him that we should leave up the equipment and just give it a shot. He certainly pushed Vic out and he got him out to the different farms in the communities and we won that election, and after the election, Albert was gracious enough to say that probably the technology helped, but ultimately it was him getting Vic out to go door to door and meet the people. And he's right. That is really what politics is about, and ultimately that makes the biggest difference. And I appreciated the fact that Albert left that message for me, that it is about reaching out to people, looking them in the eye, shaking their hand and making that connection for them.

He also taught me the second lesson, Mr. Speaker, is that public service goes beyond what we do here in the Legislature. Albert, when he left this office, I think he only came back to the Legislature twice that I know of. Once was for a breakfast with a group of constituents that I was hosting, and once was to meet with the now-Minister of Conservation (Mr. Mackintosh), the former minister of Housing, about getting the Menno Home expanded in the community of Grunthal because Albert went on to be the chair of the Menno Home, and he was working to get that place expanded.

And so that the record is clear, it wasn't a situation of who you know; it was a situation of what you know. Albert knew that if it was—the Menno Home was going to expand, there had to be public contributions, so he made sure there was a million dollars. In a small community like Grunthal, that's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. He made sure that that money was raised. He made sure that the government was onside, in terms of the kind of facility that it would be, and even shifted a little bit from the personal care home side to more of a continuum of care side. And when we had the meeting, myself, Albert and the minister, now-Minister of Conservation, I could tell there was a lot of respect between those individuals, lots of collegial respect, and Albert worked hard to get that Menno Home ultimately expanded.

* (15:00)

At the opening, he shed a few tears, which, for those who know Albert personally, wouldn't be a

surprise—for those who didn't know him as well, would have been a surprise. But it meant a lot to him that that was one of his legacies after politics, that he could ensure that there'd be people in his home community that he beloved of Grunthal who would have a place to stay in that community in their later years. And it was a great accomplishment for Albert, and I give him tremendous accolades and tributes for continuing on his work and service after he left the Legislature here.

In fact, the last time I saw him was two weeks prior to him passing away; it was at a fundraiser—at a barbecue for the Menno Home, and he was still talking a lot about politics. It was before the election. He had lots of different advice about what we should do in the campaign, but he was passionate about the Menno Home and serving the community even after he left politics.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the last lesson that my friend, Albert, left for me and the one that I hold dearest is that family comes first, and it's already been referenced by the Leader of the Opposition—Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister). Every day when I worked for Albert, it never failed. Didn't matter if it was a good day or a bad day and there were equal amounts probably of both, that the—I could hear that the door would be open and he'd be calling Mary, and at the end of every phone call, he'd say, I love you, Mary. And whether he was, you know, on his way home that night or not, he always phoned and he always said that he loved her. He always said that when he campaigned that for every vote that he lost, Mary got him two.

And Mary was a legendary campaigner in herself. I know she has had some mobility issues in recent years and some health challenges of her own, but they truly were a team. And when we thought of Albert, we also thought of Mary; we thought of the two of them together.

He was very proud. His last calendar—and we're, I guess, in calendar season now as MLAs as we put together our own calendars. His last calendar, he got the whole family together—all the kids and the grandkids and he explained what an ordeal that was, but I think it was an ordeal of love. He was very, very proud of that last calendar that he put out as an MLA with all of the family together, and I know that in—as the years went along, he treasured his time here as an MLA. He didn't come back often, as I mentioned, but he was proud of what he accomplished. He was proud of the legacy that he

had here as an MLA, and I can certainly reflect that all of his constituents, both in Steinbach and Emerson, were very, very proud to say that we had Albert Driedger representing us for many years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): It's an honour to rise today to speak to the condolence motion for Albert Driedger. From his first election to the House in 1977 to his retirement in 1999, Albert was a stalwart voice for his constituents and for Manitoba. He believed in Manitoba and believed it was a great place to live. He can be widely credited for having paved this province as the Minister of Highways. A forthcoming and direct man, he was known by many as honest Albert for his tendency to answer questions in question period more openly than would otherwise be the case.

Albert's impact on the province, however, is not just held to the Legislature. While he was part of the great days of Sterling Lyon and Gary Filmon, he also served his community outside the Legislature. From 1967 to 1972, he served his most prominent role—sorry—as the reeve for the RM of Hanover, and what was his most prominent role in the last years, as chairman of the board for the Menno Home for the aged in Grunthal.

While he built roads and bridges, his legacy is undoubtedly tied to the Menno Home. As chairman of the board, he spearheaded a fundraising campaign that raised over \$1 million towards the construction of an assisted living addition to the Menno Home. He believed wholeheartedly in that project and worked hard to achieve it. It is now a model of community fundraising that is looked at all over the province as a way to deal with our shortage of funding.

Albert was a force of nature, and his impact was huge. We in this House do not remain here forever. It is important that what we do is not merely tied to being politically correct in our actions but is tied to tangible, real change we can bring to the lives of people, not just through legislation but what we do once we leave here.

When I first decided to seek the nomination for the PC party for La Verendrye, I went to see Albert. Albert's advice to me was: I'll give you the same advice I've told everybody that's come to see me. He said, if you want to win, you have to work hard. He says, you will have no life for the rest of this

campaign. You will work hard and the one that works the hardest will win.

He had a few other adjectives included in that little speech to me, but.

After that, his nephew decided to run. He did not support me during the nomination race, but when it was over—when it was over, he was there for me.

Albert provided an example to all of us what is meant to serve one's community, and I think it's something we should all take to heart. I would like to offer my condolences to his wife, Mary, and their family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): It gives me great pleasure to rise as—put a few words on the record in the condolences of my good friend and a great MLA. It's going to be a tough one.

Mr. Speaker, I was there when he got his nomination. I knew Albert before that—he was a shareholder in the Grunthal auction mart and at that time we had no representation as beef producers in the province of Manitoba. And so I and my neighbour, over a beer one day, decided that we needed representation, and so we talked to the shareholders of the auction mart and Albert gave us some good advice. He said, if you want representation, then you better go out and get it done. We're not doing it for you; we have a business to run here.

And so that was our incentive to go out and organize the province, which later became the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association. But at the same time, Albert was in the process of a nomination meeting and he ran against some pretty good competition, one of them being the member for La Verendrye's (Mr. Smook) father. And he was successful; Albert turned out very well as—that night. It was a long night for him. His numbers didn't change much that night, but his supporters never left. Some of the other members that were running, their supporters left and went to the hotel. Albert promised them that he would go there later and he kept his promise.

At any rate, as time went on, as Albert was the MLA and I was involved in a number of different things—one of them was when Sterling was elected and the Lyon government was elected—they gave us a checkoff to form our MCPA, our organization in the province. And so you would go to guys like Albert

and say, Albert, we need this. And he would say, yes, we can do it.

He was a we man; he always wanted to work with everyone. It didn't matter if you had a good idea, we can do it. About the only time that he ever changed that opinion, was after the accomplishment. He would say, I believe you're buying.

If he liked you, he had a saying when you met him, and I can't repeat that saying in here, but it was a term of endearment.

At any rate, time went on and Albert left the Emerson constituency; there was no nomination meeting. Jack Penner came along and was our MLA. But we always considered then that we had two MLAs and that we could go to two people and we had double the representation, and I'm sure that we did.

As the Highways Minister—I recall Albert getting that portfolio, and I called him that night to congratulate him. I can't tell you what he said immediately, but he did say, what you've been asking for for the park at Roseau River, you got it. Just don't—tell the people not to phone me and congratulate me. So they didn't get any congratulations, but we got what we wanted and I was a newly elected councillor at the time and I needed a new bridge on Highway 59, and he announced that the next day. Of course, it was in the works, but I took full credit and so did Albert.

As the Highways Minister, he made no apologies about being a selfish Highways Minister. He said that the roads will lead to Steinbach. And in our area there's a lot of people that still say that the highways all lead to Steinbach. But, as I travelled later on in life, Albert and I actually had a company; we worked together after he left politics and we did consulting work all over the province of Manitoba and we drove many of the highways, and it didn't matter where you went, he was recognized as the Highways minister and the minister that paved the highways to his community.

The only negative thing I ever heard him say was, I wished they'd of kept these up. And I don't know who he was referring to when he was talking about they, but, at any rate, he was recognized every place.

* (15:10)

When he had the opportunity to fly to Thompson for a special meeting one day, he said to his deputy,

why would the Minister of Highways fly? I want to see that highway. We're building the highways. If we can't drive on them, then no one can. And so they drove to Thompson.

It's been said tonight—or today, that Albert and Mary knocked on every door. That was true—that was true—they were both at every door. It wasn't that they drove into your yard and one walked up to the door with some propaganda. No, there was no paper that changed hands. It was a handshake and they were both standing there. And it's true that any vote that Albert may have lost, Mary got it back. There was no question about that. They were a team that was inseparable.

When we travelled around the province doing our consulting work, every night Albert made that call. The call was made, didn't matter how late we were or whether we had no cell service or whether we were at a hotel; he made that call to Mary. And it was always the same as been presented here today.

It's given me great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, just to put a few words on the record of a good friend that did a great job in this House.

Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I want to offer my condolences to the family of Albert Driedger: wife, Mary; children: Marilyn, Diane, Laurie, Gordon and Sandi.

I have some personal experiences with Albert that I wanted to share. Just some memories, going back around, well, I think it's probably almost 25 years. But he was the Highways Minister at the time and my husband, Wilfred, was the president of what is now called Manitoba Heavy Construction Association. At that time, though, we kind of referred to it as Manitoba road builders and, of course, it was Minister of Highways, not Infrastructure and Transportation like it is today.

And there was a little bit of a different 'comradery', I guess, at the time, when Albert was the Highways Minister. At the meetings and conventions—the minister was always invited, of course, and Albert always came and always with Mary. They were a couple; they were inseparable. And I can remember, of course, Wilf being the president and Albert being the Highways Minister. And it comes to mind when the member from Steinbach was speaking about these terms of endearment that were used because they must of liked each other very much, Mr. Speaker, because

there were a lot of terms of endearment between the two of them discussing what needed to be done from the minister and what needed to be done in the industry.

It was at a time, I think, when, as I said, there was much more 'comradery' between that association and the Minister of Highways, attending our conventions and really presenting papers and speeches to the convention. I mean, this was something that was done with other provinces as well. It was the western Canadian road builders association. So it was Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC that would get together and other ministers of highway, or the similar portfolios in other provinces would be coming as well and there was a lot of informal discussion that occurred and it was a lot of fun time.

I remember Albert as a person that always liked to enjoy fun. He certainly like to imbibe a little bit, and I guess my husband did, too, because they seemed to get along well that way. Anyway, I remember him from that time.

I also want to tell you a story that, of course, I was told when I first became the member of Morris and I first attended Frog Follies in St. Pierre. Now, the story goes—and I first—I should first of all explain what happens at Frog Follies in St. Pierre. The frog-jumping contest has been going on for a very long time, I think maybe over 25 years. And how this occurs is everybody gets a frog, you put it down on a spot, and without touching the frog you have to make that frog jump and in three jumps you measure that jump and that's the winner of the frog-jumping contest. Now, you can't touch the frog, but you can slap both hands down on each side of the frog or behind the frog or you can blow on the frog or you can yell at the frog; you can do anything, but you can't touch the frog.

So, now, the story is that Albert, in his exuberance in participating in the frog-jumping contest, actually—when he was slapping down on the ground beside the frog actually didn't quite hit the ground and hit the frog. And I don't think the frog jumped very far after that, Mr. Speaker; he actually—the frog was deceased.

Now, it's interesting because just at the AMM convention a few days ago—last week, I ran into some people from St. Pierre. So I said, Doug, can you just confirm to me that this was Albert? Because you know how these legends evolve, and sometimes whatever happened with one person as the primary

person it evolves into after time, well, it was actually somebody else and people remember stories differently. But it was confirmed to me that it was Albert. And that story is still told. Every year, we talk about—at the Frog Follies, about when Albert Driedger killed the frog. But they, of course, didn't hold that 'again' him. I don't know about the frog; I don't think the frog was very happy.

But, Mr. Speaker, Albert was a very likeable person and a person that did a lot of good as the Highways Minister, as Minister of Government Services, in any of his portfolios as he served. We've heard from the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and the member from Emerson who have more personal stories than I would have to say about him, But I know that he's responsible, for example, for twinning up Highway 75, which runs through my constituency, and I know that he did a very—a lot of work both for his constituents and for the people of Manitoba. I just want to offer my condolences once again to the family and say how much we remember him and cherish the work that he did for the province of Manitoba. Thank you.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): It's my honour to rise today in the House and give my condolences to Mary and to Albert's family as we celebrate and talk about Albert's life—his life in politics. And I know that others have had association with him before and after his political career, but my first introduction to Albert was in 1986 when I was newly elected to the Legislature as a rookie and we were in opposition at the time from 1986 to 1988, and those times were quite different than our years in government. And, certainly, it was Albert and Arnie Brown and that group of individuals at the time that taught me the ropes about what the Legislature was all about.

And, if you can recall, in those days, we had very different sitting hours in the Legislature. When I was first elected we sat three evenings a week until 10 p.m. and then just till noon on Fridays. But I do know that—I think it was usually Arnie Brown's office that kind of opened up after question period and everyone gathered and there were stories to be told. And from time to time I did join the men in that office just to get an understanding of what this place was all about, and I did learn a lot of lessons in those days.

And, you know, as a member from the city of Winnipeg, I felt it was important, too, very often, rather than going home over the supper hour and

coming back, to stay and enjoy the company of my colleagues over the supper hour and get to know who they were and what they were all about.

And, you know, any comments that have been made today about Albert, about that twinkle in his eye and his love for people, was obviously very evident. And so I credit Albert very much with helping me to learn what this place was all about.

* (15:20)

As we moved to government in 1988, things became a little different, because you are distanced a little bit when you have your own personal responsibilities. But Albert was my seat mate; he sat next to me for many, many years on the government side of the House, and he always—no matter what the issue of the day was, and sometimes they were pretty difficult issues when I had Family Services, he sat there and he always put me in the right frame of mind with a little bit of conversation, that twinkle in his eye, and very often a joke. And, Mr. Speaker, they're probably not jokes that I could repeat in the Legislature today, but, nonetheless—[*interjection*] Yes. I—he always was able to brighten my day a little bit with his attitude and his demeanour, and he was a straight shooter.

I enjoyed very much listening to his answers in question period to questions, and I also enjoyed the story that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) told about how caring he was when he met with individuals from his constituency. And, you know, it's not very often that we hear members on the government side of the House today talk about caring Conservatives, but Albert was indeed one of those caring Conservatives, and I want the member for Dauphin to know that we all care very much about people in his constituency and in every constituency throughout the province. And we are a caring group over here, always have been and always will continue to be. Albert was honest, and have to say that his questions in question period were certainly much more straightforward and honest than what we hear today from the government side of the House.

Albert enjoyed his time in opposition. He enjoyed his time in government. But I do know that his first and foremost love was Mary and his family, and he often, often talked about Mary. He—I heard stories about their times out campaigning together and the parades that he was in as they sat in their convertibles, and Mary was always at his side. She was a very integral part of who Albert was, and I

know that his legacy will live on through his family, through his children, through his grandchildren and through the community from the stories that we've heard about how Albert participated in his community, how he loved people, how he related to people and how he will always be remembered as a very outstanding individual, an outstanding Manitoban. And I truly have been blessed with the opportunity that I had to spend years with Albert in this Legislature, and my condolences to Mary, to his family and to the community that he represented so well. Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I would just like to add some words of commendation to what has been already said today in regards to Mr. Albert Driedger.

He was a man that I got to know, I guess, as a farm leader or a farmer in Manitoba from the southwest part of the province, a different direction than where he came from. But one of the favourite stories that I have was the opportunity to represent the Canadian Wheat Board in the west half of the province that I had for eight years, Mr. Speaker.

And on a particular evening in May of—or in the spring of 1988, when the government was overthrown, the Pawley government, and there was an event take place in this facility, in this building. I was writing my Wheat Board report for the Co-operator over in the hotel, and I remember making a phone call over here after seeing the—what had happened on television in my room, and I phoned my colleague from southwest Manitoba, Mr. Downey, and I asked Jim what was going on. And he says, well, young man, get over here, he says, if you're in the city. So I came over and it was a very exciting evening, and my colleague from River East has alluded to some of those times and opportunities when she had some learning opportunities with her colleagues in this Legislature around that time and, believe me, I learned a lot that night. It was a very great opportunity to see Mr. Driedger and hear him say to me that, you know, we've waited a long time, Mr. Maguire, and he says—he called me Mr. Maguire, actually.

I'll never forget that. I was sort of a young guy that he had seen around this building maybe a few times but not very often, and he said, we have an opportunity that we'll be going forward with to form a government, and I thought, well, okay. You know, I mean, obviously, that's—there was—a change had happened at that particular time.

But I just wanted to say that I always appreciated his straightforwardness and his insight into all of the issues that I brought forward as a farmer and a farmer representing some farmers in different organizations that I was with, and enjoyed the discussions that I had with him on a few opportunities to share those ideas. We weren't very far apart on some of those, Mr. Speaker, around the province.

And I always just wanted to say that I wish his family all the best and wanted to just put a few words on the record on behalf of the farmers in Manitoba and those particularly in my constituency of Arthur-Virden for the years that he devoted of his life and his family to the province of Manitoba.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words in tribute to Albert Driedger and extend condolences to his family and friends.

Certainly, it is a tribute when a Minister of Highways is complimented on the quality of the roads. I mean, I've seen many, many ministers of Highways, and most of the time, they are, you know, assailed because of the potholes in the roads in this province and the problems with the roads. So I think it's certainly a tribute to Albert Driedger that he did well looking after the roads. I think it certainly has to be said, as others have said, that he paid particular attention to those in southeastern Manitoba, but, of course, he lived in southeastern Manitoba. But the existence of those compliments, I think, says a lot, and I certainly heard quite a number of those.

Albert Driedger was, of course, innovative—had some new ideas, including things like toll roads. I don't think that one went very far but, you know, I think that the people need to be given, you know, some credit sometimes even for ideas and be ready to put forward things.

I remember in the period when Albert Driedger was the Minister of Natural Resources and I was the Member of Parliament for Portage-Interlake, and I had managed to get some funds for—to help fish habitat. I know the MLA for Dauphin knows my concern about fish habitat sometimes. But I had managed to get some funds for fish habitat in Manitoba as a federal representative, and the—it was a—I think a contract for a provincial brochure which talked about what was happening in terms of fisheries and other aspects of natural resources. And into this fish—this booklet, there was—people who had

the contract inserted a phrase or a paragraph talking about the good things that were being done at the federal level, in terms of the support of fish habitat. And, of course, when Albert Driedger found out that there was a positive reference to a Liberal federal Member of Parliament, he made sure that all 10,000 books were—very carefully—had that page excised before any of them were sent out.

He was a partisan, but he certainly did some good things for roads and for many people in Manitoba, and I just want to pay this tribute and extend those condolences.

Thank you.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak here, not just for the fraternity of ministers of Infrastructure and Transportation, although I certainly could, but also, as someone that did appreciate serving as an MLA during some rather interesting times and getting to know Albert and, you know, I think—well, honesty was certainly one of the great qualities he had, but he was a really nice guy.

*(15:30)

But I do have a couple of other connections as well, and I'm not going to leave out the Highways side, by the way, because that was certainly important part of what Albert did. He was very passionate about what he did, but there was a time when I was nicknamed Landslide in this Legislature. I had won by 72 votes, you know, I'm not exactly member for Assiniboine in terms of, you know, that's the ultimate definition of landslide, but there was a time when Emerson, as it was then constructed, was a pretty competitive seat. Actually, I believe was one of the original seats in the 1969 Schreyer election—*[interjection]*—1973, yes, '73 actually, correct. And I know that, you know, that with all the discussions that go back and forth, you know, sometimes things are said back and forth.

But I remember after one session where I was, you know, particularly critical of the Conservatives at that time, and I was getting heckled quite a bit. I think it was one of the evening sittings. By the way, we used to have three evening sittings, and it was—you know, the ultimate was the, you know, landslide, right? It was, landslide—well, they couldn't say my last name, but I remember talking to Albert afterwards, and he said, you know, they used to say that about me as well. And he said, you know, one

thing you always have to appreciate in this House, doesn't matter how many votes you win by, you're just as good as any other MLA. And, of course, Albert went on later to represent perhaps a somewhat different riding, but with a significant increase in vote margin. But it really struck me that right in the middle of this—and I tell you, some of those evening sittings, people were taking things pretty seriously. I think those of us went through evening sittings probably remember now why we got rid of them. I'm always reminded, by the way, why we only have a few Fridays left as well, too, on occasion.

But Albert was a genuinely nice person, and one thing Albert appreciated, by the way, after—another thing he had in common and I had in common, it was fairly lengthy apprenticeship before the opportunity of being in government, being in Cabinet. And I've always said, by the way, that every seat in this House is good. I remember my original seat quite well because I remember—this is just as question period was starting to be televised—and I think I had the only seat in the House where you couldn't be seen by the camera. That was before we got the central cameras, and it took a bit of persuading, but I was actually persuaded it was a pretty darn good seat as well.

But Albert really appreciated the opportunity, when government did come around, to be a minister, and he took it seriously. And, yes, I was going to mention a little bit about being MIT Minister. I know the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) probably be surprised that you do get a fair number of, you know, compliments when things go well and when projects are done that people appreciate. But you also get a lot of invitations to visit highways that, you know, people usually want to invite you sort of during the spring, you know, kind of the roughest conditions. Of course, it always has to be in a pickup truck with pretty stiff suspension, and I've had enough of those invitations and I've taken up some of those invitations, or at least I've driven myself out on some of the roads.

And I've always felt that as Highways Minister you're pretty well the chief highways inspector, and I'll never forget with Albert, Albert did that. And I went into Cross Lake, I didn't represent Cross Lake, but I knew a lot of people in Cross Lake at the time, and this was Highway 373. And I actually used to lecture for universities north in Cross Lake, and I remember getting stuck in the middle of Highway 373 in a pickup truck.

But I remember one time and it was just, I think, shortly before Albert was moved to Natural Resources. But people in the community were saying, you'll never believe this, but we went to a meeting and we said to the Minister of Highways, you should come and see how—well, I can't use the word they were going to describe the highway with—how bad our highway was, and he said, okay, I'll check it out. And actually he drove up to Cross Lake and I think his wife was with him as well, if I remember correctly, and—but I loved the description because, of course, it was very muddy and they said you could barely see anything out of the vehicle he was driving. But, you know, the respect he got for taking the—up the offer and driving up there was pretty significant.

I dare say that in his time as a minister, and I can certainly appreciate his time as MIT Minister, but I was also [*inaudible*] you know, conservation successor department. It is—these are departments where, you know, start at whatever knowledge base you have, but the time you're finished—I think anybody that's been through it or been critic—you know the province from end to end, and I think that was the key thing with Albert. He got to know this province really well.

The one thing I always was struck by as well, too, whether he was in politics or out of politics, because I did have the opportunity to run into him afterwards, he never looked back. I don't think he, you know, he was a rear-view mirror type of person, but when I ran into him he was always friendly, and there was always a bit of a banter back and forth because he certainly was partisan, but he was always, to my mind, I think a reminder to all of us, that you can—you can actually be partisan—I don't think it's all that bad, you know. I think that's part of our democratic system, our parliamentary system. But you could also be a nice guy. And when I say nice guy I'm using it in the non-gender specific way, because you know what, it really—Albert was nice with everyone. He could come in the House and actually he always had a twinkle in his eye when he gave even the most partisan of speeches, but as he was walking out he would have that twinkle again, maybe a wink, you know, because he—not that he didn't take everything you said seriously—he did. But he never took it personally.

And I can truly say when I—when I watched him and I sat with him many years and I saw him in both opposition and government he always kept that—that demeanour, and it's something we can all learn from.

I can truthfully say to his family that he did leave his mark and he certainly contributed a lot, but in addition to his fine career in public service, I think he—he left a lot of people glad that they knew him, and I'm certainly one of them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

John A. Christianson

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), that this House convey to the family of the late John A. Christianson, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincerest sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty and a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects and condolences to the family of John A. Christianson, who was first elected as an MLA for Portage la Prairie in 1959. Concurrent with his career in provincial politics, John was a city alderman as well in Portage la Prairie from 1959 to 1960.

As an alderman, John began to exhibit a concern for the safety of those who have no voice which later made him ideal as Manitoba's first minister of Welfare.

Despite opposition, John rejected a City proposal to straighten a road in order to save a 60-year old elm tree at the intersection of Crescent and 4th Street southwest in Portage la Prairie. Today, the dog leg in the road serves as an excellent speed control device, quite like a modern roundabout.

As Manitoba's first minister of Welfare under Duff Roblin from 1961 to 1963, John was instrumental in the decision to build the Portage Diversion or the Assiniboine River Floodway. The project was made as part of a larger effort to prevent flooding in the Red River Valley.

In February 1962 he introduced a resolution entitled The Old-Age Pension Plan. He said old-age pensions would increase the mobility of the labour force in Canada and provide everyone with the

opportunity to prepare for his retirement and to protect their dependents.

Prior to his political career and before becoming an MLA, John served as a professional pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War. After the war he returned to Portage la Prairie where he worked with his brothers in the family business.

* (15:40)

After his time in the Legislature John proceeded to leave his mark across the world. Originally educated as a mechanical engineer, he went on to become an educator, a counsellor and the founder of an international college. He earned a master's degree in educational psychology, taught grade 6 and proceeded to write Manitoba's first study on the education of emotionally disturbed children. He went on to become the president of a national chain of daycares, what we know today as Mini-Skools, a student counsellor at the University of Winnipeg and the co-founder and vice-chair of Canadian International College, an English language university for Japanese students.

In his personal life, John is survived by his wife, Gwen Bailey, his two sons and six grandchildren. With his unwavering commitment to educational excellence and improving the lives of others, John's contributions went far beyond his time in this House. He will be fondly remembered by friends and family in every city he lived, including Portage la Prairie, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Los Angeles and Sun Lakes, Arizona.

Mr. Speaker, I'm privileged and—to be able to rise today to pay respects and appreciation for the service of John A. Christianson to the people of Manitoba and all the other communities in which he lived during his long and productive life.

Thank you.

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

The life of John Christianson was a long one and a varied one. An incredible record of service, a short time—a single term in this place, but his devotion to his people never wavered, Mr. Speaker. He was a proud of his humble rural upbringing near—we'll say between Langruth and Westbourne, in that area. The Christianson clan is a tremendously successful group, many, many examples of exemplary

community service among those family members. John's brothers and—his nephew is a well-known columnist in the Free Press that many of us read with interest—David. His other nephews are noted and respected in the legal community of the province and some here will be aware of them. And he has—his brothers also were tremendously successful business people in the community of Portage la Prairie and surrounding area. First with selling that green equipment which we all thought was—the paint was too expensive on—in our family, but, nonetheless, really good equipment.

He was first elected in '59. He defeated Charlie Greenlay, who was the Liberal-Progressive member of that time, the sort of descendant party of the D.L. Campbell era. And a relatively close election, 473 votes, and shortly thereafter was appointed to the Cabinet of Duff Roblin as his first Minister of Welfare.

John was truly—I had the privilege of meeting him on just a couple of occasions, but he impressed me immediately as a straightforward—and he looked you right in the eye when you met him and he was a straight-standing, ex-military man—you could tell when you met him. But he was a person who fit the description, I think, of a compassionate Conservative. He was a person who cared very much about—because, I think, he came from not much he knew that we needed to have a province that was a place where people could move up in the world and could find success, and he cared very much for that.

And so when he was defeated, largely I would suggest, perhaps, as the result of something the residents of the city of Winnipeg should consider that they owe John Christianson a favour on, and that was the Portage Diversion. The Portage Diversion was a very emotional proposal to farmers in the north of Portage la Prairie through the Central Plains, of course, because it impacted them directly. Its proposed route intersected many of their holdings, many of their farms, and it created a tremendous challenge for farmers, in particular, of that day, when equipment was smaller and moving tractors and various self-propelled machines was a lot more onerous than perhaps it is today. It created a tremendous imposition in the minds of many. In the election in which he was defeated, the Portage Diversion became, arguably, the issue, and it resulted in his loss and his retirement from this place and from his career in politics. But that diversion has proved a safeguard mechanism for many in this province in the years since. Its operation an issue of

much debate and discussion, I'm sure, among members of this Chamber. But, nonetheless, the existence of it has provided an option that wasn't there before to: to move water, not to Winnipeg, but to another basin.

John Christianson was largely responsible for that initiative as part of the government of Duff Roblin in that day. When we talk, we speak much about the floodway, the Red River diversion, as we should, and Duff's Ditch, as we call it, but, perhaps, that was John's ditch; at that time, hotly debated. At this time, many in the province, and I include in that, the residents of the constituency of Portage la Prairie, understand the value and the foresight that went into the decision that was made at that time by that government.

John's career, after his loss to Gordon Johnston in 1963, was a varied one as well. He was an entrepreneurial spirit, Mr. Speaker. He and his brothers were responsible for building a community called Koko Platz, which was, if you visited Portage la Prairie—I invite all of you to do that, as it is my hometown and stomping grounds of years past—you will know that in Portage la Prairie, in the south side of the community, bordering on what we call Crescent Lake, which is an isolated meander of the Assiniboine River, there is a significant residential area there called Koko Platz. John and his brothers were responsible for the building of the housing in that area. And they continued as family, separately and together, in their entrepreneurial engagements.

John went on after his political career to a number of other engagements. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) has outlined some; I'll just mention a couple. The Mini-Skool's daycares that some of us are familiar with—he was the first president of that organization. He helped open 48 schools all over North America. He was also the co-founder and vice-chair of the Canadian International College. I mentioned Koko Platz housing. He took a lot of joy in the fact that he was also, in his later years, inducted as an official colonel in the state of Kentucky. And he also, in earlier years, drafted Manitoba's first study on the education of emotionally disturbed children.

John's legacy—his desire for a legacy—was that he leave this world a better place than when he entered it. And, through his efforts, I think that we can agree, that he accomplished those things.

He was an entrepreneur; he was an investor and a capitalist; he was an education specialist and an

educator; he was a community builder; he demonstrated, in the way he handled his—himself, his real compassion for those less fortunate among us; he was a lifelong learner and an adventurous spirit.

And our condolences go out to his family. John's life was a life truly well lived, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I, too, would like to join Manitobans in extending condolences to the family of John Christianson.

Coming from the small rural community that was referenced of Langruth, John developed his small-town values very early on, and they influenced a lot of his thinking and he carried them through his entire life. His extended family has been referenced; still continues to contribute in a major way in the community.

John served as a pilot in World War II, as did one of his brothers, and returned after World War II to the family John Deere dealership. And they also had a car dealership in Portage. They were a significant portion of the business community.

He also served in city council from '57 to '59, and in '59 was elected as the MLA for Portage la Prairie, serving in Duff Roblin's government, where he served as Manitoba's first Minister of Welfare, as was referenced.

He was also very instrumental in the decision to build the Portage Diversion. I think a structure that has paid for itself many times over and was a significant part of the success of dealing with the 2011 flood in terms of avoiding any major catastrophe.

John and his brothers also did develop a very significant residential area in Portage, as referenced, called Koko Platz. He used his engineering degree to—actually to help design a significant amount of the community structure around there. And it is, without a doubt, one of the more beautiful areas in Portage la Prairie to this day.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) made reference to the tree that he fought to have saved when he was on city council, which still stands to this day. And there is still a little deke in the road there that we use to go around that. There have been many people that have questioned why that tree is still there, because it has been a victim of a few automobile accidents over the years, but it's there for good reason, and it reminds us that you can make a difference as an individual.

* (15:50)

John went on to another career after politics, however, and that was in education. He started with a teaching degree and went on to get his master's in educational psychology, writing Manitoba's first study on the education of emotionally disturbed children. And as was referenced, he was the first president of the Mini-Skool daycare system, which went on to become an international system. So he was—and this was very early days in terms of daycare, so he was a major contributor in the commercialization and development of this whole system.

He also went on to co-found and be vice-chair of the Canadian International College, that was an English language college for Japanese students that had campuses in North Vancouver and Nelson, BC. And, in fact, he was instrumental in designing those colleges and having the structures built using his engineering degree yet again. And this, I must remind everyone, was actually after he'd retired. He—retirement never took very well to John, and vice versa, and he went—he was always doing something.

But, most importantly, John is fondly remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather and mentor of many, and a friend. John, without a doubt, left the world a better place than he had found it.

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

And I ask the members to rise for a moment of silence, please.

A moment of silence was observed.

George Minaker

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Ms. Crothers), that this House convey to the family of the late George Minaker, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

Mr. Selinger: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my respects and condolences to the family of George Minaker.

George Minaker led a very political life, throughout which he served his constituents with

great dedication at various levels of government. Like myself and many other members of this House, George Minaker began his political career in city politics, first as an alderman for the City of St. James in 1966.

Following St. James's amalgamation with the City of Winnipeg in 1971, George became a city councillor, and then he went on to become first elected in the Legislature of this Province in 1973, and in 1979 became the Minister of Community Services and Corrections in Sterling Lyon's government.

George entered federal politics in 1984, winning the riding of Winnipeg-St. James for the federal Progressive Conservatives. He completed his political service as a federal Member of Parliament in 1998.

Throughout his life George also pursued other interests besides politics. He worked as an electrical engineer—one of the hardest types of engineering accreditation to get, I might add—before running as an alderman. After leaving politics, George was appointed as a member of the National Transportation Agency in 1990, in which he served until 1996. In this independent role in Ottawa, George outlined—continued to impart his knowledge by providing adjudication, an economic regulation on matters related to Canada's transportation network. George continued to live in Ottawa after his retirement.

I want to pass on my deepest condolences to George's wife, Joan; his children, Cathy, Donald and Scott; stepchildren, Lesley and Keith; and their 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. George will be remembered as a man who devoted his life to serving the people of St. James.

And, on a personal note, I want to extend my appreciation for his service for my mother, who knew him as a small business person in St. James and always found him very responsible and supportive of the concerns of the business community in that part of our community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you to the Premier for his comments.

The—George Minaker was an interesting—it was an interesting career to put it mildly. When one considers that he served not only as an alderman in

St. James prior to it becoming part of the City of Winnipeg, but also, thereafter, as a Metro councillor, also served as a member of the Legislative Assembly and served as a Member of Parliament. There are very few people who have served in all four of those capacities, certainly, Mr. Speaker, and that's an accomplishment.

The Premier has put a number of good points on the record. I will try not to repeat them, but I should mention that he was born in Morris, interestingly. And spent—he did spend all of his life in St. James, but he was born in the constituency of the member for Morris—I didn't realize that until we were doing this research—passed too soon at the age of 74. And we do offer our condolences to his wife, Joan, and his children and stepchildren as well.

To do the chronology, I think it's worthwhile to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, he served as a City of St. James-Assiniboia alderman from 1966 until 1971. He was the chair of the property committee at that time. Then he went on to become a Winnipeg city councillor from '71 to '73. He was a member of the Executive Policy Committee, at that time the chair of Works and Operations, both senior positions of great responsibility. He served as an MLA in this place for eight years for the riding of St. James-Assiniboia from '73 to '81, and he served in various opposition roles. He was involved in Mines and Natural Resources, Northern Affairs and the Manitoba Development Corporation under the leadership of Sterling Lyon. He then served as the legislative assistant to the Minister of Finance and the minister chairing the Manitoba Energy Council in 1977. And then he went on to become the Minister of Community Service and Correction from '79 to '81. And then after a brief interlude he went on to serve as Member of Parliament for the riding of St. James in 1984 to 1988 under the Prime Minister Mulroney. He was also a member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Manitoba. He was a member of the St. James library and St. James recreation boards. He was past director of the St. James-Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce and, as was mentioned, a bachelor of science in electrical engineering from the U of M in 1960.

Now, just for interest I contacted some old friends of his just to get their perspectives, and some of you here will remember J. Frank Johnston, who, interestingly enough, had as his first campaign manager, George Minaker. And he said that George was a person who had a tremendous following, who worked exceptionally well and, in particular, with

young people, according to J. Frank, and he had a lovely rapport with people. He said also that they stayed in touch and in later years he relocated to Manotik after—Manotik, a community just near to Ottawa—following his time as a Member of Parliament. And he in later years loved to tend to his yard, his beautiful yard and garden. And he also enjoyed preparing wonderful meals for his family and friends, which I'm sure at this time of year they will remember fondly.

Councillor Grant Nordman has had some association with Mr. Minaker over a number of years, as his family has as well. And he described him as a truly unique man, a very happy-go-lucky, very open, very approachable. Councillor Grant Nordman met him when he, Grant, was working in the pro shop at Breezy Bend as a teenage boy. And he said that George was an avid golfer at Breezy Bend and he said he was always one of the boys.

* (16:00)

The other comment he made which I think was an interesting one is he said that even though he was an engineer by trade, he carried no airs about him whatsoever. He was a man of the people, very casual and friendly individual; made everyone feel welcome and at ease. He was truly a St. James boy at heart, true to his roots, and also the comment came from both Mr. Johnston and the—Councillor Nordman. They said he was tremendously well-liked among his peers, which has been referenced today by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and others—tremendously well-liked by his peers, not only in the Legislature, but in the House of Commons as well, and also, very importantly, likewise by the staff that worked with him.

We offer our condolences to his family and we celebrate the career and the life today of George Minaker.

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, hopefully, my voice will hold out.

I have to say this has been a very interesting afternoon for me. I kind of feel like I'm sitting in my grandfather's living room listening to him tell stories about people that came before.

And, unfortunately, I didn't know Mr. Minaker myself, so I might be repeating myself a little bit here, but I do think, out of respect for all of the accomplishments that he had while being the MLA for St. James that it's worth repeating.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to recognize the years of service to the people of Manitoba by a previous MLA for St. James, George Minaker. I might have to get you to finish this. Excuse me.

While I didn't know Mr. Minaker, I certainly do know the constituency he represented, and I'd like to outline some of his accomplishments while he represented the people of St. James.

Mr. Minaker began his political career at the municipal level in 1966 when he was elected as an alderman in what was then the City of St. James. In 1969, when the city became St. James-Assiniboia, he was re-elected and chosen as chair of the City's property committee.

When St. James-Assiniboia was amalgamated with the City of Winnipeg in 1971—the year I was born—Mr. Minaker was elected as a city councillor. He spent six years serving the public at the municipal level before he leapt to provincial politics.

In 1973, he became the Conservative MLA for St. James and a member of the opposition. He earned the public support and was re-elected in 1977, in which the Progressive Conservatives formed government under Sterling Lyon. He joined Cabinet as the Minister of Community Services and Corrections in 1979 and held this portfolio until 1981.

During this time, he introduced several bills that received royal assent, including amendments to The Museum of Man and Nature Act, The Change of Name Act, the child welfare act, The Social Allowances Act and The Social Services Administrative Act. His provincial political career lasted for nine years until he was defeated in the 1981 election.

However, Mr. Minaker wasn't done yet. In 1984, he entered federal politics and won the riding of Winnipeg-St. James for the federal Progressive Conservatives and held this seat until 1988. He spent four years at the federal level, but, in total, Mr.—excuse me—Mr. Minaker's political career spanned 22 years, which is pretty fantastic, and he covered the full gamut.

This was Mr. Minaker's political career, but I feel it is important to acknowledge the personal side of his life. As all of us with the honour of holding the title of MLA know, we are more than just our political roles or titles, and it is never a one-person show.

George was born in Morris, Manitoba, on September 17th in 1937, but he grew up in Winnipeg. He graduated from the University of Manitoba with a degree in electrical engineering and worked as an engineer prior to entering politics.

George was famous for preparing elaborate meals for his family and friends, and found great delight in gardening.

He leaves behind his wife, Joan, three children, two stepchildren, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. I'm sure he will be deeply missed by his family and friends. He died in Ottawa on April 30th at the age of 74.

I would like to acknowledge the years of service George Clement Minaker dedicated to representing the people of St. James.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I, too, wish to make a few comments on the record about my great friend, mentor and one of my heroes growing up in youth politics in the province of Manitoba. I first got involved in politics in 1981—got involved in the election of 1981, and by 1982, the PC Party of Manitoba decided that it was going to have a leadership convention and wouldn't you know it that George Minaker and his family and myself, amongst others, were on the side of Brian Ransom. And that's how I got to know him, first of all, and we got involved and it was close. It was within 50 votes. I'm sure there are other individuals in this House who ran for leadership who would have liked it if it was a 50-vote difference. But it—not that I'm going to mention any names.

But it was a hotly contested leadership. It was a lot of fun, I got to know George well. In fact, it was another individual that was involved in that leadership campaign by the name of Seech Gadjaharsingh, and Seech became my nemesis, because Seech was brilliant at organizing and just outstanding. He was an amazing organizer, and every time we'd go up against him, you know, I think, we were winning one to his every two insofar as delegate selection meetings. In fact, maybe the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) should have had him involved in his campaign. Seech could win delegates like no tomorrow.

So he gave us a lot of trouble in the whole Wolseley, St. James, Assiniboine area, even though Gerrie Hammond and Olive McPhail—Gerrie Hammond ended up being an MLA. We were on the

side of Brian Ransom. But Seech was a good campaigner, and I know, without the Minakers and there was names that I'll mention later on—Barb Switzer; Olive McPhail; Gerrie Hammond; Adele Chornoby, Eldon Ross's sister, relative to the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief). He's part of the Ross clan. And anyway, moving on, there ended up being a nomination meeting for the riding of Assiniboia—St. James Assiniboine.

And I had been involved in a couple leadership campaigns and always with the candidate who came close but not quite the one that won, and I was a little discouraged as a young organizer involved in politics. And the party president, Ted Revel, another name involved in the history of the PC Party who's also gone on to be with the Lord, tapped me on the shoulder and took me out for lunch one day, and he said, Ron—he said to me, I don't want you to quit, he said. Get—stay involved in the party and go work for George Minaker. You worked with him in the leadership campaigns. Go and work for George. He's going to have a tight nomination meeting. And wouldn't you know it, in that nomination meeting was, of all people, Bob Lane, L-a-n-e, not the Bob Laine from CTV, but the Bob Lane from St. James, and a guy by the name Seech Gadajaharsingh.

So we had another run at Seech, and it was a tough nomination meeting. I believe we had it at the Polo Park Inn, in the big ballroom, and I know there were over 2,000 voting individuals at that meeting. It was a big meeting, and if any of you ever organized against Seech, you knew the minute he was involved, you were already behind the eight ball. So I got with a—I got together with a lot of my university buddies, and I said, okay, I got to settle this score once and for all with Seech. We're going to back George Minaker, and we're going to settle some scores from the leadership. One of the things you do in youth politics.

Anyway, worked for George and really got to appreciate who he was and what his strengths were, and we had a great nomination meeting. And George happened to win that and then went on to the election, and one of the things about—I just want to say about our good friend, Seech, and George Minaker and all the rest of us, you know, it gets very competitive. And George was one who came to us and said, you know, it's time to reach out. We want to win this seat. We gotten—got Seech involved in the campaign and he was a great asset, and that was George Minaker.

You know, whether you were beat by him or you beat him, George always went the distance to either offer his help or to get you involved in the campaign. George was incredibly big that way. He was a real—a big guy that way. Just always made sure that you were involved and that he cared and he gave you a serious role. And the election, again, it was run by, I believe, Gerrie Hammond was the campaign manager, with Adele Chornoby, Olive McPhail, Barb Switzer and just amazing individuals. And that campaign, I use that as an example when I talk to a lot of people.

* (16:10)

If you want to talk about volunteerism, it was an old building—they've ripped down now on Portage Avenue—and upstairs it was quite substantial. During the day, no air conditioning, summer campaign, you would have up to 200 volunteers—yes, 200 volunteers. I mean today, if you get 10, 15, 20 coming out for a day—200 volunteers transcribing because there were no computers then and you would transcribe the ID list, and one person would call the name off the master list, and then there would be four or five people sitting on the other side of the table and they would go, you know, I can't use the name for the—the member for Thompson, and you know, we would have an orange marker, you know, and then there'd be, say, for instance, the member for Morris, and that would be a blue marker. And, you know, there'd be another colour for the Liberals, and we would do these master lists as the canvassers came in.

And George was amazing at motivating people, and that election—federal election 1984, like any election, you don't know how it's going to go. You know, the polls say you're going to win, or whatever, but George said we've got to run as if we're two points behind but gaining.

And we had this new system which we had learnt from another party, the oranges, that we would go door to door and we'd convince people to speak. And George had given us all this speech how every vote counted.

And can you imagine if, on election day, we were one vote short. And there was one household—I don't know if it was on Olive Street—you know what? The name—the name—the name escapes me what street it was, and there were seven voters in the House and there were 20 minutes left to vote, and they were the last ID Conservative voters I had to get out from that poll. And I took this very, very serious,

and I know that comes as a shock to members here, that I take my politics serious. And I sat on the doorstep and I was absolutely distraught that these seven voters weren't going to get out, and I bet you that's what we were going to lose by.

And they happened to come home, and with tears in my eyes, I said to them: If you don't get out to vote, what am I going to say the next morning if we lose by seven votes? And in tears I said: You have to get out and vote.

And I probably, in youthful exuberance, said to them: You know, the nation hangs on your seven votes, because that's what you do when you're young. You tend to take this really serious, because you know, Mr. Minaker, George Minaker said to us: You know, it could be that one vote. That's the one that could put us over the top, and here there were seven.

Anyway, these people must of thought: My goodness. You know, if that is that important—they said to me if it means that much to you we'll go and vote. And I almost offered, you know, that I would ride along in the car with them just to make sure they got there. But I did pull back a little bit on that one. And, needless to say, my poll was one of the strongest and George went on to win that election.

In fact, I know we're not allowed displays in the House, Mr. Speaker, and I have two beautiful buttons: Elect Minaker and George Minaker, MP, and these are treasured along with all my other buttons that I have hanging on the wall.

You know what? He was a great guy. And he was great to work with. He became elected and I remember at that time Mothers Against Drunk Driving—it was still an infant organization, and it was Professor Yellen, who used to be the president of it, and he invited—I happened to know him from the university; he was one of my professors.

And he wanted to meet with George and we drove one bitter cold morning to the home and George took an interest in it and that was, you know, when they were starting to just develop the whole Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and George—it didn't matter what it was, where it was. He was involved and engaged and he was a great MP as he was a great individual. I know he loved his family dearly and is missed.

And Mr. Speaker, I stand here today and I say with a heavy heart I lost a good friend, a good mentor, and Manitobans lost an advocate, whether he was in the provincial Cabinet or he was in Ottawa, he

was always a booster for Manitoba, and even in the years that he worked in Ottawa, he was always there for what was best for this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, to the family, my heartfelt condolences, and certainly I, as one of his young volunteers, miss him and think very fondly of him and appreciate that this House does this for members as I know George would really appreciate these comments that have been said today.

Thank you very much.

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

I ask the members to rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

* * *

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Would you canvass the House to see if there's a will to call it 5 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is there a will to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

Before I ask the House to see the clock—and we'll call it 5 o'clock—I wish to indicate to the House that I neglected, in my haste, to move to orders of the day and a grievance motion—I neglected to call grievances.

So I know there are members of the House that may wish to have a grievance on that oversight, but I'm—I'd like to have leave of the House to return—revert back to grievances, see if there's any member wishing to grieve. *[Agreed]*

Calling grievances. Is there any member wish to pose a grievance?

Seeing none, I thank the honourable members for their leave.

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

CORRIGENDUM

On December 3, 2012, page 321, first column, second paragraph, should have read:

The state failed to protect them. After 28 years nobody is convicted. The democracies of the world failed to sympathize with the victims.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

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