

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, 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
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 23, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 25—The Statutory Publications
Modernization Act**

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the minister of culture and heritage, that Bill 25, The Statutory Publications Modernization Act; Loi sur la modernisation du mode de diffusion des publications officielles, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: This bill modernizes the legal requirements for statutory publications. It will replace The Regulations Act with a new statutes and regulations act that will require statutes and regulations to be published online and will give official status to bilingual versions of the laws published on the Manitoba Laws website. It will also replace the outdated Public Printing Act with a new Queen's Printer act that enables electronic as well as print publishing.

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

Any further introduction of 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.

These are the reasons for the petition:

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 and diminished economic and employment opportunities and the potential loss of the local store and a 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 the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider repairing St. Ambroise provincial park and its access points to their pre-flood conditions so the park can reopen for 2013 season or earlier if possible.

This petition's signed by K. Bird, E. Kendall, T. Kendall 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. Further petitions?

Provincial Road 433 Improvements

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

And 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.

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 B. Biddulph, L. Davidow, M. Davidow and hundreds of other fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than a thousand constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including the

absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

And this petition is signed by D. Davison, L. Dnistranski and K. Lawrence and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Highway 217 Bridge Repair

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The bridge over the Red River on Highway 217 outside of St. Jean Baptiste was built in 1947 and provides a vital link of economic opportunities and community development on both sides of the river.

The Department of Infrastructure and Transportation closed the bridge after spending significant sums of money and time on rehabilitation efforts in the summer of 2012.

Individuals require numerous trips across the river each day to access schools, businesses and health-care facilities. The bridge closure causes daily undue hardship and inconvenience for residents due to time requirements and higher transportation costs.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to repair or replace the existing bridge as soon as possible to allow communities on both sides of the river to return to regular activities.

And this petition is signed by M. Goodfellow, H. Van DenBosch and A. Sabourin and many thousand more Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none—

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public

gallery where we have with us today from Carberry Collegiate 36 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Raegan Dyck. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

* (13:40)

And, I believe, also in the public gallery where we have with us today the Manitoba 4-H club volunteers from across Manitoba who are visiting for 4-H day at the Legislature and are the guests of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn). On behalf of members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PST Increase Election Promise

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, this NDP government promised no new taxes. They have since broken that promise by jacking up the PST. This NDP Premier, his Cabinet ministers and all of his backbenchers have shown an arrogant disregard to Manitoba taxpayers. They have become much more interested in looking after their own interests than looking after the interests of hard-working, taxpaying Manitobans.

So I'd like to ask the Premier of Manitoba: When did he forget who he was elected to serve?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we saw the growing economic uncertainty around the world. We saw the forecast that said economic growth would be down about a per cent of GDP this year. We saw the risk of a third major flood event in five years occurring in Manitoba this spring, and we recognized that to move the province forward and to match the federal announcement of a 10-year infrastructure program that we ourselves had to have a 10-year program of infrastructure.

A hundred-\$10 billion of investment, over a hundred thousand dollar—over a hundred thousand jobs, and let's remember what the folks opposite would have done. They would have cut jobs; they would have put Manitoba into austerity and slower economic growth.

Mrs. Driedger: It's interesting because in the last election this Premier was saying that everything was going very well in Manitoba. And that was only a year and a half ago.

Mr. Speaker, during the election, this NDP Premier promised not to raise taxes. He said a tax hike would be totally ridiculous. He manipulated voters with a false promise just to get elected. That is morally and ethically corrupt. He has broken a promise to over a million Manitobans.

So I'd like to ask this Premier again: When did he forget who he was elected to serve?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it's exactly because we want to do what's best for Manitoba and the future of this province that we brought forward this plan.

The member opposite correctly says that Manitoba has done relatively well compared to all other jurisdictions, in the top three for economic growth. This plan will allow us to continue to be one of the best 'parming' economies in Canada. This plan will build hydro. This plan will train apprentices. This plan will invest in health care and look after the elderly. This plan will create jobs and educational opportunities for young people. This plan will create a hundred thousand additional jobs over the next eight years as we train 78,000 people to enter the labour force.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is intended to build on the excellent record we've had over the last decade, not cut—

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

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, that plan is taxing Manitobans to death.

The rhetoric from this Premier is insulting to Manitobans. Does this Premier really think that jacking up the PST is what matters most to Manitobans? Does this Premier really think that a boldfaced lie is what matters most to Manitobans? And does this NDP Premier really think that it's okay to keep breaking his promises and breaking the law?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, what I believe and what people on this side of the House believe is that we need a positive plan for the future, a plan that does not take us back to what the members opposite wish. They want to go back to the '90s where they were laying off over a thousand nurses and firing them. They want to go back to the '90s where they fired and released 700 teachers. They want to go back to the '90s where they laid off people on a regular basis in areas of high-risk service, such as child welfare.

Our plan is intended to keep Manitobans working, to train Manitobans for the future, to build Manitoba hydro, to move the province forward.

We've seen the conditions out there—we've seen the conditions. We've responded accordingly, and we will ensure Manitoba stays affordable with a low rate of unemployment and a high rate of economic growth. Thank you.

PST Increase

Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Lawbreakers, Mr. Speaker, lawbreakers.

Mr. Speaker, April 16th, the Finance Minister stood in this House and spoke on the 2013 budget. Within the budget, he announced raising the PST from 7 per cent to 8 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino): Was she at the Cabinet table when the hike in the PST was discussed, and was she in favour of it, yes or no, or did she just go with the flow?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, everybody on this side of the House is seized of the urgency of moving forward with critical infrastructure in this province. We understand the urgency involved in putting together flood protection that help Manitoba families.

It won't be this side of the House that sticks its head in the sand like you have done in an effort to leave Manitoba families unprotected. But we're going to take this measure on.

It's a transparent measure. It's an accountable measure. Every dollar of this measure is assigned to building Manitoba infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

I can't understand why you aren't supporting it. Get on board and do something positive for Manitoba.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Finance Minister standing up, but let me be clear on this next question.

My question is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism: Is she afraid to stand up and speak on behalf of her constituents of Logan and voice their concerns about paying more, or is she just along for the ride? Did she support this or did she not?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, the next time the member for Lac du Bonnet stands up with a petition in hand and demands more money for his constituents, he should thank—he should thank—every member on this side of the House for not being as

narrow-minded and short-sighted as members opposite.

Last Tuesday, before I even stood in this House to present a budget you were asking for \$112 million in more spending. Are you telling me and 1.2 million Manitobans that that was just free money from somewhere, you were going to pick it off a tree? People across the aisle should be a lot more honest and be—

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

Mr. Ewasko: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's not only cheque presentations, events and photo ops in the job description.

Why won't she admit she ran in the election on untruths and that she is only in it for herself, Mr. Speaker? Did she support it or did she not?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, this side of the House is absolutely committed to providing for Manitobans the necessary infrastructure that we need to grow our economy. This side of the House is absolutely committed and understands the urgency by which we need to move in order to provide flood protection. This side of the House has been open and transparent about where we're going to get that money.

Mr. Speaker, I have tried to get out of that member's leader his commitment on what—how he's going to raise that money. I suggest they're looking at a harmonized sales tax and they won't say no to it. They refuse to say no to the HST in this province. That's where they're going, between that and deep cuts to services that Manitobans count on. You're missing the boat.

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

PST Increase

Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): My question is for the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick).

When the recommendation to raise the PST from 7 per cent to 8 per cent was made at the Cabinet table, did she stand up for her constituents and say no to the increase?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Acting Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): You know, Mr. Speaker, if they want to talk about the budget, I think—you know, you'd think they'd be talking about

the main investment in the budget, which is in terms of infrastructure.

* (13:50)

And I know members are stuck in the '90s. This member is stuck in the '90s—the 1990s in economic policy, the 1890s in terms of social policy—but I think it's important to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that during the 1990s they did absolutely nothing in terms of infrastructure. They spent as little as \$85 million on highways capital. This year it's going to be over \$460 million.

When are they going to own up to the fact that they did nothing on infrastructure in the '90s? And they would do nothing, Mr. Speaker, this year, because we know they're going to vote against the budget that will invest in infrastructure.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And again, my question is for the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick).

When the recommendation to scrap the referendum and deny taxpayers a vote on the PST increase was made at the Cabinet table, did she stand up for her constituents and say no?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing, that every one of our members of our caucus that live in the many areas that are protected by floods, including every one of our MLAs from the city of Winnipeg, understands one thing, that we have to do the same for other areas of the province, the same that we did with the floodway and the floodway expansion that we brought in, the dikes in the Red River, and the only way we're going to be dealing with that is through the leadership that's shown in this budget.

Now, members opposite have a choice. They can either stand up with the kind of lines of questions we've seen, the debate, Mr. Speaker, where every so often they feign some interest in terms of flood victims. We know what they did when they were in government: they blamed flood victims.

We are out to protect flood victims, and that's what this budget is all about.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But it's clear from the answers that have come from the government side of the House today, Mr. Speaker, that we might need antibullying legislation to keep the men from silencing the women on the government side.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes. That'll be an amendment—that'll be an amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We got off to a very good start.

I hope honourable members will recognize that we have many guests in the public gallery with us here today. I'm sure you'd want to leave a good impression with them of our conduct in the House, so I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please conduct ourselves accordingly to make sure we leave that good impression.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And it's disturbing to see that the women on the government side aren't allowed to get up and answer the questions when they're asked of their responsibilities and their portfolios.

Again, I'm hopeful that the Minister of Multiculturalism—Mr. Speaker, I'm hopeful that the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism will be allowed to get up and answer my question.

Mr. Speaker, was she not concerned about protecting her taxpayers in her constituency, or was she only concerned about protecting her own job?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I can tell you for certain what I'm concerned about, and that is the plan of the Leader of the Opposition to cut deeply, to cut painfully and to cut thoughtlessly, a euphemism he calls tough love, Mr. Speaker, which can only translate according to the arithmetic into the same Filmon era firing of nurses, freezing of health capital, erasing of seats in medical school.

That's their plan. We reject it; we want to build Manitoba.

Balanced Budget Legislation Call for Referendum

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I regret, Mr. Speaker, that the government has so little faith in the minister for culture and tourism. That is too bad that they don't have confidence in their own minister.

Mr. Speaker, when this Premier first ran for the Legislature in 1999, he did so on a promise to protect balanced budget legislation. In fact, his predecessor, a fellow named Gary Doer—you might remember him—ran on saying that he supported balanced budget legislation. But since becoming Premier, the member for St. Boniface has dismantled this legislation piece by piece, protecting ministers' salaries, doing away

with the requirement to balance the budget and now doing away with the requirement for a referendum.

Mr. Speaker, won't the Premier stand up for what he himself ran for in 1999 and his predecessor, Mr. Doer, said that he supported and call a referendum?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member from Steinbach just skips over what he ran on in the last election, which was to extend and break balanced budget legislation 'til 2018. That was the commitment he made in the last election. So let him not feign disappointment about balanced budget legislation. He wanted to break it for a longer period of time than anybody else.

Our plan, Mr. Speaker, is to build—to keep building Manitoba. We know that we have the opportunity with the 10-year federal infrastructure program to build those schools and hospitals, to build those roads, to protect people from floods; we will do that.

Members opposite want to drag Manitoba back into the '90s where people were losing their jobs, where there was declining disposable income, roads weren't being built, hospital projects were being cancelled. That's what they want to do. We want to move forward. They want to go back to the '90s, Mr. Speaker.

PST Increase Call for Referendum

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, we want to put money back in the pockets of hard-working taxpayers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's as though this Premier had a conversion on the road to the PST tax increase, because it was only a short time ago that he was a crusader for referendums. It was only June two years ago that he said, stand up and support Manitobans' right for a referendum. That's what this Premier said.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've got a picture of the Premier at a news conference from 2011 demanding a referendum, and I think the guy standing over his right shoulder is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers). I'll table the pictures and maybe they can identify themselves.

Doesn't he understand that Manitobans want a leader who stands up for what he says and not someone who has mastered the art of the flip-flop?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it was only in October of '11 that the member opposite ran on a plan to breach balanced budget legislation. He took the very legislation that he now feigns to be one of the creators of, and he wanted to toss it out of a window so he could spend more money and never have to balance the books.

We saw the economic uncertainty out there, Mr. Speaker. We saw the third major flood risk in the last five years. We saw the need to continue to invest in Manitoba to make sure that we have a low rate of unemployment, to make sure people are working. The best way for people to have money in their pockets is to have a job.

Our plan will create a hundred thousand more jobs over the next 10 years. That'll put money in pockets of Manitobans. That'll put families in schools. That'll put Manitoba on the road to prosperity, not austerity, like the member opposite.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has flip-flopped all over the place on the issue of a referendum. First he said, well, you know, we couldn't do it because of the construction season. Then he said, well, you know, it's probably because of the cost. He's floated those trial balloons.

But, you know, it's funny because it was two years ago, cost didn't seem to matter from him. In the 2011-2012 Public Accounts, it shows that this government gave \$80,000 to an organization called the Canadian Wheat Board Alliance in Alberta to help them fight for a referendum. Mr. Speaker, their Premier was willing to write a cheque from the pockets of taxpayers for \$80,000 to a lobby for a referendum, but he won't call one himself when he has the power.

Wouldn't he describe that as hypocrisy, Sir?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member from Steinbach knows a lot about hypocrisy; he was the one that wanted to breach balanced budget legislation until 2018. He knows a lot about hypocrisy because just a week ago him and all his members stood up—and the member always puts a petition in the Legislature. He wants to spend more money on health care. All the members opposite just less than a week ago wanted to spend more money on roads.

Mr. Speaker, we brought a budget forward that will invest in roads. We brought a budget forward that will invest in hospitals. We brought a budget forward that will invest in schools, create a hundred

thousand jobs over the next decade and move Manitoba forward.

Now the member opposite wants to take us back to the '90s, where people were losing their jobs, where nothing was being built, an age of darkness and austerity. That's his vision for the future, not one that we share.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

PST Increase Call for Referendum

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): In 2011, the then-minister of Agriculture, the current Minister of Finance, funded a referendum for the Canadian Wheat Board to the tune of \$80,000. He did so giving the following advice, and I quote from Hansard: Take some political advice from me at the very least, he said. And I further quote: It is almost beyond words how hypocritical, how phony, how ridiculous the position of members opposite is. Why don't you grow a backbone? Stand up for Manitobans. Do that. Do that, he said, and I quote—end of quote.

Will the Minister of Finance now take his own advice and fund the referendum on the big NDP PST lie, or does he first have to grow a backbone?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): I'll put my backbone up against any backbone across there, Mr. Speaker.

Manitobans have been very clear. Manitobans want a government that's going to stand up for their livelihoods, Mr. Speaker. They want us to stand up and protect them from flooding. They want us to stand up and build infrastructure that builds our economy. Manitobans have been very clear about that. We've heard what Manitobans have had to say about investing in infrastructure as opposed to sticking our heads in the sand like members opposite would do.

Mr. Speaker, we've put forward a measure that raises the revenue in as fair a way as we can. We've put forward a revenue item that is—

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

Mr. Schuler: What a spineless answer. In 2011, the Minister of Finance spent \$80,000—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

I'd like to caution all honourable members that sometimes, I understand, in the heat of the moment we can stray over the lines of parliamentary and unparliamentary, so I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members of the House. Please—please—pick and choose your words very carefully. Do not direct your comments to other—another member of the House, but direct them through the Chair, please.

Mr. Schuler: In 2011, the Minister of Finance spent \$80,000 on a referendum stating, and I quote: Take some political advice from me at the very least. He goes on to say: Why don't you just grow a backbone and stand up for Manitobans? Do that. Do that, he says. And he goes on to say: How can you be so hypocritical?

He must be a clairvoyant. He was already giving himself advice in 2011.

Will the minister heed his own advice and hold the referendum on the big NDP PST lie, or is he just being a hypocrite?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, I'll stand up for Manitobans and protecting their families from the imminent threats of floods any day of the week. I'll stand up for Manitoba families who tell us that we need to invest in infrastructure, as opposed to sticking our heads in the sand like the Manitoba opposition has been doing. I'll do that any day of the week.

We have found a way to move forward in terms of the Building and Renewal Plan, Mr. Speaker, a plan that provides stimulus to our economy, a plan that puts together about \$10 billion over the next 10 years for flood protection and critical infrastructure, a plan that where every single dollar goes towards flood protection or critical infrastructure that Manitoba families count on.

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

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, only this minister lays down on the PST and calls that standing up—only this minister.

The Minister of Finance funded a referendum for \$80,000 and defended his plan by saying, and I quote: Take some political advice from me at the very least. And he goes on to say: I'm not quibbling with the results; I'm quibbling with the process.

Why does the Minister of Finance not show his backbone and hold the referendum on the big NDP

PST lie, or is he just frightened about quibbling with the results?

Mr. Struthers: Only members opposite seem to understand that they should ignore a report that came forward not just three weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, a report that said in order to protect Manitoba families from an imminent flood, the third flood in five years, only members opposite, with theirs—with their narrow-minded, short-sighted view, can think that they can ignore that one-and-a-half-billion-dollar price tag.

Or were you going to do it all through cuts? Well, you know, last Thursday, I guess they said they would do it through cuts, didn't they, Mr. Speaker? They said they would cut deeply into health care. They said they would cut deeply into Family Services. They said they would cut deeply into Justice.

That's not moving Manitoba forward. That's not creating jobs. That's not keeping—

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

PST Increase Legality

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): The minister talks about flood, but he knows full well he had very little in that budget for the flood.

Mr. Speaker, we know this government lied to Manitobans in the last election. Manitobans know this NDP government lied, and now this NDP government wants to break the law by taking away Manitobans' right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, did the Attorney General of Manitoba, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), advise his Cabinet—his colleagues around the Cabinet table to break the law?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite referenced floods in his preamble, and I want to put on the record what the—what summed up the 1990s in terms of the former premier and the government that they feted this past weekend.

That premier said, at the end of the day, individuals who decide to locate their property in a flood-prone area, on a flood plain, have to take responsibility. He blamed flood victims, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you what the translation of the position of the Conservative Party is on this budget.

They can talk all they want about flood protection, but we have a major report is—indicating there could be upwards of a billion dollars that we're going to need to protect the people that were impacted the most in 2011, by the way, including the people of Brandon, who did such a great job in fighting that flood.

So, Mr. Speaker, they still blame flood victims. They still—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I know where I was during the flood of 2011, Mr. Speaker. I was shoulder to shoulder with people in Brandon and western Manitoba throwing sandbags, fighting that flood.

Where were this government? They were there for the photo opportunity with their new boots walking along the dike. We were waiting for them to get out of the way so we'd get back to work.

Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with the Minister of Justice? Has he no backbone? Will he not stand up in this place and answer the question? Did he advise his colleagues around the Cabinet table to break the law?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the real question for the member of Brandon West is, will he actually vote for flood mitigation and flood protection, for flood victims in this province? That's what we want to see.

And again, I want to stress, Mr. Speaker, that at—that the party opposite—we've seen today, by the way, even further reflection of that. I think the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) summed it up the best. You know, they are the party of the 1990s and—in terms of economic policy. They're the party of the 1890s in terms of social policy. And, quite frankly, when it comes to flood victims, they're stuck in the 19th century.

If we're going to protect flood victims, we need this kind of budget. That's why they will see every member of this side of the House stand up for flood victims. Will they do the same, Mr. Speaker?

PST Increase Request to Table Infrastructure Spending

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I stressed the importance of having referenda related to raising the PST and the implications for a future referendum on Hydro. It's obvious from their announcement today that my concerns are shared by the opposition.

Last week, I asked the Premier to table the list of new infrastructure on which he plans to spend the money brought in by the NDP's 1 per cent increase in the PST. Premier replied his government will spend \$1.8 billion on capital this year versus \$1.4 billion last year. The budget category the Premier's talking about is spending on—is listed as tangible capital assets, which by definition can include spending on computers and vehicles.

I ask the Premier: Will he be spending money coming from the 1 per cent PST hike on computers and vehicles?

*(14:10)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the money that will be raised through additional revenue will be spent on roads. It will be spent on hospitals. It'll be spent on personal care homes. It'll—in particular, it'll be devoted towards additional flood protection in the province of Manitoba. It will be spent on those items that Manitobans have told us are a priority.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I take that to mean the Premier won't spend that money on computers and vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, it appears that the NDP have carefully and strategically hidden information which the public needs to have clarity on: where exactly all of the new infrastructure will go. The opposition, the public and some members of the media raise continued concerns about the NB-NDP's transparency in budget matters in this respect.

I ask the Premier: Will he simply table a list of the infrastructure that the NDP have budgeted for this year through their 1 per cent increase in the PST?

Mr. Selinger: Our—we—the legislation we've already tabled, the Manitoba Building and Renewal Plan act, will identify a 10-year program of rebuilding the province and renewing the infrastructure in Manitoba. That 10-year program—at the end of which the PST will then be reduced by 1 per cent—during that 10 years, we'll match up the federal money that's coming forward over the next 10 years announced in the federal budget. We will jointly agree on variety of projects that we will do together. Those projects will be announced in due course.

We will, in this budget, make very significant investments in schools, we will make very significant investments in health care, we will make

very significant investments in roads, all of which will be completely reported to the Legislature and the public through announcements. Members opposite will have every opportunity through Estimates to ask questions about that, as they always do. This plan will report to the Legislature every single year on what we've—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the budget should tell us what you're going to spend the money on this year; why doesn't it? The information the public is demanding is actually well hidden in your budget documents, which is why there's so much confusion about what the NDP are doing.

You know, I note, for example, that the category he refers to in the budget, which includes tangible capital assets, includes those purchased by Crown corporations like the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation.

I ask the Premier: Will his list of infrastructure include par-cars purchased and buildings built by the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation, or will his list be based on core government, real infrastructure spending?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member from River Heights and I this morning were at Queenston School where we announced the Community Places Program: \$2.9 million, 241 projects all across Manitoba, many of which will leverage additional dollars raised by the excellent volunteers in the community, including at Queenston School. Many will be matched by other levels of government that want things to happen in their communities.

We will be building gyms; we will be making those gymnasiums available for community use. We will be building community clubs and skating rinks. We will be doing very practical things that improve the quality of life in our communities, give places for young people to be after school, ensure that they are usefully using their time, getting mentorship, getting support. That's just one concrete example; \$2.9 million, 241 projects all across Manitoba. The list is fully announced today, available to all the members.

We will make announcements on roads. All the announcements—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I rise on a point of order.

I listened to the Premier's response. I thought the question was actually clear. There wasn't an answer in the question.

I refer to the House of Commons Procedure and Practice by Marleau and Montpetit on page 432. Where ministers or the Premier doesn't know the answer to a question, he has options: he can defer his answer, he can take the question as notice, he can make a short explanation as to why he cannot furnish an answer at that time or he can say nothing.

I would ask you to call him to order and advise him of the other options he has if he doesn't know the answer, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I heard the answer in the—in sitting where I am. Maybe the voices don't travel as well as they could across the aisle, but I heard the answer about the infrastructure projects that we're currently investing in and will be investing in, and perhaps once the members have a chance to look at Hansard, they'll also know the answer.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Official Opposition House Leader, I must indicate to the House with the greatest of respect that there is no point of order. The Speaker of the House cannot insist upon any particular minister answering the question; that's up to the government to choose.

But also with respect to the point more specific that the member raised dealing with the quality of the answer, the Speaker cannot determine whether or not the answer is appropriate to the question that was asked. I leave that to the judgment of the House to decide that.

So I must respectfully indicate that there is no point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: With respect, I challenge the ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: Could you summon the members for a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker?

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

Order, please. The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm instructing that they be turned off, and we'll now proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Caldwell, Chief, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 31, Nays 18.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now revert back to question period.

Immunization Awareness Week Update

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, about two weeks ago, I took my children to their

pediatrician to update their immunizations and, not surprisingly, they weren't enthusiastic. It's a painful but necessary step in preventing illness and maintaining health, much like good governance.

This week is Immunization Awareness Week, and we want to encourage all Manitobans to make sure their immunizations are up to date and their family is protected.

Can the Minister of Health please update the House as to how her department is raising awareness of the importance of immunization, as well as building more QuickCare clinics to make it easier for families to get immunized?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question.

I'd like to inform the House that I had the great privilege this morning of attending, with Dr. Michael Routledge, the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, one of our newly opened QuickCare clinics to celebrate and promote immunization during Immunization Awareness Week.

* (15:20)

We know, Mr. Speaker, that immunization is one of the single most important things that we can all do to ensure that we're as healthy as possible. We know also that the World Health Organization estimates that every year immunization prevents more than 2 million deaths worldwide, and it has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other single medical intervention.

I hope that you'll join me, Mr. Speaker, and, indeed, all members of the House, in saying to Manitobans that we want to ensure that their immunizations are up—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): We know, Mr. Speaker, that it's important that information that's brought to this House be factual. In fact, there are several rulings that previous Speakers have administered regarding factual information to the House.

I'm conscious of the fact that on page 433 of the House of Commons procedure, it does caution Speakers that normally they would not be involved in disagreement among members, but I think that this

is egregious enough to rise to a matter of a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

When we heard the minister give her response, she never spoke about the Vita emergency room, which has been closed, Mr. Speaker, for months, and people have been waiting. She didn't speak about those emergency rooms throughout Manitoba where Manitobans have been waiting to get service because they've been closed.

She didn't talk about the hundreds of Manitobans who've been waiting for services in ERs, waiting to have surgical procedures done, waiting in ambulances, Mr. Speaker, to get service. She didn't bring factual information to this House.

I ask you to find her in violation of the rules for not bringing factual information to the House, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I want to speak to the point of order raised by my friend across the way.

I'm sure we will soon get into budget debate, and there will be lots of opportunity for members on both sides of the House to talk about health-care issues that are important to all our constituents.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, it's customary for Speakers, obviously, to take points of order very seriously, as I do and have shown in this House many times. But I want to indicate to the House that under this particular point of order that it's not the duty or responsibilities of the Speaker to determine the answers that are provided or necessarily those—quality of the answers in the information provided and the content of those answers.

So I must respectfully indicate to the House that there is no point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: With respect, I challenge the ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling have—of the Chair has been challenged. Call in the members.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: I'd request a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order. Order, please. The one hour allocated for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm instructing that they be turned off, and we'll now proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Caldwell, Chief, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

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

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 33, Nays 17.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has accordingly been sustained.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We'll now revert back to question period.

Minister of Agriculture Call for Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): It seems like all afternoon I've been waiting to get this question out.

Mr. Speaker, we know how the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) has been a strong supporter of referendums in the past and that he is

now flip-flopping on the—to appease the First Minister rather than his constituents.

Will the Minister of Agriculture take the member's advice from Dauphin and grow a backbone—a referendum in 2013 like the funded—the one he funded in 2011?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): You mean my friend across the way had all afternoon to come up with that? It's the first time members across the way got into recycling in months, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done very clearly is we have made it possible for the people of Manitoba to get their wish of increased support for infrastructure. We've listened to people in Manitoba who said we need to put in place flood protection measures that protect Manitoba families. That's the real reason for this.

Secondarily, Mr. Speaker, it does promote our economy. It builds our economy. It provides employment, employment in Lakeside, so well represented by the member who just asked that question.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, then the minister of Agriculture, in 2011 spent \$80,000 calling for a referendum vote on the Wheat Board. Now he has the audacity to stand in this House and refuse a referendum on the PST.

Will the Minister of Agriculture stand up today and do the same thing for the people of Swan River, make sure that they have a voice in the PST, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, the member for Lakeside stood with me with a farmer in his constituency and watched how his cattle was surrounded by water and listened to that farm family figure out how they're going to feed their cows, and now you have the audacity to come in here and get mad at us for putting money into flood control structures?

Come on, that's far beyond belief, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, we'll stand with the flood victims each and every day.

This very minister went out, made promises, broke those promises time and time again. That's why we need transparency. We need to make sure this government is held to the account. Without a referendum, this government is misleading Manitobans each and every day.

What's he afraid of? Yes or no? Is he going to call a referendum? Let's get it on the table. Let's do the right thing.

* (16:30)

Mr. Struthers: We said we would not let Manitobans stand alone in that flood, Mr. Speaker, and we followed through. We said we would follow through, and that—and the Manitoba taxpayer put out \$1.25 billion in support through compensation programs, through flood mitigation infrastructure, and not one member across the way was in support of that.

You want transparency across the way, vote for this budget, vote for the bill that I put forward. It's transparent, it's accountable and it's a fair way to build infrastructure in this province.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Several times during this elongated question period, Mr. Speaker, we've tried to put questions through ministers, to get them to answer questions: to the Minister of Culture (Ms. Marcelino), to other ministers and now to the Minister responsible for Agriculture.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that Beauchesne's 416 generally puts forward the proposition that government can determine which ministers respond. But I would refer to House of Commons, Marleau and Montpetit, and page 422 on reflections of the House, and I think it's a poor reflection of the House where ministers don't stand in their place, because ultimately they're not just accountable to us; they're really accountable to the people of Manitoba. They are paid as ministers, they drive ministerial cars, they have responsibility as ministers; the least that they could come—is answer questions here and not disrespect this House by not answering questions.

I ask that you call those members to order for breaching the rules, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

I think my honourable colleague knows that it's a practice in this House under successive governments that the questions are put to the government; the government chooses the minister to answer. We are very lucky on this side of the House to have many, many capable ministers who can answer the questions that are put to them.

It's clearly not a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Official Opposition House Leader, I will refer to the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, 2009, page 509: Questions, although customarily addressed to specific ministers, are directed to the ministry as a whole. It is the prerogative of the government to designate which minister responds to which question, and the Speaker has no authority to compel a particular minister to respond.

So I must respectfully indicate to the Official Opposition House Leader and the members of the House that there is no point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: With respect, Mr. Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Call in—oh, the—I should make sure I get the procedures right here. I'm jumping ahead here, my apologies.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: Those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the—sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: To fulfill your wishes, please call in the members, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order, please.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Caldwell, Chief, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

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

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 32, Nays 17.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has accordingly been sustained.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 23, 2013

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