

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
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
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

Wednesday, July 24, 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, 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

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no bills, we'll move on to—

PETITIONS

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or be eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by L. Fremista, C. Barrion, Z. Barrion and many other Manitobans.

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

St. Ambroise Beach Provincial Park

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

And the reasons for this petition:

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 the 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 conditions so the park can be reopened for the 2013 season or earlier if possible.

This petition's signed by V. Wojtowicz, B. Lund and B. St. Goddard and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Reopen Beausejour's Employment Manitoba Office

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The RM of Brokenhead and the town of Beausejour are growing centres with a combined population of over 8,000.

(2) Employment Manitoba offices provide crucial career counselling, job search and training opportunities for local residents looking in advanced-looking to advance their education.

(3) The recent closure of Employment Manitoba's Beausejour office will have negative consequences for the area's population who want to upgrade their skills and employment opportunities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reopen Beausejour's Employment Manitoba office.

This petition is signed by S. Fletcher, P.C. Flynn, J. Robbie and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the important of early intervention for children with autism.

The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by G. Sawatzky, R. Munro, V. Fazekas and many more fine Manitobans.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

* (13:40)

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped our children achieve—or helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in school by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to access—allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider funding available to eliminate the current wait-list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition's signed by S. Ricketts, S. More, E. St. Bernard and so many more Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this is signed by A. Marks, D. Baluk, C. Setla and many others.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This petition is signed by G. Asprey, E. Wackel, M. Orlow and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legal required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of D. Oakley, D. Waterer, R. Maskow and many other fine, hard-working Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by B. Friesen, V. Morrissette, J. Kshywiecki and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to access—pardon me—to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

So we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-aged services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by L. Simpson, C. Hamm, Z. Samu. Thank you.

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

And this is the background for this petition:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis

and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

* (13:50)

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being 'denied' necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denial of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if the need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by K. Descrochers, T. Palmer, H. Giesbrecht and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever wait-list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to access to the same—which will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

And (5) waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by G. Stone, R. Kehler, K. Giese and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

Signed by R. Roeland, R. Patacril, C. Holhause and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are

expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of a treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This is signed by K. Mathare, W. Mathare, H. Fox and many, many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to access the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access or to be eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their nil-need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (14:00)

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by C. Buhr, D. Buhr, T. Knutt and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

And (5) waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by M. Rodeck, K. Maslechko and A. Kapur and many, many others.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes that—the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denial of treatments are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their needs still exist.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And this petition has been signed by L. Ionita, C. Gosselin and Y. Gray and many, many more fine Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm pleased to table the 2012 annual report concerning complaints about judicial conduct of judges, masters and judicial justices of the peace.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? 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 Grant Jackson and Mackenzie Rowat, who are the guests of the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen).

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today, from the 2013 Central Highlands, Princess Lexi Sullivan and Queen Marita Hales. And also, from the 2012 Manitoba Sunflower Festival, Miss People's Choice Ravae McDonald, Second Princess Mandy Peters, First Princess Britni Reimer and Queen Sarah Hildebrand. And also in the public gallery, we have with us the family and friends of these folks, including Rory, Ray and Yvette Sullivan, Roxanne Reimer, Kelly McDonald, Lorena Peters and Darcy and Mike Hildebrand, all of whom are the guests of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III East/West-Side Route Costs

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): We've been pretty clear that we have a lot of concerns about the bipole west line, Mr. Speaker, and we're also concerned that the NDP isn't listening, not just to us but to others.

They're not listening to hydro experts and, certainly, hydro experts past and present are unanimous in saying this is a mistake to go to the west side. But they are also not interested in listening to the Clean Environment Commission; in fact, they prohibited them from even studying the alternative east-side route. And now they prohibited the Public Utilities Board from even looking at, in their NFAT review, their needs-for-and-alternatives-to analysis, looking at the east side as well.

Now, we know there are problems with this route. We know it's circuitous. We know it's 500 kilometres out of the way. We know it's in tornado and ice storm alley. We know it's less reliable. We know it's 25 per cent less effective at transferring hydro.

But we're very concerned that the government's not listening to any of this. In fact, the only people who support this are over there on that side of the House. So we know the east-side route is far

superior; everyone knows it except these members opposite.

I just want the minister or the Premier (Mr. Selinger) to answer this simple question: How much less costly would the east-side route be than the west-side route?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, the—Mr. Speaker, the real concern Manitobans have is the fact that the members opposite, led by Leader of the Opposition, want to stop hydro development. They've announced it. That would put the economy at risk. They'll put our future at risk.

And I realize that the Leader of the Opposition has been gone for a while, but if he'd perhaps taken some notice of what had happened in the last two elections, we fought on a platform that included locating the bipole where it made sense to protect the east side. We also ran on a platform of developing our hydro potential. Both times we were elected on that basis.

I don't know where the member has been or where the Leader of the Opposition has been, but we're not going to allow him to shut down hydro in this province.

Mr. Pallister: Takes a lot of nerve for that member to stand up and talk about what they ran on. They ran on not raising taxes in this province. Nobody believes these guys. We're concerned they can't manage a lemonade stand, let alone Manitoba Hydro.

And their cost estimates are low. Every year they spent more than they said they'd spend. They have a well-earned reputation for overspending. Every year and with every hydro project they underestimate the cost too. Wuskwatim was estimated at—to cost \$800 million and it ended up more than double that, at one point, \$7 billion. And the other dams are also, in terms of their cost estimates, far higher than were the original projections.

Now, the bipole west estimate—and we know bipole waste will cost a billion dollars more at least—has gone from \$2.2 million just a few years ago as an estimated cost to now \$3.3 million. Now, I understand these people have no trouble spending other people's money, but there's a limit.

What is the latest estimate for the cost of bipole west and the total bipole project, or does the member even care?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there's only one person in this House who doesn't care about any of the business case for developing hydro, and that's the Leader of the Opposition who wants to stop it dead in its tracks.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're used to this. When the Lyon government came into power, the first thing they did was shut down Limestone. When the members opposite were in power in the '90s and he was a key part of that government, they shut down Conawapa.

I'm proud of the fact that we built Wuskwatim in partnership with First Nations people. We're going to build Keeyask and we're going to build Conawapa as well because that's what Manitobans want.

*(14:10)

Mr. Pallister: That member wouldn't know a business case if he tripped over one, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the member, this party's actually built things, including founding Manitoba Hydro in the first place. And we're interested in the intelligent advancement of Manitoba Hydro for the people in this province, the real owners, not the phony owners, not those 37 members, all Manitobans. Manitoba Hydro does not belong to the NDP.

Now, I asked the Premier (Mr. Selinger) in Estimates, why wouldn't you build it on the east side? And he said, well, no one wants it there. Now, setting aside the obvious lack of logic in that answer, what about the far greater number of people who live along the west-side route? What about the economic dead zone that this government is proposing to create along 300 extra miles?

Why do these people care so little for the opinions of hydro experts, ratepayers and the Manitobans who live along the west-side bipole route?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, we take no lectures from the members opposite, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, because when it comes to hydro development, not only do we have the potential, not only do we have the partnership, the Keeyask partnership with First Nations, we also have the customers in the US that want to buy that hydro. That's called a business case, and that's why we're going to develop that hydro.

Hydro Development Projects Confidential Document Recovery

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, in a document tabled yesterday from October 18, 2012, it

states Manitoba Hydro has confirmed that a highly sensitive internal document has been distributed to unauthorized sources outside of the corporation.

My question is to the minister responsible, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak): Can he tell this House, can he assure Manitobans, that the top secret documents have all been returned to Manitoba Hydro?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a continuation of a series of questions from the member for St. Paul, and I want to put on the record it's unfortunate that throughout the last several weeks he's asked numerous questions attacking the Tataskweyak Cree Nation, which I'm proud to represent in this Legislature.

But despite the fact, Mr. Speaker—despite the fact it faced devastating flooding, through a process of reconciliation has now become a partner in the development of Keeyask. And I know members opposite are opposed to hydro development in this province, but it's pretty sad when the members opposite, including this member, will do virtually anything, including attacking the Tataskweyak Cree Nation, to make that happen.

But I have news for the member opposite. We're going to develop that hydro capacity in partnership with the Tataskweyak and the other First Nations because that is the Manitoba way.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, it's the TCN that's coming to us, the women that are concerned about what's going on that are coming to the opposition and asking what's going on.

In fact, Manitoba Hydro, in an unprecedented move, put out a letter and asked for top secret documents to be returned. Yesterday, after six questions, the member for Kildonan never really answered those questions, and today we get absolutely nothing from him.

I'm going to ask him again: Will he tell us, can he assure Manitobans and this House, that every one of those top secret documents have been returned to Manitoba Hydro? Yes or no?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has a lot of gall talking about people coming to him. I wonder if he'll come to Tataskweyak Cree Nation and meet with the people in the community. And you know what? I realize that's asking a bit much. There's still more sightings of the sasquatch in northern Manitoba than there are Tory MLAs.

But I'll tell you one thing. When it comes to TCN, which right now has been evacuated by—because of a forest fire, I'd expect a little bit of decency of the members opposite and understand what they're going through in that community.

And I'm proud that TCN is a partner in terms of hydro development. I wonder why, day after day, they're critical of TCN.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that TCN families find it disgraceful that this minister considers this to be a joke. These are very serious questions we've been asking.

In a letter from 2011 from the TCN to their lawyer, they said: Those who are authorized to receive such information include our chief, the Hydro relations counsellors and certain designated TCN staff, elders and community members. Some of our advisers are also designated to receive such information.

I would like to ask the minister responsible, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), if he will answer this question: Can he assure all Manitobans and this Legislature—there are top secret documents that have to be returned. Did he get them all back?

Mr. Ashton: Again, and members opposite may want to yell from their seats, but I can tell you one thing. Mr. Speaker, the people of Tataskweyak Cree Nation, that I'm proud to represent, the chief and council of Tataskweyak Cree Nation, these are—this is a community that has suffered due to flooding, but they have come to an agreement with Manitoba Hydro. They're a partner along with York Factory First Nation, War Lake and Fox Lake, four communities that are there in terms of the Keeyask partnership.

And I know members opposite, led by the Leader of the Opposition, can't stand to see future hydro development in this province. But we've worked hard. We built Wuskwatim and partnered with First Nations, and we're going to build that hydro potential that is our tremendous advantage in this province by working with First Nations instead of criticizing like members opposite.

Hydro Development Projects Confidential Document Release

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): The member has more screams than Monsters, Incorporated, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked on behalf of Manitobans, how is it that top secret documents that could have killed \$20 billion worth of projects were released to sources that they shouldn't have been? The minister responsible seemed to have no idea. In fact, the minister had to go for a briefing. He wasn't even aware, apparently, that these documents were released.

We want to know how it is that the Minister responsible for Hydro didn't know that top secret documents that could have killed \$20 billion worth of projects were being released to the public, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, the member for Steinbach is such a quiet-spoken guy, I find it a bit much, but I can tell you that one of the aspects of this that members opposite continue to fail to recognize is that Tataskweyak Cree Nation is a partner who's part of the Keeyask partnership. It's one of four First Nations. It's a partner.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of documents that are provided, when you have partners, all information is provided. Obviously, there has to be protection of sensitive commercial information. Steps have been made to ensure that happened. The member knows that Manitoba Hydro has done that.

But, again, the difference between us and them is we develop hydro and we do it in partnership with First Nations. They're opposed to hydro and they're opposed to those same First Nations.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, we're opposed to the mismanagement of Hydro, and we'll always be opposed to the mismanagement of Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro said that the top secret information that was released could have killed \$20 billion worth of projects. Now, it's surprising and concerning that there's information out there that could kill \$20 billion worth of projects, that it hangs by such a thin thread, Mr. Speaker, that that could happen.

Now, Hydro said that the documents contained predicted export prices. Are the predicted export prices contained in that document so low or so unrealistic that they could kill \$20 billion of projects, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the only document that puts Hydro at risk is the Tory platform, and the only thing that could kill Manitoba Hydro would be

members opposite, starting with hydro development and ending up with Hydro itself. So we'll take no lectures from members opposite who have no credibility on Manitoba Hydro.

Manitobans don't trust them on Manitoba Hydro, and they know if you want to keep this province moving, you want to keep hydro development moving, the way to do it is the way we're doing it, in partnership with First Nations with an NDP government committed to our hydro potential.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, in the last few months, this is a government that has lost a community centre that Hydro was going to help support. They've lost a water treatment plant that Hydro was going to help support, and then they lost top secret documents that could have killed \$20 billion worth of projects which they say are necessary and important. This is a government that doesn't know how to manage anything, let alone Manitoba Hydro.

And I want to ask the government: How is it that they didn't even know that these top secret documents were being released to the public, and what is it within these documents that's so critical that it could have killed \$20 billion worth of projects, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, let me explain to the members opposite.

Of course, they know nothing about partnerships with First Nations. They didn't have any. They also know nothing about hydro development because there hasn't been a single development initiative by members opposite going back to the 1960s.

* (14:20)

So I want to explain to members opposite, including this member, that, indeed, commercial information was part of that what was shared. It has not put anything at risk, Mr. Speaker.

And the only thing that puts Manitoba Hydro at risk is the members opposite who can't stop opposing hydro development in this province, want to privatize it. That's what puts it at risk.

Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry Implementation of Recommendations

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister's response to a question on child welfare, child safety, was, and I quote: Reading the reports of that murder, the reports of the injury, the reports of the absolute contempt in

which that child was held by the people who would've loved her and who killed her, that will never leave me.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, these words were being shared by—you would think that these words were being shared by an observing bystander or someone who has no power to implement fundamental change in the child-welfare system. But, no, it was the minister who was responsible for over 10,000 Manitoba children in care.

Mr. Speaker, besides reading all of these reports and recommendations, did she ask her department if their recommendations have been implemented?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): When I became minister, I thought it was very important for me to read those reports. I thought it was important for me to have more than a passing understanding but to know everything that I could lay my hands on in terms of what happened to that child. As painful as it was to read in detail of the injuries, of the murder of that child, to read those in detail, I thought it was important for me to have all of that information.

Certainly, we have put in place hundreds of recommendations to improve the child-welfare system, working with our partners. That includes funding for over 200 new front-line workers. It includes new and modern and internationally respected tools in the hands of those workers so that they can do a better job. It includes a renewed commitment to training and new methods—

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

Mrs. Rowat: This NDP government, under the Minister of Family Services, was directly responsible for Phoenix's care, and we all learned of the conflicted horrors Phoenix endured leading up to and including her death.

It is clear the past child and family services ministers had not provided the necessary protection and care for our most vulnerable children. They remained silent, observing the chaos under their mandate. Press releases maybe, but they did not act.

Mr. Speaker, at the time she became minister, did she direct her department to immediately implement the outstanding recommendations? Did she act?

Ms. Howard: Mr. Speaker, there were over 300 recommendations made to improve the system after the murder of Phoenix Sinclair; 80 per cent of those recommendations are complete. Many more are in progress. We work every day to make sure that outstanding recommendations are met.

When you go and talk to people who work in those agencies, they will tell you of the utter change that has happened in the way that they do their work. They will tell you of the training that they've received that changes the way that they do child-welfare work. They will tell you that not only did they get that training, but they got mentoring along the way to make sure they can put that training into effect. They will tell you that now they are able to work with families before they come into care, when they're in crisis, to prevent them coming into care.

There's been a great deal of change in the system, and there will be more change as a result of this inquiry.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, ministerial responsibility means taking immediate action to protect vulnerable children under her watch. We continually see systemic challenges and issues within this department. Surely, she is not waiting for the inquiry to finish to take action. I would expect this minister to do more than be just a disinterested bystander on this tragic situation.

Mr. Speaker, how many recommendations have not been implemented in the eight years—yes, it has been eight years—since Phoenix Sinclair's murder? What has she done to implement all the recommendations, because they are all important in protecting our children in Manitoba?

Ms. Howard: As I have said before, one of the first things that we knew we needed to do was to make sure that there were more resources available to child welfare. That's why funding has more than doubled in that system. That's why there are more than 280 new front-line positions helping to protect kids, take care of kids. That's why the act was amended to make sure that child safety was the No. 1 priority when placing children. That's why there are new risk assessment tools in place, internationally known tools that have changed the way that social workers work in the child-welfare system. That's why, for the first time, we put in place direct funding to help provide prevention at the grassroots level so that we

can keep more families together, so that we can keep—so we can help families who are in crisis.

There has been a tremendous amount of change under the leadership of ministers before me and that change will continue—

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

Manitoba Justice System Sexual Assault Case Concern

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): The story of Phoenix Sinclair is one of the many sad and tragic stories that has unfolded during the tenure of this government.

And recently in a Winnipeg court, another sad and tragic story unfolded. Two Winnipeg men were acquitted of serious sexual assault charges. The judge ruled that the videotaped statement given to police by an alleged victim of a brutal rape wasn't reliable enough to be used as evidence against them. The alleged victim has since died of unrelated causes.

Mr. Speaker, did delays in Manitoba's justice system cause justice to be denied in this case? Was justice delayed justice denied?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, that might be why we're not asking questions of this minister, because there's very limited answers.

Mr. Speaker, the videotaped evidence was recorded as prescribed by the court, but was still ruled inadmissible.

Mr. Speaker, what message does this Minister of Justice think that this sends to victims of violent crime, especially women in Manitoba?

Mr. Swan: I think this is a very good day, with the release of a report by the Winnipeg Police Service, to thank the women and men of the Winnipeg Police Service for the work that they do day in and day out, walking into situations they never know what they may find. I know the police do their very best and that's something that we certainly respect on this side of the House.

And that's why each and every year we support additional resources for the Winnipeg Police Service, as well as for the RCMP, for the Brandon Police Service, to make sure the police can be there as

quickly as possible to investigate and, more importantly, Mr. Speaker, to get out in front and prevent terrible crimes from occurring. And that's actually the most important thing that our system can do.

And I know the members opposite don't want to hear about it and don't want to see that, indeed, the Winnipeg Police Service's report issued this morning—that the member won't talk about—I'll get to it—

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

Mr. Helwer: Well, I didn't hear any address to the question there at all, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, court delays and interpretations and rules of evidence may have denied this victim justice.

What does the Minister of Justice think that this message sends to someone who may have committed a crime? How can the minister ensure the safety of victims and witnesses?

Mr. Swan: Well, again, if the member wishes to talk about safety, I can certainly talk about the statistics the Winnipeg Police Service issued just this morning. And I am very pleased the Winnipeg Police Service is reporting that Winnipeg's violent crime rate decreased by a further 6 per cent in 2012, indeed, down 20 per cent over a rolling five-year average. And, in fact, just a couple of weeks ago, through CrimeStat, we know that violent crimes in Winnipeg are down by another 20 per cent.

If the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) is suggesting that it's the place of an attorney general to interfere in the way a case is prosecuted or the way that a judge deals with a case, he's very mistaken.

The member for Brandon West, though, can explain to Manitobans why he votes against more police, why he votes against more Crown attorneys, why he votes against more resources for the courts. There is no explanation the member for Brandon West will be able to give the people of Manitoba.

We support the justice—

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

ER Services Rural Physician Shortage

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) has

said that she's committed to ensuring that Manitobans receive quality health care regardless of where they live, and yet we've noted that since February there has been 17 ERs closed or suffering loss of services. And last week we disclosed that Boissevain and Killarney were the latest to share—who would be sharing acute-care services because of acute doctor shortages.

A recent RHA memo cites serious concerns about the sustainability of health-care services in communities along Highway 3.

Does the minister share those serious concerns, and is this her idea of what quality health care should look like for Manitobans?

* (14:30)

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Acting Minister of Health): I can assure the member opposite that quality health care includes hiring more nurses, not firing them. We're building state-of-the-art facilities, ensuring that we are recruiting doctors and training more doctors by increasing medical spaces.

That's what we're about. We're about ensuring that we are working with all of our partners in the health care, looking at recruitment strategies, looking at what we can do to provide high quality health services to all Manitobans.

911 Response Plan

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, does that minister honestly believe for a second that that kind of glib response gives any kind of satisfaction to Manitobans?

Yesterday the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) raised some serious questions about the loss of services at Pine Falls ER, one of the busiest ERs in that region, and the minister went on about a new practice of having ER staff call 911 if they encounter an emergency situation. Mr. Speaker, this is absurd.

Will the minister provide more information about this latest plan she has? And, really, what are communities supposed to interpret about their acute-care services in community from her statements?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: What I can share with the member opposite is that we are making investments in health care across this province. We are not committing to indiscriminate cuts across the board of 1 per cent,

which would mean \$52-million reduction in health care, which would equal 700 nurses. That is not what we're about.

We're about working with our health professionals, working with the regional health authorities, and I do not believe that fear mongering for Manitobans is what they want. They want service when it's needed.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, this minister talks about investments and investing. I can tell her the kind of investment these communities are looking for are more doctors.

Mr. Speaker, surely this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It's not even Thursday yet. Please keep the level down a little bit. We have guests that are watching here this afternoon. We want to ensure they have a good experience watching us perform our jobs, so I'm asking for some co-operation keeping the level down a bit so I can also hear the member for Morden-Winkler.

Mr. Friesen: Because, clearly, the data shows that 2,200 doctors have left this province since the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, surely the government gets this much, that if they dispatch EMS services to a hospital, that is one less emergency vehicle that is available to respond in the community because of those shortages. If the minister's plan is to have EMS responding to 911 calls and driving to hospital, it means it's not there for the community.

Can the minister please provide some more information about this new plan of hers to have 911 responding at hospital? And at what point do we call this a crisis?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'd like to put on the record our commitment to hiring more rural doctors. That includes providing training opportunities for them. That includes increasing the residency opportunities for them.

And I can tell this House today that we have hired 66 more doctors in rural areas. And, for the facts, I'd like to put them on the record, please: 19 in western Manitoba, including Brandon, Dauphin, Deloraine, Grandview, Hamiota, Melita, Rivers, Shilo, Swan River, Treherne, Virden and Winnipegosis; 7 in southern Manitoba, including Portage, Steinbach, St. Pierre and Gladstone.

If they would listen, they would find out that there are many doctors in their areas that are there to provide services as well as the very well-trained nurses and nurse practitioners we have hired to ensure that our ERs are staying open to provide those services.

Elder Care Case Concern Percy Loster

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, dignified care for elderly Manitobans must be a top priority.

Today I tell the story of a system breakdown and a communications breakdown in ensuring the dignified treatment of a 78-year-old man who was for 21 years a veteran in the Canadian navy. This Manitoba citizen, as a result of this health system failure in the Interlake-Eastern region, has seen a huge injustice and rapid deterioration of his mental and physical health.

With his son and daughter-in-law in the gallery today, I ask the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald): Will she investigate the situation of Mr. Percy Loster and ensure this system failure, which is occurring under her watch, is addressed immediately?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities): If the honourable member wants to share those details with me after question period, I will take that information and we will ensure that the case that he is referencing is looked into.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I will do that, but the—it is important to know that the unacceptable care of Mr. Percy Loster has been associated with very poor communication at numerous steps along the way.

Mr. Loster's son Robert and his daughter-in-law Christine Loster, who are both experienced health-care aides with 12 and 20 years' experience respectively, have been unable to obtain basic details of Mr. Loster's care. At one point at a time when he was walking and healthy at home, Mr. Loster was taken away by the police and put in hospital where his health has gone down rapidly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister to ensure that the poor communication with the family is addressed quickly, as it's contributing to the high level of stress and concern of family members.

Ms. Howard: I also want to welcome the individuals that are here with us, thank them for their work in the health-care system.

As I said previously, if the member wants to give me those details—I'm not going to discuss people's confidential health information on the floor of the Legislature. If you want to—if the member wants to give me those details, Mr. Speaker, I will, of course, ensure that they are looked into.

If there have been issues with communication, then we will look into that and we will make sure that those are remedied.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it's important to know that the family called to help—for help to the Minister of Health's (Ms. Oswald) office four times and never received the help or the follow-up that they were promised.

Two days ago, the family learned that the guardianship of Mr. Percy Loster has been taken over by the Public Trustee without any discussion with the family, in spite of the fact that Mr. Loster's son has the power of attorney for his father. Surely, Mr. Speaker, when there are capable family members available and they're in agreement, the Public Trustee should at the very least undertake a proper consultation and discussion with family members before proceeding in this fashion.

I ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan): Will he look into this situation immediately and ensure the concerns of the family are heard and acted upon?

Ms. Howard: It sounds like, from what the member is saying, there are several issues here that need to be addressed. I'll be pleased to get that information. I'd be pleased to offer the people who are here in the gallery a meeting with staff that can help address some of the questions and concerns that they have this afternoon if that would help.

Starting Early, Starting Strong Program Launch

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): As a former teacher, I know how important a quality education is to our children's future. Our side increased funding for education for the last 14 years, unlike when the Leader of the Opposition was in power; they slashed funding deeply.

The best research we have shows that early kids start their journey—earlier they start their journey, the better their prospects are down the road.

Can the highly energetic Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities inform the House of the government's latest efforts in the area of early childhood education and development?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): I want to thank the member for the question.

I was very proud to launch our public dialogue today, *Starting Early, Starting Strong*, at the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg. So all members of the House know, over 300 people attended, Mr. Speaker: parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, teachers, academics, community organizations.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Ian Gill and Ric Young flew in from Vancouver and Toronto representing the McConnell foundation because they see the leadership that we are providing on early childhood development in Manitoba.

We continue to invest in those programs that maximize the potential of our youngest children. And I want to thank all 300 people who came to share their thoughts and ideas to continue to improve our programs to support our most vulnerable families, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

*(14:40)

Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Government Support

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Instead of celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the applied behavioural analysis program for children with autism, we are experiencing the highest wait-list ever for Manitobans with autism. This therapy provides for significant gains in social, adaptive and communication skills.

Despite the minister's rhetoric, we know that no dollars have been committed to ABA programming since 2011.

Will the minister stop her empty rhetoric and take action to redirect the vote tax that her party is collecting to support children with autism?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I want to thank the member for the acknowledgement of the 10-year anniversary of this program. It's a program that we were very pleased to be able to bring in and to have funded. It is a program that is among one of the most generous in the country in terms of support to families and children with autism. It is part of a package of \$30 million worth of supports that are provided to families who have children with autism. Those are investments not only in the ABA program but in the education system, in the child-care system, in disability services throughout the government.

We continue to work with clinicians in the field to find ways that we can improve this program so that more families can get the support that they need.

Mr. Smook: On July 4th, the minister of child and family services stated that resources for children with autism need to get to the kids where they are going to make the most difference. Mr. Speaker, all children with autism deserve supports and therapy on a universal basis. On this side of the House, we don't believe in picking one child over another in any circumstance.

I'd like to know exactly what the minister means by this statement. Is she proposing to pick some children over others for treatment?

Ms. Howard: Certainly we know that children and families, they make different choices in terms of the kind of treatment that they want to access for their children who are experiencing autism.

That's why, not only have we invested, of course, in the ABA program, we've also invested in the autism outreach services. In this last year, we invested in adding two more outreach specialists. Those people are civil servants, so I know that they wouldn't have been hired had your hiring chill been in effect. But we thought that it was important to have those people who are able to provide support to families outside of the city of Winnipeg.

We continue to make those investments, and we continue to protect those investments even when we're being told to cut them by members opposite.

Mr. Smook: We know that no new supports have been committed to support families with—of children with autism. This minister touts additional supports. The only new investments are a result of the government allowing the St. Amant Centre to use reserve funds to support additional kids in school programming on a short-term basis.

It's another example of government taking credit where it isn't due. It's clear that the minister's not capable of undertaking her responsibility to support families.

Will the minister admit that this government may pretend to be listening but not hearing to what Manitobans have to say?

Ms. Howard: We have, of course, met with many families with children who have autism and those families who receive both ABA services but also families who receive other services. They're incredible advocates for their children, and they have

done an incredible job in making sure that there are supports in place for their children.

And when I meet with those families and they are concerned about what the impact is of uncertain economic times on those services, I'm very clear with them that we will not take the advice of the Leader of the Opposition to cut deeply into those services. I know that the plan that he put forward would mean that there's \$300,000 less available, would mean that there are four less children receiving ABA services. That's not the road we're going to go down.

Municipal Amalgamation Flood Recovery Process

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Yesterday my colleague from Midland, the critic for Local Government, capably asked the member from Dawson Trail why that minister thinks distracting municipal officials with forced amalgamation legislation, Bill 33, should supersede the regular responsibilities of councils, particularly those in the midst of states of emergency from overland flooding.

Why is the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) so inconsiderate and uncaring? Why does he believe bullying rural municipalities is more important than helping them with the flood recovery process?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to commend the excellent work that has been done again this year by our municipalities in response to very difficult situations. I think we can all agree on that.

And I particularly want to indicate that we're all more than aware of the particular challenges in southwest Manitoba this year. There have been communities that have been hit again and again with extreme weather. It reminds us of two things: one is the importance of recognizing that climate change and the instability of weather is increasingly real, and the second is making sure that we have the resources put in place to deal with that.

I'm very pleased at this moment that our Premier (Mr. Selinger) and other premiers across Canada are meeting in Ontario. One of the top items on that agenda put forward by this government and other governments is to be—to deal with those emergency situations to provide the resources those municipalities and those communities need.

Disaster Financial Assistance

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, here's an example of what I'm talking about. In spite of the minister's denial of forced amalgamation, councils have hammered him for this decision to distract Manitobans with dictatorial legislation to force amalgamation, and he's been told time and time again that that's not what is important to Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, the RM of Albert sent a letter to the Premier on July 16th saying, and I quote: Because of the lack of acknowledgement from the Province, the council is not convinced that there will be disaster financial assistance for the RM of Albert. This is after Albert declared a state of emergency on June 23rd and renewed it on July 6th.

So, Mr. Speaker, why has the NDP not contacted the RM of Albert, and will they commit to the disaster financial assistance as required by this municipality?

Mr. Ashton: At least the member opposite is referencing, because over the last number of years we've put in place record assistance for municipalities and for individuals impacted by extreme weather.

What we do, Mr. Speaker, the first thing we do is our staff—and I want to commend them—has worked with the municipal staff to deal with the immediate situation. The second is to assess the damage, and I want to put on the record again that we provided unprecedented assistance in 2011, 2012 and we will in 2013 for the affected communities.

I want to assure the member opposite—*[interjection]* You know, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if—you know, I don't know when talking about emergencies become the kind of issue where members opposite have to heckle, but the bottom line is we're all concerned about it.

Our staff has been out there and we're going to provide the assistance those communities need.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Springfield Country Fair

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): For the past 131 years in July the small community of Dugald celebrates its annual country fair with games, entertainment, exhibits and prizes. This year, the Springfield county fair—Country Fair commemorated its remarkable 131st anniversary, a community

tradition dating back as far as 1882. For 131 years the Springfield Agricultural Society's Country Fair has brought the community together to learn about their rich agricultural heritage. A significant social occasion, the Springfield Country Fair is also an opportunity where people can meet over entertainment and games.

This year's Springfield Country Fair took place on Saturday, July 20th, where families from across the RM of Springfield shared in the fun-filled events provided by the country fair's dedicated team of hard-working volunteers. Each year the 'volun'—each year the volunteers ensure that there is something for everyone to enjoy and opportunities for both the young and the old to be entertained.

This year's events included the scarecrow making competition, the cribbage and bingo tournaments, the bicycle decorating contest and the newest addition to this year's event calendar, the pet dress-up contest.

Traditionally, community members submit exhibitions to the fair to showcase their creative efforts. Next to the engineering and agricultural exhibits, some highlights of this year's exhibits included photography of the RM of Springfield and an exhibit that featured the artwork and hobbies of children and youth in the community.

I had the great pleasure of attending the Springfield Country Fair along with the MLA for St. Paul. Together we competed in a trademark huck-a-boot competition, an event opened to all ages. For someone who has never participated in a boot-throwing contest before, it was a wonderful learning experience.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the community of Dugald and the organizers of the Springfield Country Fair on 131 years of success. I wish them all the best, and may they begin to plan for their 132nd anniversary.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Salute to Malala Yousafzai

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Today, I rise to recognize an incredible young Pakistani teenager, a brave girl full of courage and determination to change the world for the better. Malala Yousafzai today stands as a true symbol of the movement for the right to education and freedom for all young

women who are the victims of oppressive forces in societies throughout the world.

* (14:50)

The tragic story of Malala Yousafzai is that only about nine months ago, Malala and two peers were shot by the Taliban for attending classes as well as campaigning for education rights for—in Pakistan. Malala was shot in the head yet survived. Thousands of men and women in Pakistan and across the world protested this injustice and prayed for her recovery in the UK hospital. She has now become an even greater advocate for the right of—to education. Marking her 16th birthday on July 12th, Malala presented a statement to the United Nations promoting the importance of education and calling on governments to implement universal education in their respective states.

Mr. Speaker, I was raised in a family of educators, and I'm proud to say that my late mother was also an advocate for the—women's education and equality of all people. As a father and grandfather, I'm inspired by this young woman who is showing her power of persuasion and conviction to change the world.

Like many world leaders and reformers, young Malala is on a mission to stop the exploitation and grant every girl the right to get an education and equal rights. Mr. Speaker, she is the pride not only of Pakistan, but for the whole world.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is a country of ideals that equality among all is known. Manitobans echo the values of Malala, that all the people should have access to education. In Malala's words: "One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world." Let's imagine not only what we can do alone, but what we can do together.

May I request all my colleagues here in this Chamber to join me and applaud this brave young woman crusading to free the oppressed women of the world. I salute you, Malala Yousafzai.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Oak River 4-H

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): The Oak River 4-H Club celebrated their 65th anniversary this year at their achievement on May 28th. Since 1948, Oak River 4-H Club has been providing children and youth with opportunities to learn valuable life skills and have fun at the same time.

Over the years, the club has had many dedicated club and project leaders. Under their guidance, the youth of Oak River and area have developed practical skills that would stay with them well into adulthood. Additionally, those leaders have helped members develop confidence, public speaking skills and provide opportunities to contribute to the community by volunteering.

The number and variety of projects offered to members has expanded and changed over time. Traditional projects included sewing, cooking, crafts and gardening, while today members can also choose from projects like small motors, photography, small animals and woodworking.

Members and leaders alike from this club have been selected to attend conferences and go on trips with individuals with other clubs. The club has also had the opportunity to host the annual rally for clubs in the district.

While times and projects have changed, 4-H motto has stayed the same: Learn To Do By Doing. I would like to congratulate the Oak River 4-H Club on 65 years of providing the youth of the community with the opportunity to learn valuable skills and develop leadership capabilities that will serve them well for years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Centennial Celebrations: RM of Hillsburg

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Summer is a great time to celebrate the natural beauty of Manitoba's Parkland area, with its beautiful parks, great fishing and thriving forestry and agriculture industries. The region has also a unique history, from the first inhabitants thousands of years ago to the people who continue to shape our region's social and cultural fabric today.

Today I rise to recognize a piece of this history. This summer marks the hundredth anniversary of the Rural Municipality of Hillsburg. The RM of Hillsburg was incorporated in 1913. Prior to that time it was part of the RM of Boulton. The RM was once home to many hamlets scattered across the countryside. Small towns like Merridale, Shortdale, Shevlin and Bield were home to stores and schools, families and flourishing community life.

Driving across the RM of Hillsburg, we can still see many historical sites that stand as a testament to this rich history. Buildings like the old Bield Cemetery, the Gilbert and Winona schoolhouses and

the Merridale schoolhouse, which was converted to a community centre, help to chronicle the story of the municipality and of the region.

This weekend we will celebrate the RM of Hillsburg's hundredth birthday. Community members and neighbours will gather Saturday in Bield, Manitoba, which is now the RM's largest centre, for a supper and entertainment. An evening dance will follow, with fireworks to finish off the night.

Mr. Speaker, generations of people have worked to make Manitoba what it is today. As we look forward to our province's future, it is important that we also take the time to look back and celebrate our history. I invite all honourable members to join me in recognizing the centennial of the RM of Hillsburg and to join us at the celebrations this weekend.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Children in Care

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the representative of the general authority spoke at the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry to say that the child-welfare system in Manitoba has been improved and there are fewer children coming into care.

It's important to actually look at the number of children in the care of the general authority. After devolution and transfer of many cases to other authorities, the number was 1,546 in 2006. Since then the number of children in the care of the general authority has increased by 13 per cent to 1,744. I submit that if the general authority representative claims improvement based on fewer children in care, then so far we haven't seen it.

Indeed, although I know that there are many people on the front lines who are working very hard to do better, there appears to be continued major problems within the system being run by the NDP. These include, as we found recently, a continuing low high school graduation rate for children who've been in CFS.

Sadly, as we discovered this year, the NDP are not even tracking the high school graduates of children in care to know precisely how things are going. And this is a failure, because the Auditor General's been calling for seven years for better measurements of important outcomes, and high school graduation is surely one of the most important outcomes.

Manitoba Liberals have also exposed the fact that a considerable number of children in care who are in group homes are not even attending school. Yesterday Manitoba Liberals exposed the fact that too many children who've been in CFS end up in the criminal justice system, a fact that's been noted in many previous reports, such as the Kimelman report and the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

Furthermore, sadly, youth in the Manitoba Youth Centre too often become exposed to gang members, and some who've not been previously involved with gangs get involved with gangs. This situation, where the NDP have been exposed as running a farm team for gangs is certainly intolerable.

All in all, though the government and representatives of the general authority have been making claims for big improvements in CFS, the evidence so far doesn't support this from the outcomes. Rather, the evidence presented at the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry suggests that there's a great deal yet to do to get the child and family services system in Manitoba to where it needs to be, and that this will take major and fundamental changes. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances. No grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Swan (Acting Government House Leader): Some House business, Mr. Speaker.

I ask that you do-to-continue an interim appropriation process by calling Interim Supply.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resume debate on Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013, standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who has 11 minutes remaining.

Bill 48—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no. Leave has been denied.

Next speaker to this bill.

Any further debate?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The House is ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of adopting the motion, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to adopting the motion, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order, please. The one-hour allocation allowed for the ringing of the division bells has expired and—the one-hour allocation allowed 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.

* (16:00)

The question before the House is Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013, second reading.

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, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Pettersen, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

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

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 30, Nays 19.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is accordingly carried.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resolve into the Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 48, the interim appropriation act, for concurrence in third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair?

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 48—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Order please. Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order.

We will now be considering Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013.

For the information of the committee, in accordance with our rule 75(5), as the 100 hours allocated for the business of Supply in our rules have expired, these questions are not subject to debate, amendment or adjournment.

We shall now proceed to consider the bill clause by clause.

The title and enacting clause are postponed until all other clauses have been considered.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business currently before us. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013, and reports the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 48—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013; Loi de 2013 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

The honourable member for—is there debate? The honourable member—[interjection] I need to have a clear understanding from the honourable member if it's his intent to debate.

An Honourable Member: Yes, it is.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to this Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013.

Here, Mr. Speaker, it's—as you put on the record a few seconds ago, whether I was willing to debate this or not—it's quite interesting that we on this side of the House are more than willing to put words on the record in regards to Bill 48, and it's interesting that no one on the other side, on the government side of the House, is willing to stand up and put any words on the record besides the Minister of Finance.

In Bill 48, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2013, we're looking at a sum of \$7.7 billion, Mr. Speaker, so that when we start talking about this bill, Bill 48, we're basically talking that—the Minister of Finance basically chatted for roughly eight minutes—seven and a half—eight minutes on this bill, so as some of our other members on this side of the House had put on the record, he was speaking for approximately a billion dollars a minute. I know that some of the other members are choosing to possibly say a few words on the record, but I can't quite hear them, so I'm just going to continue on with my debate.

It's actually unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that we're debating this today. And in regards to the sum of money or just how broke or unbroke the government is, we did have a chance to—we could have got back into session as early as February 4th, 2013. Instead, they chose to call us back middle of April. And they continue to put on the record that the reason why they don't call us back into the House is the fact that the federal government has not passed their budget yet, but, in fact, there's no reason why some of these bills that the government side wanted to debate or even bring forward could not have been brought forward in the beginning of February.

And it just is—it's too bad, but at the same time we are, you know, we are prepared to sit through the summer and, of course, 'til Christmas, because I think we do have a lot of good things to put on the record from this side of the House in regards to some of the workings of this government and also the level of disrespect that this government has shown all Manitobans since they've entered their term in office here as of the fall of 2011.

* (16:10)

In the fall of 2011, I'd like to point out a couple of their broken promises. When they were going around and they were knocking on some of the doors, Mr. Speaker, they—some of the broken promises were that they were going to balance the budget by 2014, and with that they were also going to do that without raising any taxes. Within about six or seven months, they broke some of those promises and they had actually raised quite a few fees and broadened the tax to a point of about \$184 million.

Some of those fees and taxes—I know that the member from Elmwood would love to stand up and put a few words on the record. I know he's trying to talk in the background here, Mr. Speaker, but you know what? I think we'll have quite some time if the member from Elmwood would like to stand up and put a few words on the record. The fees and the various taxes that were expanded with Budget 2012 that, like I said earlier, resulted in about \$184 million in new fees going towards the government, and some of these had included insurance premiums, property and group life, salon services for pedicures and manicures, women's haircuts, tattooing, plumbing, furnace repairs, accountants, lawyers, electricians, heating and cooling services, architectural fees, engineering fees, security, private investigation, travel and baggage insurance.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? The spenDP government didn't stop there. They decided to not only hit hard-working Manitobans with their taxes and their fees, but they also decided to put the fees and taxes onto birth certificates and also death certificates. So they sort of—they've got you coming and going. Manitobans work very, very hard for their money, and the NDP government, whilst breaking promises, they are taking more and more each and every day out of the back pockets of, again, hard-working Manitobans. Well, but with the election of 2011, again with the broken promises from that election and with Budget 2012, they decided to do that sort of behind the backs and they brought that in sort of under cloak and dagger, Mr. Speaker, in Budget 2012.

In Budget 2013, what they decided to do was they decided to do a PST hike, and that hike has raised the PST by one point which is a 14 per cent increase. And that took out about \$227 million on top of the already inflated fees and taxes that they had from the year before, Mr. Speaker. So, when you add up the Budget 2012 fees and tax increases and add them to the Budget 2013 taxes and fees, we're talking about approximately a half a billion dollars. And when you take into that account and you do that simple math—that I know some of the members across the way were past educators—you divide that number by 1.2 million people who live in this wonderful province of Manitoba of ours, you're getting roughly \$400 per person additional costs put on to them, basically taking it out of their back pockets, their kids' piggy banks, their grandkids' piggy banks, away from any type of savings that they possibly want to have. That's \$1,600 per family of four.

Which, when you even look at it even more, we're looking—right now we're looking at roughly \$5 million a week. And since July 1st—we're just past the third week so we're already looking at approximately \$15 million that this government has taken on the backs of Manitobans, law-abiding citizens at that—for that matter, Mr. Speaker—\$15 million.

Now, with that PST hike, one of the additional things that—and one of the largest things that this government failed to do was—(1) was consult with the general public, and also with the taxpayer protection act they were supposed to hold a referendum, and that has not happened. So they went ahead and they asked businesses and various other companies in—within the province to start collecting

that one additional point on the PST without actually passing the bill, so in essence they're asking other Manitobans to basically break the law. And it's interesting to say that there's been many things that have been going on in this session from the government side that seems to be breaking the law, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the Jockey Club for, say—and various other issues that are going on, on the government side.

Now, when we talk about broken promises, Mr. Speaker, we also talk about—and I would be a miss—remiss without—if I didn't mention the promises from the last election in regards to seniors. They had promised in the fall of 2011 to take the education tax off of property tax from seniors and farmers. When we take a look at what that promise had equated to, they had promised roughly \$35 million of savings to seniors. And, again, has that happened? No, it hasn't. It's another broken promise.

And with that, they've also—I don't remember any of them possibly going to the door and telling people, fellow Manitobans, whether it was in any constituency—I mean, there was 57 candidates out there for this spenDP government, going around door to door and offering up false promises. They did not go to the door and tell people that they weren't actually going to balance the books by 2014 and they did not tell anybody that they were going to be raising fees and taxes in the Budget 2012, nor did they say that they were going to raise the PST in 2013, Mr. Speaker. Matter of fact, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) stood on various—whether it was candidate meetings or in the local newspapers, basically stated the fact that the thought of raising the PST was absolute nonsense and that they weren't even considering that.

I don't know how Manitobans today are basically taking anything that the government has to say as far as truth, because in the big picture they've—the government themselves, has lied to Manitobans. Various promises, again, broken. And it also speaks volumes to the fact that when they were going around door-knocking door to door, they also didn't mention the fact that the vote tax—\$5,000 per member on that side of the House. Now, they didn't go door to door saying that oh, by the way, we're not only going to raise the PST on you, we're going to increase taxes and fees on various other services and products, but we're also going to take \$5,000 per member so we don't have to go around, so that the government side does not have to go around and ask for donations. Instead, what they're doing is

absolutely stealing from people. They're taking it right out of their pockets.

Now, I know that some of those members on that side of the House seem to be fairly well off and \$400 a 'mem'—\$400 a person in Manitoba doesn't seem like much to those people on the other side of the House, but on this side of the House I know that what it is, it's going to impact Manitoba families, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:20)

I know that when we're sitting down, and we're—my wife and I—are talking with our boys and we're talking about saving money and putting money aside for whatever they'd like to purchase that they also have to now think about 13 more cents on the dollar. That's 1 more cent than what they had to include last year, or \$13 per hundred, and so we have to go through this lesson for our boys. And the boys can't quite understand why this government feels that they're above the law and they can do certain things when it is stated in law that they have to hold a referendum in order to make some of these decisions.

Now I know the other side of the House when they start talking about, you know, it's only 1 cent on the dollar. Well, the problem is, Mr. Speaker, as we had heard in the Bill 20 debate, there's many, many, many people, great hard-working Manitobans who stood up, came to the Leg. evenings, on the weekends, to basically share their stories and talk about their anger in regards to this government making these decisions, and they're—it's not 1 cent on the dollar; the problem is it's 1 more cent. It's a 14 per cent increase, and again for a family of four \$1,600 out of their pockets. Now in some cases they are going to have to—some families are going to have to decide, you know, which extracurricular activity are they going to have to step aside.

I know that some of the members across the way they say, well, you know what, then maybe they can access KidSport. But, you know, there are certain hoops and red-tape things that you have to get through in order to get KidSport as well. Mr. Speaker, \$1,600 is a big chunk of change.

Now, if I can just go back to the vote tax just for second, it was interesting, I was sort of just doing some—again I know that the members across the way on the government side like to use this tool quite a bit, which is Google search, and that seems to be their product of choice for doing some of their research. And it just so happened that I stumbled

across the NDP website, and not only, Mr. Speaker, are they talking about \$5,000 a member that they're going to pull out of Manitobans' hard-working—hard-working Manitobans' pockets, \$5,000 a member for each and every one of those members across the way.

What else they are doing they are going on their website and they are actually trying to promote the fact that a couple of their members, the member from Kirkfield Park and the member from St. Norbert, they're saying, well, you know what, only \$1 for each vote that the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) and the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) won by will help defeat the Conservatives in the next election. One dollar per vote for each vote. Well, what is that, Mr. Speaker? The member for Kirkfield Park won by 21 votes and the member for St. Norbert had won by 31 votes. Now, you know what, in a democratic society we have to live with that. I know that if we won those seats by those margins we'd be thrilled as well. It's absolutely fantastic. But it's that democratic right of Manitobans that it seems to be missing from this government's vocabulary and actually giving people those choices and those votes on this referendum for that PST.

Now it sounds like I've hit a little bit of a chord on the other side there, Mr. Speaker. Now, when we're talking about on the website and asking for money for people to donate, that means that people actually have a choice whether they want to donate to this party or not, whether they do want to donate to these particular members or not, no matter how many of those broken election promises might not have got those 21 votes or those 31 votes. But, at the end of the day, you can't begrudge them from asking on their website for those donations, but what you can begrudge them for is the fact that they're willing, and openly willing, to take those—that \$5,000 per member in the vote tax. It's quite again a large chunk of change, and I can't even believe that they're going with that.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other things that I'd like to talk about is the lack of consultations. Now I know in the last few months—and I know that we're going to be here for quite a few months in the upcoming months, and I know that eventually Bill 33 is going to come up. I know in the last—I know the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) has heard this already a few times, but I know that within the last couple months since we've been sitting in session that a third of the time—a third of the time—that we've

been actually sitting, we have been debating Bill 20. They've called the Bill 20 a third of the time since we've been here from April 'til July. One third of the time.

So, where are their priorities, Mr. Speaker? Their priorities are to take out more money out of the back pockets of each and every Manitoban—each and every—each and every hard-working Manitoban, an additional \$400–\$400. And I hear the Government House Leader talking behind me here right now, and I appreciate to hear her to put—or encourage her to put a few words on the record in regards to her defense of the PST hike or the one point—*[interjection]* And she says that if I was willing to listen she'd be glad to put those words on the record. I'd be willing to sit here for her half hour of putting words on the record. I'd be happy to sit down and give her a chance, and in roughly 10 and a half minutes I will gladly sit down and give the Government House Leader an opportunity to stand up and put a few words on the record.

So, getting back to consultations, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about—I'd like to put a few words on the record in regards to forced amalgamations. I know that it is going to be affecting some of the municipalities in my constituency, one being Victoria Beach. It's also going to affect the RM of Alexander. I know that the Minister for Local Government is—you know, he did his bully tactic; he didn't have any consultations on the forced amalgamations. He basically brought it out in the Throne Speech, and in that Throne Speech he said, for all of those municipalities with people, permanent residents, less than 1,000 permanent residents, you're going to have to amalgamate. But he doesn't understand—the Minister for Local Government doesn't understand the fact that he's not just impacting those municipalities that are under a thousand, he's actually impacting their neighbours as well, because what's happening is I see the fact that these municipalities are then having to sort of possibly battle a little bit over something that wasn't even their choice—it wasn't even their choice.

I have another couple municipalities in my constituency that stood up at AMM last fall, and they said, you know what? Amalgamation sounds like a great idea—this is what the RM of Lac du Bonnet and the Town of Lac du Bonnet said—so we're willing to sit down with the government. But does the government want to actually do that? No. They don't want to work with anybody that actually wants to move ahead with certain projects. They'd rather bully

themselves—bully Victoria Beach and various other smaller municipalities into forced amalgamation, Mr. Speaker. But then, again, that causes hard feelings with neighbours.

But the interesting thing with Victoria Beach is the fact that they've got 370 permanent residents. Now, when you take in their summer residents, their seasonal residents, they're well over 2,200 taxpaying properties in the municipality of Victoria Beach, and with that they've got roughly 5,000 residents, taxpayers. So why does the Minister for Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) sit on his hands and not get out there and have a conversation with those municipalities so that we can hopefully move forward with one way or the other?

So, tell Victoria Beach, you know what? No, it's okay; we're going to back off because the government was wrong in bringing this forward during the Throne Speech. But instead we're going to take those services that we were offering Victoria Beach and the RM of Alexander and we're going to go ahead and actually offer those services to the RM of Lac du Bonnet and the Town of Lac du Bonnet so they can amalgamate and make sure that it's done right, Mr. Speaker.

*(16:30)

The one other thing that I don't quite understand with the forced amalgamations, Mr. Speaker, is the timeline and what are the consequences. I know that the Minister for Local Government had given a timeline of December 14th, I guess, to come up with a plan so that they could amalgamate. But what if—what if they don't? I know that Minister for Local Government had mentioned that there are going to be consequences, but the minister has not said what those consequences are going to be.

The interesting thing, whether it's forced amalgamations or it's the PST hike, it's the lack of consultations. This government doesn't seem to want to get out there and actually have conversations with hard-working Manitobans who, in the last election, had voted them in, Mr. Speaker. That is the utmost disrespect in regards to our voters and again our hard-working Manitobans.

I know that what I'd like to share is a couple of the stories that was very interesting during the Bill 20 debate, to get back to the amount of money that this government is spending, and, again, not hitting any balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker. It's quite disheartening. But there was a couple people that I

had heard from in committee that I would just like to share their story, and there was many, many, many stories. And I know that, you know, if I had, you know, a couple days maybe to speak on this that I'd love to share their stories, but, unfortunately, I only have roughly about five and a half minutes left, so I would like to just mention a few.

Mr. Al Shrupka came to committee on July 3rd, Mr. Speaker, and he basically started off by saying, and I quote: "All I have to ask is what makes you think that you have the right? Yes, you're elected representatives, but who gave you the right to break the law? That's the only question I have for you." End quote. And that's what Mr. Shrupka came and he wanted those answers. What gives this government the right to think that they are above the law and that they could just go ahead and push through things without actually having any consultations.

Mr. Shrupka continues; he also said the reason that he was there that night was because and I quote: I'm here—"the reason that I'm here is I'm angry. I'm very angry." End quote. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, that was the sentiments of roughly 85 per cent of the presenters who came, or possibly even 90 per cent of people who came and shared their stories with us at committee for Bill 20. They—some of the stories were very heart-wrenching because a lot of them were the very people that this government stands up and pats themselves on the backs all the time, saying that they're here for the working poor. They're here for the working person, and they're here to basically take their money from them and spend it for these people, because they—the government—feels that the people's money—Manitobans' money—is better off in the government's hands than in their own.

Just a couple others that I'd like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Chris Dsovza. He's a resident of Point Douglas actually, and he said, and I quote: "It disappoints me to be here today, because I want to take you back to the Magnus centre, which is now the River Point Centre. It's still not open eight years later." End quote.

Mr. Dsovza continued on to say that he was from Pakistan, and the problem here is that people work within the existing order and the law, Mr. Dsovza was saying. However, when people feel that the systems are corrupt and unjust and are rigid, often an event will trigger a movement to change the unjust to just. And this is what I see. I'm having flashbacks of the riots that I saw first-hand. This is

what Dsovza said, and he continued: We see it in Egypt. We saw it in Greece. There is words out there that this is what's happening to Manitoba. It is not about the money. It about more than the money. There's over 12,000 men and women that gave their lives for this country so we could have freedoms and democracy. What is that price today? One per cent. That's what Mr. Dsovza said.

But to correct that even a little bit more, Mr. Speaker, it's not just—it's not 1 per cent. It's one point. It's a 14 per cent increase from 7 to 8, which equates to, again, \$1,600 for a family of four. What could those people do with \$1,600? *[interjection]* I know that the member from Elmwood—I know that he's interested in the fact of how I get to that math, but 'basically'—I know that the member from Elmwood, it's been a while since the abacus has been in use—but, basically, it's \$500 million divided by the 1.2 million people in this fantastic province of ours, which equates to \$400 per Manitoban, and when you times that by a family of four, that's \$1,600. So, for the member from Elmwood and his abacus, he can go home tonight, practise that, and then, when tomorrow's chance gets up again, he will have the opportunity to stand up and put some words on the record in regards to Bill 48.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that Mr. Dsovza, Mr. Shumilak, Mr. Shrupka and many, many others who came—

An Honourable Member: Thousands.

Mr. Ewasko: —thousands of Manitobans who came to debate Bill 20, I know that the PST hike, the one point, the 14 per cent increase, is going to hurt those hard-working Manitobans, Mr. Speaker; and with that, I thank you for your time, and I'm going to give the opportunity to the House leader, the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard), her chance to stand up and put those words on the record as she had requested.

Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, was waiting for the Government House Leader to get up. I know she was quite vocal from her chair about when the previous member was speaking, and she was quite—she still continues to be quite vocal. And she's—she doesn't seem to want to get up and talk about Bill 48. I'm not sure if the House leader is wearing this information or this particular legislation, or what it is, but, you know—and there the House leader is still chirping

from her chair. She's had the opportunity to get up and talk about Bill 48.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 48, it's a \$7.7-billion piece of legislation being brought forward. I would think the government would want to get up and tell us and tell Manitobans why we should be passing Bill 48. *[interjection]* Oh, to keep the lights on. Oh, maybe the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) should have got up and said that. You know, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), he was—got up for about a minute and a half the other day when he brought forward this legislation. And he didn't add too much to the discussion there. He didn't say to us why we should be passing this legislation. And that's really what it's all about.

We're here to act on behalf of Manitobans. You know, obviously we're—I, you know, and let's—Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition missed the last two months here. We were in spending time in committee discussing, you know, their budget, their Bill 20, and I don't know where they were, but they should have recognized some of the anxiety out there that Manitobans are facing with where they're headed in terms of their budgetary plan. And my view is Bill 48 is simply another tool, an extension, to their budget.

Clearly, we're in the situation now where they're—they've mismanaged not only the finances of Manitoba, they've also mismanaged the affairs of the House, Mr. Speaker. It's very rare that we have Interim Supply come forward to—at this point in time, and we just wonder how badly the government has mismanaged this file as well. Clearly, if the government was interested in passing their budget, they would have brought their budget documents in way sooner than towards the end of April, would have had a chance for Manitobans to have a more thorough debate on their—where they were headed in terms of their PST hikes.

* (16:40)

And I guess the question it begs, Mr. Speaker, is when did the NDP decide they were going to raise the PST by 1 per cent? Was that just the day before the budget? They had to wait 'til the middle of April to decide that was the time they were going to surprise Manitobans with the extra 1 per cent. Was that what it was? It was just this bad management over there in terms of their Cabinet? Or what was going on over there at the time? Why did they wait so long to introduce their 1 per cent increase in PST?

I am assuming the government must have known a year ago that they were in financial straits. You know, obviously we saw what happened after the last election. And I think I should go back even before the last election where the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the members opposite were out campaigning on the fact that they wouldn't raise taxes and the whole concept of raising the provincial sales tax was nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

Well, there we go, we got through the election, and what did the NDP come out with? They came out with their next budget after the election. And what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They went and they increased a broad rare—added a broad range of products and services to the provincial sales tax.

So I would say, at that time, the signal must have been from the government—at least it was in our eyes—they were in some financial difficulty. And, Mr. Speaker, at that time they even proposed a \$500-million deficit, and that's the way it was; that's what they proposed to Manitobans. And even with the extra income they were generating from the broadening of the provincial sales tax, they were still going to be short \$500 million on an \$11-billion budget.

Now, that's pretty much a red flag to me, Mr. Speaker, especially when we get the Premier—and I'll have to dig through my notes here a little way—but the Premier talked about—let's talk about his 2011-12 public accounts and what he said then. He said then that they were on track to return the budget to balance by 2014 while protecting jobs and services without raising taxes. That's what he said at the release of the 2010 public accounts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that nothing was further from the truth at this point in time. And then 10 days later he says, our plan is a five-year plan to ensure that we have future prosperity without any tax increases and we'll deliver on that; we're ahead of schedule right now. Well, I know in the budget documents they did talk about a five-year plan at one time. What—you know, if you read the budget documents this year proposed, there's nothing in there about a five-year plan. That plan they had way back then has completely fell off the rails. And I'm looking forward to the Government House Leader getting up there and trying to justify what happened and how bad things went off the rails so that the Minister of Finance had to come back and raise provincial sales tax by one percentage point on the backs of Manitobans. And I'd love to hear the

members opposite come and debate Bill 48, but they've been very, very quiet on Bill 48.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you may be a hockey fan. I'm a bit of a hockey fan too. And if you remember back—and I'm thinking this is the 1970s, '80s, we had the Philadelphia Flyers. The Philadelphia Flyers were a pretty famous hockey team, very successful hockey team back then too. But they had a reputation, they got to be known as the broad steep bullies—the Broad Street bullies; that's what the Philadelphia Flyers were known as, as the Broad Street bullies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you we've got a whole new NDP group over here, these are the Broadway bullies; this is the minister of the Broadway bullies. That's how these guys govern. They 'bullen' their way into making things happen in the way they want it to happen.

You know, Mr. Speaker, obviously their fiscal plan is completely off the rails and now they have to find new ways to increase revenue on the backs of Manitobans. And Manitobans come back and they're not very happy with the way the NDP are bullying them around. And it was pretty clear in committee that they weren't very happy with that.

And let me give you a few examples, Mr. Speaker, of where and how the NDP are bullying Manitobans. Now, clearly, let's talk about some financial issues. You know, I think the first thing we should talk about is Manitoba Hydro and what they're doing with Manitoba Hydro. Now, clearly the budget the minister has brought forward certainly will have impacts to all Manitobans, and Manitoba Hydro is certainly a critical part of what happens in Manitoba. And, you know, we know we certainly—we disagree with what's the approach the government's taking in terms of Manitoba Hydro. And I know many Manitobans are disagreeing with the approach that Manitoba Hydro are taking.

In fact, if you listen to Graham Lane, he used the chair of the Public Utilities Board, he certainly has indicated a lot of issues with the NDP approach to how they're dealing with Manitoba Hydro as well. And he writes a very scathing letter in some of the publications around the province, and I think it's something that the government should take heed, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly, we've got Jim Collinson, and Jim Collinson, I think, for your information, Mr. Speaker, is an interesting individual who spent a lot

of time in Manitoba, and he's had a lot of experience around the world. And he's a management and consultant specializing in the complexities surrounding energy, economy and environmental issues.

And, not only that, he also served as the president of the UNESCO World Heritage committee for two years. So he certainly brings a wealth of experience and interesting articles that he's writing in publications around Manitoba. And he certainly takes issue with how the NDP are managing Manitoba Hydro and, in particular, how they're managing the Bipole III program.

And he goes on and talks about, at length, about the Clean Environment Commission report and some of the issues that they raised there in terms of the policy and the program and the lack of diligence that Manitoba Hydro put forward and, in fact, the whole plan around the proposals for bipole.

And he certainly raises concern—the fact that the Manitoba NDP refuse to have a serious look at bipole placement on—certainly on the east side of the province. And he, quite clear, and I'll quote from his article, his last article was: "This questions the government's ability to govern in the best interests of Manitoba. The debt burden and subsequent necessary rate and tax hikes will discourage future population growth and business development."

So—and he goes on to say that it was pretty clear Manitoba Hydro and the NDP forgot to look at the due diligence and look at the big picture here in Manitoba. And that's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. So he's certainly concerned about that, and he says, you know, the extra cost alone for bipole on the west side, the circle approach, is certainly going to cost; even with Manitoba Hydro's figures, it's at least a billion dollars more. And, obviously, there's long-term costs associated with the west-side bipole as well. And that's certainly very unfortunate.

And, he, you know, he talks about the whole spectre about the woodland caribou. He gets into bird strikes. And he also talks about the tornado-prone alley, which the NDP are proposing to build Bipole III on. And, Mr. Speaker, those are the kind of discussions that Manitobans should be having and really haven't the opportunity to have. And, certainly, he calls into question some of the issues around the proposal about the UNESCO World Heritage too. But that's—clearly, these NDP, as bullies, they're going to—figure they're going to get their way on the west side despite what Manitobans have to say.

Mr. Speaker, the other one that really comes to mind in terms of the Broadway bullies is the Bill 33, which they are proposing to amalgamate municipalities around the province. And they're talking about, you know, cost savings, and I don't know who's going to save money; we haven't seen too much cost savings in money in terms of amalgamations over the past. *[interjection]*

And I certainly look forward to the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) get up and debating this particular Bill 48. It's a \$7.7-billion budget. And let's talk about it. If the member opposite wants to talk about a fiscal cliff, let's talk about the fiscal cliff. It's a fiscal cliff that's been designed by them themselves, by the NDP. Mr. Speaker, it's very unfortunate that they couldn't manage their own affairs. Now, all of a sudden, they're trying to blame us for the financial situation that they're in.

Now, I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) not too long ago said, hey, we're good 'til the end of July. We've got money 'til the end of the—July. Mr. Speaker, if the Government House Leader wants to get up and tell us, no, the government's broke, well, she should get up and talk about that. She should tell us that, if the government's broke.

Now, even the Free Press, the Winnipeg Free Press, have seen through the NDP bully tactics on this one, Mr. Speaker. Even the NDP—last week, I think it was Saturday, in their editorial, said that everybody knows NDP House leader is being 'disingenius' by claiming the Province is facing a fiscal cliff because of our refusal to either approve the budget or pass Interim Supply.

That's it. It's when things don't go their way, what do bullies do? Bullies go out and fear monger. And that's exactly what these guys doing. The Broadway bullies are out fear mongering Manitobans. That's exactly what they're doing. *[interjection]* Now, here again we got lots of chirping from the member—Government House Leader, member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I know they must be sensitive about this. And I'm pretty sensitive too. We're talking about a bill here that provides the NDP government \$7.7 billion worth of taxpayer monies. I would think that they would be interested to get up and say to their constituents why the NDP government needs this bill. I'm looking forward to the debate on this one. I'm hoping they will get up and say—and I'm looking forward to your—hearing your position, Mr. Speaker; that's exactly what I'm looking forward to.

* (16:50)

And that's what we're offering, is a chance for them to explain their position, Mr. Speaker. Why have they got into this situation? Why have they got themselves into this position?

And that's the typical thing with an NDP government, that's a typical thing with a bully—the Broadway bullies—it's never—never their fault. You listen to the debate; it's never their fault. Let's blame the federal government. Oh, yes, we're not getting any money from the federal government. Let's blame the federal government for our problems here, our financial problems. Well, Mr. Speaker, they've had the most money coming in from the federal government ever in the history of the province of Manitoba. How can they blame the federal government for their problems?

How can they blame us as opposition? We're 18 members in opposition, Mr. Speaker. They're blaming us for their financial problems.

And this thing hasn't happened overnight, Mr. Speaker. You know, we can look at the financial history here, where the NDP have been, over the last 13 years. When the NDP came into government, we had a provincial budget of about \$6 billion a year. That wasn't very long ago—\$6 billion. This year's budget is just under \$12 billion. Effectively, they've doubled the budget within the course of 14 years—14 years they've doubled the budget.

The scary part in those 14 years, Mr. Speaker, only once did they ever live within their budget. Every—13 out of 14 years, they have actually spent more money than they've budgeted in their budget. That is not fiscally responsible. That is not fiscally responsible, and they can't tell Manitobans that they've been fiscally responsible. Manitobans came here, and they came here, in the last month, and they said: You guys have to wake up and smell the coffee. You're not fiscally responsible.

And they're not, Mr. Speaker. What have they done with the provincial debt? Provincial debt was \$13 billion when they took over office in 1999—\$13 billion. This budget now proposes a \$30-billion debt—a \$30-billion debt. Now this was—that's unbelievable precedence.

Now—and I've said this in the House before—when we have debt, we have to service the debt, Mr. Speaker. Now I know this year the debt-servicing costs are going to be close to \$840 million—\$840 million that cannot be used for anything else

but to service the debt. And that's not talking about paying off any debt. That's just the cost we have to service the debt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be lots of time for the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) to get up here and defend her position on her budget, and we look forward to that discussion coming forward.

It's our job, I think, to stand up for Manitobans, of what Manitobans think. And we're waiting for them to get up and justify to their constituents, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) budget, and why he wants to increase the provincial sales tax by 1 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about servicing debt in terms of Manitoba Hydro as well. I talked about core government being \$800 million. Manitoba Hydro has a debt of about \$9 billion. And, as a result of that debt, they have a debt-servicing expense of over \$400 million. Again, \$400 million that can't be used any—for anything else.

So we've got a debt-servicing cost on an annual basis of over \$1.2 billion that Manitoba residents are paying to service the debt that the NDP have created. That is a huge amount of money, Mr. Speaker.

And you know where the NDP have got—going to go from here? They do not have—they have not laid out a plan in their budget how they're going to turn this around. Even this budget proposes a \$500-million deficit, even with the proposed increase in the 1 per cent PST, which they are collecting, we believe, immorally, and we also believe they are collecting that illegally. And we'll see what the court has to say about that down the road.

But, nevertheless, they're still proposing a \$500-million deficit, even given the increase in taxes and fees that they're pack-tacking on the backs of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, you know, ordinary Manitobans are sending letters—they're sending letters to the Premier (Mr. Selinger), they're copying us as opposition, and they're saying that, you know—and this is one copy that I got. This is a copy of a letter from my constituent who had sent to the Premier. And she clearly points out to the Premier: Most important, you cannot spend more than you receive.

Well, you can do that once in a while, Mr. Speaker, but you can't do that year after year after year because eventually somebody's got to pay the

bill. And, quite frankly, that's going to be us, that's going to be our kids and that's going to be our grandkids. They're going to have to pay for the decisions the NDP government have made.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, she goes on to say that, unfortunately for the Manitoba government, there's only one taxpayer and we are maxed out. We have no more money to spend. Now that's a well-written letter from one of my constituents who also goes on to say—I've been—you know, I guess it's going to be important to get this particular bill through so we can buy some more glasses for the Chamber, but I digress.

Mr. Speaker, this member says: I've been a proud Manitoban all my life but I'm ashamed to say I'm from Manitoba now. The province is heading for disaster. More and more people are coming forward and telling this government that we're heading for disaster, and it's time the NDP woke up and realized that, yes, we are in fact heading for disaster.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also talk about the bullying tactics, the Broadway bully squad over here. What they're doing with the PST increase and the Bill 20 is they're increasing the taxes on the backs of Manitobans, but they're also taking away Manitobans' right to vote on the new increase in provincial sales tax. And that's shameful. That's something that normal—I would think normal people would not do, and, you know, I just love to hear—I would love to hear the Government House Leader defend her position on Bill 20. We've heard lots of chirping from the other side on bill—but now no debate really on Bill 20 and Bill 48, where they stand, how they can justify this legislation to their constituents.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I know the member—the Government House Leader must be feeling some pressure from her backbenchers. I don't know where the pressure's coming from. You know, we think we'd love to be here—we'd love to be here in Manitoba and debate legislation on behalf of Manitobans. We think it's the right thing to do. We have to debate legislation on behalf of Manitobans. We love to debate the budget that the member brought in kind of late in April, and, hopefully, this serves as a wake-up call for the NDP to get their act together and manage their fiscal house better and, hopefully, manage the business of the House more effectively too. That's obviously pretty critical.

Mr. Speaker, we see all kinds of areas where the NDP are playing their bully tactics, too, and we can

look at other pieces of legislation that they are proposing to bring forward too.

Certainly, I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) and the minister responsible for lotteries, they are taking—have a bit of a vendetta out there against people over at Assiniboia Downs and the Manitoba Jockey Club. It appears they want to put them out of business, and clearly they're going to tear up some contracts they have in place. They're going to change legislation to put some more money in the government's hands which was—under the existing legislation was supposed to go to support the horse racing industry in Manitoba.

So, you know, clearly, they got a different agenda, Mr. Speaker, and one way or another, they're going to get their way, and that's the way the NDP operate in their bullying tactics. And I could say that, you know, Manitobans are starting to fight back. Certainly, the Manitoba Jockey Club, the people at Assiniboia Downs, they're starting to fight back, and they're saying enough is enough is enough. And that's what Manitobans more and more around this province are saying too. Enough is enough is

enough. We can only take so much of the Broadway bullies and it's time for them to stand up and take notice and respect Manitobans.

And really, that's what it's about, Mr. Speaker, it's about respect. It's about respecting Manitobans and their views on things. And I guess what happens once you get in office so long, people just think they can do whatever they want to do and do whatever tactics they want to get their way, but I don't think that's the way it should be. And it really speaks to the credibility of a government when a situation like this arises.

So, with that, I wanted to say, it's time that this government dealt with people with respect in the future and I—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen) will have seven minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 24, 2013

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