

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

J. Frank and Hazel Johnston—65th Anniversary

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I'm very honoured to rise in the House today to congratulate an amazing couple who just reached an incredible milestone in their lives. On February 24th, Mr. J. Frank and Mrs. Hazel Johnston celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Mr. Speaker, the Johnstons' partnership embodies the true meaning of the phrase soul mates.

After their marriage in 1951, they settled in St. James where they began a life that established them as pillars of the community in short order. They raised three children, Robyn, Scott and Donna, and have enjoyed watching their grandchildren grow and prosper. Recently, they have become proud great-grandparents to a new generation of their wonderful family. And I want to welcome the Johnstons in the gallery today.

The Johnstons' dedication to their family is matched by their professional history and community involvement. As I'm sure most in this House are aware, J. Frank enjoyed a very successful political career that spanned from 1964 through 1988.

He began his career as an alderman for the then city of St. James, followed by his term in the successor city of St. James-Assiniboia. He was chosen as the city's deputy mayor in 1968 and chaired the urban renewal committee. This post saw him spearhead the development of the St. James Civic Centre.

His interest in city politics led Mr. Johnston to pursue a seat at the provincial level where he was first elected as the Member for the Legislative Assembly for Sturgeon Creek in 1969. During his role as MLA, J. Frank held several ministerial portfolios and was recognized as a passionate representative in legislative proceedings.

Now, as the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, behind every great man there is an equally great woman. Truer words could not be spoken about Hazel Johnston. Besides being a dedicated mother to her three children and an avid community volunteer, Hazel partnered with her husband in developing their family business, JFJ Agency, in 1960. She was instrumental in the day-to-day operations of the business during J. Frank's political appointments. To this day, she continues to work in the business with him and son Scott.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to mention that her dedication to an understanding—to and understanding of politics matches that of her husband's. She worked hand in hand with him to achieve his many election successes and contributed her knowledge, opinions and discussions of the political climate.

Mr. Speaker, the Johnstons' dedication to family life, business, community and political involvement remain evident to this day. We should all aspire to work towards the impressive achievements they have accomplished.

I would like to ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating me the Johnstons on their 65th wedding anniversary, and wish them many more years of continued happiness and prosperity.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Recognizing Justin Papoff

Hon. Melanie Wight (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): Mr. Speaker, the integrity of the young people in the province always amazes me. Sisler High student Justin Papoff is no exception.

Justin made a splash in November last year when he and keynote speaker Spencer West spoke to 16,000 students and educators at the MTS Centre for We Day Manitoba.

Justin spoke about his work organizing charity drives for Siloam Mission, the Christmas Cheer Board and Winnipeg Harvest. But he wasn't content with just that—content being a word I doubt is even in his vocabulary. Justin began to deliver donations to these organizations. Seeing first-hand the effects of the cycle of poverty reinforced his desire to make a difference.

Justin has a long list of accomplishments but foremost is his work with Free the Children. This organization uses an international development model to address issues of education, clean water and sanitation, health, agriculture and food security, and alternative incomes and livelihoods in eight different developing countries. Justin has been working with Free The Children for the past two years. As a community leader, Justin organizes local fundraisers, most recently selling rafiki chains to support building a school in Kenya. He has also helped manage the creative aspects of Free The Children's local campaigns, designing posters and pledge sheets, as well as making a short film for the Adopt a Village fundraiser, We Are Silent.

Justin has just come back from a trip to Ottawa, learning about human rights issues in Canada and around the world. At school, Justin is a model student. His history teacher Orysya Petryshyn tells me Justin is dedicated, diligent and has been a privilege to teach. On top of his extensive volunteerism, Justin writes for his school paper and has been a featured columnist in the Winnipeg Free Press.

Justin's commitment to making the world a better place is impressive and so inspirational to people of all ages. He represents the many admirable young people in our province who see the importance of volunteerism and helping others, so today I pay tribute to him and them.

Mr. Speaker, our future is in very good hands. Here, here.

Budget 2016

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, it is the work of a sitting government to bring a budget. Indeed, this Finance Minister said that there would be a budget this spring. He said that Manitobans would know what their plans were before they went into the election period.

Indeed, the Finance Minister even spent \$40,000 on very expensive public consultations where he asked them to bring their opinions in the preparation of the 2016 budget. But then, Mr. Speaker, he declined to actually deliver a budget to Manitobans. The NDP is hiding.

What they have offered instead is not a budget but a phony financial report that doesn't follow the rules that a full budget would follow. It hides key information that a full budget would disclose. But as much as the government would try to hide from

Manitobans, even they could not hide the fact that the deficit is now projected to be a record \$773 million, up from their own projection of \$422 million, up \$351 million. No government has ever gotten it that wrong. It came as a surprise to all Manitobans. I imagine it came to a surprise to the colleagues of this Finance Minister. When the Finance Minister said that the deficit was stubborn and going in the wrong direction, we can say it was an understatement.

But it is also a betrayal. Neither the Premier (Mr. Selinger) nor the Finance Minister nor any members on that side gave Manitobans any idea, any indication of the size, the proportions of the disaster that they were perpetrating on Manitobans. They have jeopardized this province with their mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, it is unprecedented and there is no excuse to which they can point. There is no flood this year. There is no declining federal transfer payment. There is no sudden drop in interest rates, no sudden loss in tax revenues. The only disaster is the NDP government itself.

Will they admit today that, simply, Manitobans don't believe anything they have to say and it's time for a better plan for a better Manitoba?

Progressive Conservative Plan

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, whether he'll admit it or not, the Leader of the Opposition has promised that he will make deep cuts. When you add up all the revenue cuts he's promised, they total more than \$550 million a year.

The fact is, deep cuts like this would have front-impact on front-line services like health and education. And when they say it's not the case, the Conservatives simply aren't coming clean with Manitobans. They talk about eliminating waste, but all too often, just like under the Filmon government of the '90s, waste was code for cutting important services that families relied on in Manitoba. The Filmon government chose to cut investments in schools, hospitals and roads. For example, they cut or froze the education budget every year from 1993-94 to '97-98. They fired 1,000 nurses. They fired 1,000—or 700 teachers. And over three years they cut \$480 million from the road budget.

The Leader of the Opposition was a senior minister in the Conservative government that made these cuts, and he must be held accountable for these decisions. Well, it seems he doesn't want to

stand up and take responsibility for his decisions, Mr. Speaker. He stands and claims that the best government of the time was the Filmon government, and he says it's the best government Manitobans have ever been blessed with.

* (13:40)

With his past behaviour being a predictor, where do you think the half a billion dollars will come from? Yesterday in the Legislature the Leader of the Opposition, repeatedly asked for his plan, and he wouldn't come clean with Manitobans.

Our team is ready to continue debating our record and our plan for health care, education, jobs, investments in roads, but if the members opposite want to critique us, then they need to answer as to what their own plan is because it just doesn't add up.

Greatest Hits

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I'd just like to do a summation of the Fifth Session of this 40th Legislature, and it started with: Never gonna tax you up, and we're never gonna weigh you down. / We're never gonna close ERs and desert you. / We're never gonna make you cry, and we're never gonna make you run dry. / Never gonna waste your time, and hurt you.

And it went on with: I had a million dollars, I wouldn't have to knock on doors. / If I had a million dollars, I wouldn't have to walk anymore. / If I had a million dollars, I could buy a new splash pad, or a park bench, or something in a store. / If I had a million dollars, I'd buy your love, love, love.

Closing time was next: One last call to the hospital, but they wouldn't pick up the phone. / It's closing time. / You don't have to go home, you just can't stay here.

And then we went on to: Let me tell you how it will be. / There's one for you and 35 for the NDP. / 'Coz' they're the taxman. / Yeah, they're the taxman. / Should 8 per cent appear too small, / Be thankful they didn't take it all. / 'Coz' they're the taxman. / Yeah, they're the taxman.

And then it was followed by: I've got a Tiger Dam by the tail, it's plain to see. / There won't be much left when you're done with me. / I'm falling in the polls and getting mighty frail. / It's plain to see, I've got a Tiger Dam by the tail.

And looking forward, Mr. Speaker: Rocking Brian walking down the street / And all his team

going tweet, tweet, tweet. / Rocking Brian with his team, / Whoa, lead the way on the 19th day.

Mr. Speaker: Just prior to oral questions, since that concludes members' statements, and I thank all honourable members for their members' statements.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: We have guests in the gallery today, and I'd like to draw the attention of the honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from HBNI-ITV System out of Fairholme School, we have 18 grade 9 students, under the direction of Ms. Evelyn Maendel, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart).

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

And also seated in the public gallery today we have with us the family members of the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), we have his wife, Mrs. Raj Jha; his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Harmeet Jha; and his granddaughter, Ms. Ria Jha.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Future Increases

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, as we approach an election and lift the House, I wanted to say a thank you, a special thank you, to all the people who work in our Assembly, the political staff from all parties, the Clerk's office, as well the interns, Sergeant-at-Arms, Chamber personnel, our pages, all of them contribute to making this a great place to work and good workplace for all of us. I also wanted to add a thanks to the Hansard staff, Leg. library staff, security services, maintenance, cafeterial staff as well, and the janitorial staff and many others, the accommodation services people as well.

We have the best Legislative Assembly, the most beautiful Legislative Assembly and what we do here isn't always beautiful, and we understand that. But the people who work here are, and we appreciate their work.

I must finish with a question. I know that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) would like to respond to a question I've asked him a few times already: We know that he'll be raising the PST; will he be

raising it to 9 per cent or to 10 per cent given the opportunity?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Before I start, I'd like to join across the aisle with the Leader of the Opposition and I'm sure the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), as well, in thanking all the members, all the legislative staff for the work they do. When you walk in the front door in the morning you see them there providing security. You go in the hallways and you see them sparkling. You go up the stairs, you don't want to touch the rail because it's just been polished, and you see the work they do in keeping the place green. And it makes a huge difference. And the civility with which all the people that conduct themselves here, they could actually be a bit of an example from us for time to time, and I've never noticed any humour on the, sort of, the things you put on your computer screen. But we—on behalf of all the members of the Legislature, I want to join and thank all the staff for the work they do. And it's been such a positive experience; I'm looking forward to being back tomorrow and discussing more things in the Legislature.

But to the answer to the question, Mr. Speaker, one of the great myths that the Leader of the Opposition likes to put out there is that somehow we've made the cost of living more onerous for the people of Manitoba, and I can report to him—I can report to him—that for an average family, taxes have gone down \$4,600 since 1999. And that includes property tax credits, which have been very significant for families. That includes additional support for seniors, not to mention zero taxes for small business. And all of those things have made a gigantic difference, and if the members opposite would just support our measures to provide more relief to middle-class and working families in our fiscal outlook, we could even make more progress for families in Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder our students are doing bad at math with leadership in our province doing that bad at math. When we know that the average family in Winnipeg pays \$4,000 a year more in PST and income tax than the average family in Regina, and the Premier doesn't think we have a problem, we have a real problem.

I wanted to, though—I wanted, Mr. Speaker, if I could, to say a thank you to the 15 members of our Chamber who will not be seeking re-election and can say to all of them that we are honoured to have had the chance to work with them, that we appreciate

their commitment to democracy, that we appreciate the sacrifices that they and their family have made, that we realize that this has not been an easy time to serve in all respects. But it is true that, regardless of partisan stripe, we believe in this career and we believe in the importance of it, and we respect the people who do it. And so I thank all of you.

And, of course, I have to finish with a question, so I'll ask the Premier again: In the interests of transparency and accountability, we know that he is planning to raise the PST again; is he planning to raise it to 10 or 11?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, in an uncommon show of unity I will also extend my deep respects for the people that have served in the Legislature, including yourself, who are not at this time seeking office again. Some of you have been here 25 years, some of you, slightly less period of time. All of you served with distinction, and I know the people in your constituencies deeply value the contributions you've made to their quality of life.

And we will keep Manitoba affordable, but we will do it by ensuring that we create more good jobs in Manitoba, more jobs and a stronger economy, which is something the Leader of the Opposition has no grasp of. His approach is to cut \$500 million out of the budget. That means less nurses by the bedside, less teachers in the classroom, less daycare workers, less people working out in the communities looking after families. Those people would be at risk and the services and quality of life of Manitobans would be at risk.

It's unfortunate the Leader of the Opposition wants to return to a time when every day was a dark day in Manitoba. We look forward to building a prosperous future where all Manitobans have a sense of belonging. Whether they live in the North, whether they live in communities that are struggling, we want everybody in Manitoba to feel that this is their home and they have a sense of belonging regardless of who they are, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Premier should not confuse his own fear with that of Manitobans. Manitobans are optimistic people, and they know that change can bring improvements to their lives, and will. They also understand that paying \$5,000 in additional broken-promise taxes, on top of the one of the highest tax burdens in the country because of the Premier's broken promises to them, it's not something that's helping them create jobs. The difference between us, of course, that we trust

Manitobans to do that, and the Premier does not and wants the credit for taking money off their table and spending it on their behalf.

Now, I respect very much, Mr. Speaker, the fact that you have served as our Speaker. I have had the privilege of being in many Chambers over the years, with many Speakers. I consider you to be among the best I have ever had the chance—*[interjection]*

* (13:50)

And I would like to say, respectfully, to all members who are seeking re-election, that I wish them and their families the very best in the coming campaign, of good health to all of you and to your families and to those who are volunteering to serve with you in your campaigns, a safe campaign for everyone.

Winston Churchill said at the bottom of all the tributes paid to democracy is the little person walking into the little booth with a little pencil making a little cross on a little bit of paper; nothing can possibly diminish the overwhelming importance of the point. And I honour all of you who are willing to go to the effort and time to make sure that Manitobans are free to have choices and options and to participate in an open democratic process such as we enjoy and should never take for granted in this province. Thank you to all of you.

And I'd like the Premier to come clean on his intentions on the PST. This is his last opportunity to do so.

Mr. Selinger: And again, Mr. Speaker, I will support the comments of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to all those people that have presented themselves for office, those that are in incumbent seats, those that are coming into the political process for the first time. It's always a big decision. It requires the support of your family and your friends and, certainly, the support of the people around you in the community. And it's a big transition from private life to public life, and we all know the pros and cons of that. So I congratulate everybody who is presenting themselves for office again, and I can assure them that this government and this political party will keep a focus on the priorities of Manitobans.

What are those priorities? Making sure that people have access to good jobs; making sure people have access to training and education; making sure young people have the support to complete high school and start a post-secondary education out of

high school, whether a college or a university program or an apprenticeship program; ensuring that families have access to daycare—another 12,000 spaces, Mr. Speaker; making sure we look after people in the communities with home care and no attempts to privatize it like the members of the opposition did the last time they were in office; and no desire to cut the property tax credits like the members did the last time they were in office; and no layoffs of nurses—over 1,000 nurses like the last time they were in office, or the dismissal of 700 teachers like the last time they were in office.

We will put forward a positive vision for Manitobans where everybody will have a sense of belonging in terms of their human rights, in terms of their identity, and we will do it by growing Manitoba as a place where all can live and work together.

Provincial Sales Tax NDP Election Promise

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And time after time, we have heard this broken, divided NDP government say one thing, make a promise before an election, then betray Manitobans right after and break that promise.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest betrayal of trust was in 2011 when they promised they wouldn't raise the PST. They went door to door and made that promise. They called it a ridiculous suggestion. And then what happened? They broke their promise. The NDP betrayed Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, for the very last time today, I ask the question: How can anyone believe anything that this broken, divided NDP government says?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday in this Chamber, I'm very proud to be part of a party that includes all Manitobans and leaves nobody out.

And it's ironic to me that the member who just asked the question, who'd been part of the Cabinet who said they would not privatize MTS, went ahead, privatized MTS, sold it to their friends—sold it to their friends—then that—thereby reducing the—their deficit. And now we have no cell service in rural Manitoba. Our rates of—telephone rates are amongst the highest in Canada, and I believe that after this election MTS will probably be bought out by one of the large telcos and that will be directly a result of members opposite and their decision to sell off a Crown corporation. Heaven forbid they come into office and they go after Hydro.

Health-Care Services Government Record

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has a broken record on health care. The longest ER waits in Canada, the only province without a dedicated stroke unit, the worst doctor-retention rate in Canada, a nursing shortage that is more than double what it was in in 1999, and a PCH bed crisis that will become a catastrophe.

Will the Minister of Health just admit that this is a broken government with a broken record that has lost the trust of every Manitoban?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I can tell you, on this side of the House, we have spent 16 years investing in health care, and not a day goes by that I do not talk to my neighbours and find out how important it is that they have cancer home-care drug treatment, how important it is that they have access to a QuickCare clinic, that they have access to more doctors and nurses. I've heard so many stories from my neighbours about what life was like with doctors and nurses fleeing and how happy they are to see so many. I'm so proud to now find some of my own nursing students working in roles of medical leadership.

So this election, yes, Manitobans do face a choice; they have a stark choice before them. They can continue with a team that has made a track record of investing, or a team that has got nothing but cuts to look forward to.

PST Increase Apology Request

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, during the illegal PST debate, hundreds of Manitobans gathered on the front steps of the Legislature asking the NDP to honour their promise to not raise the PST.

The member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) slid out the back door. The member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) slid out the side door. And the member for Fort Richmond (Ms. Irvin-Ross), well, she was nowhere to be seen.

Will they now stand up and apologize for breaking their word to their constituents? Will they now say they are sorry about the illegal PST?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): When I was door knocking on the weekend, as I said yesterday, I came across two women who were so thankful that we are providing free cancer-care drugs at home. And one of the reasons we're able to provide that, Mr. Speaker, is because we're a government that cares for all people, not just certain segments of society.

And the other thing I was very pleased to see on the door was how many seniors were thankful that for the first time in history, we've eliminated education taxes on about 98 per cent of seniors' homes. That's a huge difference. That's a huge difference; when we came into office, and I remember those—many of those same seniors worried about whether they could stay in their homes because they couldn't pay their taxes. Mr. Speaker, we've eliminated that.

I'm very proud of a party that looks after all Manitobans and includes all Manitobans as part of Manitoba, not just a small set of elites.

Government Fiscal Policies Impact on Jobs and Economy

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Since the NDP PST hike, Manitoba has lost 9,300 private sector and self-employed jobs, the second worst record in Canada.

And Manitoba is also down 6,600 jobs from this time last year and down 5,300 jobs in January, the second among—the second most among all provinces in Canada.

Clearly, this NDP tax-and-spend policies of the Selinger government have had a negative impact on jobs in our economy. Mr. Speaker, will they just admit that this is a broken government with a broken record that has lost the trust of all Manitobans?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): For the record, Manitoba did the best of any province for creating jobs last year. That's a fact, Mr. Speaker.

Let's talk about loss, though. And the Leader of the Opposition sat around the Cabinet table, lost 30,000 people; say bye to Steinbach twice, Morden gone four times over, Winkler gone three times over. Businesses were closing, storefronts going dark, Mr. Speaker. Buildings sat empty. And then his first promise when he's elected, comes in here and says let's cut \$500 million.

The fact is you ask the member from Steinbach, the member from Tuxedo, have they asked: Is that the same plan the leader has for Manitobans going forward? The fact is, they don't want to ask their leader what that plan is because, Mr. Speaker, they know they would need a whole herd of wooden buffalos to hand out for all the bad ideas the Leader of the Opposition has.

**Manitoba NDP
Status of Party**

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, you don't have to look much beyond this Chamber to see how broken this government is.

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), former Finance minister and an honourable man, he's not running. You look at the member for river-*Seine River*, former Health minister, one of the longest serving in Canada, not running.

* (14:00)

Former member for—the member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), one of the smartest members in this House on either side, not running. Yet the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), immersed in scandal, sits in Cabinet on the front row.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier would look at those members who are not running and acknowledge that he's broken his caucus, he's broken his party, he's broken the trust of Manitobans and he does not deserve to be the Premier after April 19th.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): I don't really want to go too much down this road, Mr. Speaker, but I suggest if he just taps the seat down from him and asks his leader why he quit Cabinet during the middle of the flood when he was last an MLA, why he went to Ottawa and quit the Harper government, why he ran for leadership of the Reform Party and is now back in Manitoba.

And the number of candidates he ran against to—he ran against to become leader was how many, Mr. Speaker? Zero. Ran against no one to become leader, and now wants to come back and give the same kind of government that he said was the greatest government in history of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we may not be perfect, but heaven help us—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

The honourable Minister of Mineral Resources, to conclude his answer.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, heaven help us if that group of people who sat around the Cabinet table in the biggest scandal in the history of this province, where Judge Monnin said of the Conservative Party, he'd never seen more liars in his life.

If those people get the reins of power again, Mr. Speaker, it will not be an inclusive province; it will not be a province that cares for seniors and their taxes; it will not be a province that looks after patients or hires more doctors and nurses. In fact, it'll be a backwards step for this province to take if they should dare elect the Leader of the Opposition.

**Need for Child-Care Spaces
Wait Times for Placement**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans understand that there is an immense difference between 12,000, the number of child-care spaces actually needed in the province, and 2,000, the number by which that need grows each year.

Two thousand is the only number of spaces the Premier and his NDP government have committed to each year, but it is not enough because the list, the wait-list, just gets longer. People in Manitoba keep hoping for a solution to the long waits, but it is a solution which never comes under the NDP.

Why has the Premier not committed to provide our families the actual level of child care that they need?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we've added 14,000 child-care spaces with those early childhood learning spaces; we've built a record number of daycares.

Every new school in Manitoba has a daycare put in; existing schools, we're renovating them, adding daycares into those schools. We've committed to 12,000 more. The members of the Opposition have voted against that consistently every time we brought in a budget for more daycare spaces. They voted against that. The member from River Heights is not supporting that as well.

We brought in a pension plan for daycare workers, second pension plan in the country to acknowledge mostly women that work in the daycare field for the dedication and service they provide. We've made sure that fees stay reasonable; we've made sure that the quality has improved. And

those things are going to be put at risk when the opposition party, the Conservatives, say they're going to privatize daycare in Manitoba.

What will that mean for Manitobans? That will mean lower quality daycare. That will mean higher fees. That will mean greater instability as daycares open and close on a more frequent basis, and it'll mean lower wages and support, and probably no pension plan for the daycare workers.

That is not a way forward, that is a day–way backward, when in the '90s they actually cut daycare spots in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. That is not progress. That's backwards and not looking forward.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Liberals believe in affordable and self-sustaining daycare and early childhood education for all Manitobans. Manitobans cannot understand how this NDP government can think announcing their—that they will merely continue meeting only 17 per cent of what the province actually needs is something to be proud of.

Will the NDP continue their navel-gazing approach to maintaining the status quo, or will they commit to actually providing the number of daycare spaces Manitoba families need, as Liberals will do?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the political party that the member from River Heights represents at the provincial level, their top promise: get rid of over \$400 million of revenues from the health and education levy. That's less money for health care. That's less money for education. That's less daycare spots. That's less daycare workers. That's higher fees. That's longer waiting lists. That will not move us forward.

Privatizing Liquor & Lotteries, Mr. Speaker, that will just wipe out good jobs, people that are in the workforce paying taxes. That won't help. That will reduce the revenues to the treasury that we see now where we take 2 per cent of that and put it back into social responsibility.

The Liberal Party is going to create a world of greater misery for people, Mr. Speaker. Daycare is not part of that vision. They don't have the money to do it. They don't have the program to do it. I challenge him to support this political party and its strong vision for daycare in Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, Liberals are setting their own policies, not the misguided, misspoken distortions of the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, it's a disturbing absence of logic, rampant in the NDP government, to believe that making Manitoba parents wait for up to two years to access the child-care spaces they need is somehow benefiting our economy. These hard-working Manitobans are being prevented from going back to work, from sustaining their own families, because the Premier has spent 16 and a half years in 17 per cent solutions which are never enough to meet the growing need.

Why is the Premier continuing to fail Manitoba families' need to simply—by simply renewing, as he's doing, his same old commitments?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we've added daycare training spots at Red River College, the Université de Saint-Boniface. We've added over a hundred new daycare builds in Manitoba in terms of facilities. No longer are they in the church basements or the halls that—where they were before, the dank basements. They're now in brand new facilities in schools; they're free-standing new daycares.

All of that has been done while the member from River Heights has consistently voted against it at every single budget. We've now made a commitment over the next seven years to add 12,000 spots, to do it in partnership with communities, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have higher wages, to ensure that there's pensions for the workers, lower fees for parents and quality early childhood learning opportunities that prepare young people for education, school and success in life. It's part of our plan, along with early childhood development and prevention and smaller class sizes and career opportunities to make sure young people in Manitoba have a bright future.

And, again, I invite the member from River Heights to abandon the policy of the Liberal Party of privatizing liquor jobs, taking revenue out of the treasury and getting rid of the health and education levy. Over \$400 million of revenue will 'disappear.' There will be no money for daycare, Mr. Speaker.

Come and join us for a better Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Truth and Reconciliation Framework Paid Leave for Domestic Violence Victims

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I'm proud to be a part of the NDP because I know that everyone matters. We'll be heading out of the Legislature here today, Mr. Speaker, on a high note with a clear plan laid out that's clearly on the side of Manitobans, from

first-in-Canada paid domestic leave for—leave for domestic violence victims to groundbreaking bill to lay out a path to reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Mr. Speaker, can the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) please tell us a little bit more about the amazing things we will have accomplished this session?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that, as we move things through this Chamber today, that we'll be able to say that we have made and we will make Manitoba a better place.

The first-of-its-kind truth and reconciliation framework will be put in place, that will start a process that hopefully over the days, months and years will build a better Manitoba; the first-of-its-kind domestic leave legislation ever in the country, that will protect women and their families; and the first-of-its-kind protection orders and banning of guns for people under protection orders, and the bill in this Legislature will hopefully get royal assent tonight—today, which will make lives safer not just today, but into the future for the women of Manitoba.

* (14:10)

And I'm glad to be part of a movement and part of a Legislature that is passing these important bills today, and that is what's important about this Chamber, not the day-to-day politics. That's got its time. This is what's important.

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

Interlake Region Physician Retention

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, this is a broken-trust government. Just yesterday, in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, we have lost three doctors, two in Powerview-Pine Falls and one in Lac du Bonnet. How many others and where else?

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Lac du Bonnet constituents and all of Manitobans, we need to ask the Health Minister to stop the rhetoric and admit that her government is broken and can't be trusted.

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

I know that our government has made steady progress in recruiting and retaining doctors every year, and we have seen a net increase of doctors in our province. So I want to give my thoughts to the members of those communities and know that we are working with them, because I want to thank them for the times that I've had opportunity to meet with them, including at AMM, and it is because of the work that we are trying to do with those groups and that we are moving forward on that the creation of the rural physician recruitment advisory committee, together with AMM, is helping us move towards more and more solutions for communities.

We've seen how communities in Swan River have been able to—like Swan River have been able to come up—group of young doctors. We came up with a solution. We worked with them. We will continue to work.

But one thing I can assure Manitobans is when members opposite talk about cutting half a billion dollars from the budget, that is not what brings doctors to this province to stay and to look after communities in the Interlake or anywhere else across the province.

Riding Mountain Constituents Relationship with NDP Government

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Increasing the tax bracket for doctors is going to bring them to Manitoba? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, time after time we have heard this broken, divided NDP government say one thing before an election, make a promise and then betray Manitobans. Remember the 12 women who were fired from their Crown Lands jobs in Minnedosa. Their unread emails of—requests mailed to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) were deleted without being read. Remember the young Manitobans who were turned away from the Russell hospital and faced to deliver their baby on a rural Saskatchewan highway with no help from this NDP government.

What these Manitoba families remember most is this Manitoba government's NDP broken trust, Mr. Speaker.

How can anyone within this province, and especially the residents and constituents of Riding Mountain, believe anything this NDP government has to say? They're full of broken trust, broken faith, and they need to go.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member opposite of things like, and perhaps she doesn't want to remember and I don't want to dwell on this, but things like Connie Curran, things like the Sinclair inquiry.

But more positively, I have never seen 5,000 people at the Legislature except when members opposite sold MTS. I have never seen over 1,000 nurses at the province—at the Legislature except when they tried to close the hospital at Seven Oaks. I have never seen several thousand people at the Legislature except when the Tories tried to privatize home care, the first of its kind in the country, the best home-care program in the world, where it's studied by the Japanese. Members opposite wanted to privatize it. And what happened to Manitobans? They came out by the thousands to tell members opposite, don't take away our health care.

Mining Exploration Permit Wait Times

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): A recent survey of the mining companies shows that Manitoba's dropped from No. 1 to No. 19 under the NDP. Another survey shows Manitoba ranked last across Canada in terms of the permitting process.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a Manitoba prospector just yesterday. He did have a MEAP loan approved but he has been waiting four years to get an exploration permit. Because of the NDP's inability to address the duty to consult, the NDP are facing at least two separate lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, we are now attracting less than 2 per cent of exploration dollars across Canada, and also under the NDP we've had nine mine closures. This is clearly a broken government. Will the NDP just now admit they've lost the trust of Manitobans?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): This allows me to reannounce the fact, for the first time in history, we are promising 25 per cent sharing of revenue with First Nations on new mines.

Because of what's happening in Flin Flon, we are increasing the level of exploration and MEAP exploration finances that are going to go to that region. We are also looking at a tax structure in order to attract capital to that region, Mr. Speaker, and we're also looking to incentives to allow the companies and us to work towards getting more exploration done. That's in Flin Flon.

With respect to Thompson, Mr. Speaker, we met with them at PDAC and we found out where we can put in additional resources to keep Thompson over—even greater than—keeping them open three more years than when they tried to shut down, and we were able to stop them.

So thank you for letting me announce those two things and to remind members opposite that, when we went to PDAC this year, they thought Manitoba was the most progressive in terms of going forward and having partnerships with First Nations through our interdepartmental committee that includes all the mining companies and First Nations sitting at one table, who have agreed together, for once, to go forward.

Lake Manitoba Flood Promises to Flood Victims

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, in 2011, just prior to the provincial election, this government broke a trust, made promises to people round the man-made flood at Lake Manitoba. They told the victims that they were going to be provided for, and then they broke that trust. After the election, many of those promises were ignored and forgotten.

Why did the NDP government refuse to keep their word to the victims of the Lake Manitoba flood? Promises were made, promises were broken.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): I'd like to give a shout out to the member who is not running again, somebody who I've worked with in many previous roles, and to all the MLAs that aren't running again. I want to give a particular shout out with the Jha family here, to my spiritual brother, Bidhu Jha—sorry, Mr. Speaker, the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), one of the most passionate MLAs I've ever seen.

And, Mr. Speaker, as the member asked his question, I've been reminded the last few days why, indeed, I am running in the next election. I've watched members opposite talk about eliminating the East Side Road Authority, the way they would get rid of committee benefits agreements; I've watched them go after, time and time again, on initiatives we've taken in terms of flood mitigation.

And I want to say to members of this Leg., and particularly the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen): I'm running again because I want to see Manitoba, Mr. Speaker—[interjection] Maybe, once, the member for Steinbach might want to listen. I want to see Manitoba go forward, not back.

Hydro Construction Site Blockade Protester Confrontation Concerns

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Speaking of broken promises, Mr. Speaker, that was what we just heard.

On Sunday, February 28th, there was a peaceful blockade at a Manitoba Hydro Bipole III construction site, and I recently spoke with a young woman who was part of that peaceful blockade. She told me about a security guard on the scene who grabbed her arm and attempted to restrain her. She said she felt victimized and very uncomfortable in his presence. There was also two Hydro trucks that began to back up towards her vehicle in a threatening manner, stopping a mere foot or so from her car's front bumper. She also spoke about a Manitoba Hydro site supervisor who verbally threatened to file a civil lawsuit.

Mr. Speaker, why would this minister and this NDP government make a young woman feel victimized and fear for her safety?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): As I've indicated to the member previously, if there is any wrongdoings of that nature, that ought to be reported to the legal authorities immediately. And I would encourage him to forward that information, and I will work with him in proceeding and reporting that to the legal authorities where it belongs.

Restorative Justice Court Construction in Brandon

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): This broken, divided NDP government has made many, many promises.

* (14:20)

They promised not to raise taxes, they promised not to broaden taxes, they promised not to raise the PST, and on more than one occasion they promised to build facilities, only to renege on their promises.

How can the people of Brandon, Manitoba, trust this NDP government will keep their word and construct a restorative justice court for those with mental health issues?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm always happy to talk about Brandon and the initiatives that we've undertaken in Brandon.

Mr. Speaker, there has never been a time in Manitoba history where there's been so much provincial investment in my home community. I'll start with flood protection. The dikes on 18th Street and on Kircaldy Drive which saved my community in 2014 from catastrophic floods, opposed by members opposite—opposed vigorously by members opposite.

The construction of Assiniboine Community College on Brandon's North Hill, a transformative initiative for western Manitoba, the creation of the Len Evans Centre for Trades and Technology, the Manitoba Institute of Culinary Arts.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak to Brandon Regional Health Centre, the development of the regional health centre, which was promised seven times over 11 years by members opposite, cancelled seven times. We've built the Westman cancer treatment centre. We're going to continue to build in Brandon.

Family Services Government Record

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Manitoba's record in child welfare is not one to be proud of. With nearly 11,000 children in care, Manitoba knows it has a system in crisis, crisis like children in hotels, travel scandals and deaths of children in care have left many Manitobans with little trust of the system.

Won't this minister just admit she's running a broken system in a broken government?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): What I will say is that I am proud of the investments we have made to support families in Manitoba no matter where they live, whether they're northern, rural or urban. We are walking beside them providing them with supports that they need: good education, employment, housing, ensuring that we are addressing the issues of poverty.

The members' opposite record, what did they do when it came to supporting families? They slashed millions of dollars from Family Services. They did not support foster parents; they reduced that funding, and when a parent came to ask for support, they said that they were going to charge them. Shame on them.

I will stand by our record anytime compared to their record, and people need to be very fearful of what will happen if they become government.

Manitoba Hydro Transmission Line Minnesota Line Route Concerns

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Residents of Manitoba are tired of this broken NDP government not listening to them. This is especially true when it comes to the current route for the Minnesota-Manitoba hydro transmission line. After the three rounds of public meetings and a strong opposition to the current route, the NDP are still not listening to Manitobans. Is this because, according to the minister, the selection of the route and the submission was made a long time ago, way before any of us? Why would the minister hold public meetings to decide the route when the decision was made a long time ago?

Will the minister admit this is a broken NDP government that has lost the trust of all Manitobans?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I do have to say, Mr. Speaker, the reason the Conservative Party never had any issues with Hydro is because they never did anything with Hydro. They mothballed it—they mothballed it. We're building it with over \$9 billion of export revenues, which will keep rates low for Manitobans and create jobs for Manitobans in the North, in the cities, in the south, where manufacturing is going on. And the reason we're holding public hearings? So the people of Manitoba can make their voice heard on what's best for their community.

And the members opposite—they don't support those things. Their job is to slice and dice Hydro and sell it off. That won't be a prosperous future. The rates are among the lowest in North America. If they do with Hydro what they did with the telephone system, the rates will go from among the lowest in North America to among the highest, the pension plan will be stripped and people will lose their jobs. We're building for all Manitoba, including the people in the constituency of southeastern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Time for oral questions has concluded.

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: It is now time for petitions.

Manitoba Interlake—Request to Repair and Reopen Provincial Roads 415 and 416

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Interlake region is an important transportation corridor for Manitoba but, unfortunately, is still dealing with serious underinvestment in infrastructure under this provincial government.

(2) Provincial roads 415 and 416 are vital to the region but have still not been repaired or reopened since sustaining damages during the 2010 flood.

(3) Residents and businesses in the Manitoba Interlake are seriously impacted and inconvenienced by having no adequate east-west travel routes over an area of 525 square miles.

(4) This lack of east-west travel routes is also a major public safety concern, as emergency response vehicles are impeded from arriving in a timely manner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government repair and reopen the provincial roads 415 and 416 to allow adequate east-west travel in the Interlake.

And this petition is signed by T. Griffith, J. Mosher, T. Goodman and many more fine Manitobans.

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

Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Every day, hundreds of Manitoba children walk to school in Oakbank and must cross PTH 206 at the intersection with Cedar Avenue.

There have been many dangerous incidents where drivers use the right shoulder to pass vehicles that have stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left at this intersection.

(3) Law enforcement officials have identified this intersection as a hot spot of concern for the safety of schoolchildren, drivers and emergency responders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government improve the safety at the pedestrian corridor at the

intersection of PTH 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank by considering such steps as highlighting pavement markings to better indicate the location of the shoulders and crosswalk, as well as installing a lighted crosswalk structure.

This is signed by S. Cann, V. Nolan, B. Tjadon and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

Pioneer Road

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Pioneer Road, which was once a regular country road, has now become a main thoroughfare by increasing truck traffic from the highways.

(2) The majority of the traffic runs to and from several businesses such as Richardson Pioneer elevator, Wheat City Seeds and Mazer's farm, including drivers wanting to avoid city traffic and the 18th Street bottleneck.

(3) Pioneer Road is a very rough road with potholes caused by the increased semitruck traffic and has no proper turning lanes, which creates a safety issue for vehicles turning off and on to the highway, such as the school bus.

(4) Pioneer Road is very dusty with large trucks, often tandem loads, RVs and farm equipment causing clouds of dust and flying stones that impairs visibility, posing further dangers to traffic which will only increase with the expansion of local businesses.

(5) Pioneer Road is, at present, a designated truck route and increased traffic will cause more deterioration and safety issues.

(6) The paving of Pioneer Road was discussed prior to the last election and traffic has increased greatly since that time.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation consider paving Pioneer Road.

* (14:30)

(2) To request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation consider constructing proper paved turning lanes on Pioneer Road.

Signed by E. Tardiff, C. Miller, G. Tardiff and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any other petitions?

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to grievances.

The honourable member for Steinbach, on a grievance?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): On a grievance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as was the case yesterday and I'm sure it will be the case this afternoon and probably going into the evening, the NDP is going to be begging for more time. They're going to be looking for a reprieve. Just a little bit more time, is what they're going to say.

Not only have they had a traditional mandate of four years which is afforded to most governments when they're elected, this government also had an additional six months. They granted themselves an additional six months by postponing the election which was supposed to happen in the fall of last year 'til April 19th of this year, and yet they still want more time, Mr. Speaker, more time to correct the mistakes that they've made over the last 16 years.

The Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) and others figure if they just had another hour, maybe just another two hours, they could fix all of the problems that they created and weren't able to fix over the last 16 years, Mr. Speaker. We've heard it from the Minister of Education who put out a press release, and, of course, a couple of days ago he put out one that got him into a little bit of trouble, but they continue to say, if we just had a little bit more time we would be able to do a few more things.

What have they done with their time? We've seen what they've done this particular mandate where they have increased taxes at record level. That's what they did with their time this mandate. Now when we've given them, or when they've taken for themselves, I would say, Mr. Speaker, an additional six months, they still couldn't find the time to bring in a budget, and instead we had something called an economic statement. Never before done in the history of Manitoba did they refuse to bring forward an actual budget. That's what they did with their extra time, and yet we still hear day after day that they'd like just a little bit more time.

Now, we understand that there is important debate that happens on bills. We've always said we want to have a reasonable and respectful amount of time to debate bills, Mr. Speaker. In a normal afternoon, we only have about two hours to debate bills. That's not a lot of time to debate a bill that might be with us for an eternity or at least a generation. I would say that most Manitobans would say that two hours isn't a long time to debate a bill, and yet the government thinks it's too much time; we should rush and be through even faster.

Well, I would say as I said at the last session, Mr. Speaker, and I said it on the record and I'll say it on the record again, when we've talked to the government about the passage of bills. And I would remind the government that we actually wanted them to come back sooner than they did for this session prior to the election. We were certainly willing to sit several weeks before, which would have given them more time, but we said to them when it came to bills that they needed to decide what they were going to prioritize. Whichever bill they would call first within a day, we would have those two hours and more than likely that bill would pass.

For example, with a bill like Bill 6, which is sponsored by the Premier (Mr. Selinger), I had the opportunity to have a briefing with him several weeks ago and I said to the Premier at that time that we would certainly be prepared to see that bill pass, and, if he wanted it passed, he should call it early in the session because that bill hadn't yet received second reading, it would have to go to committee and it would have to have third reading all within 12 days.

So we offered him that opportunity. I offered him personally my assurance that if he would call that bill early in the session, there would be time to get through the different legislative processes that it has to go through to pass, and yet days passed and they never called that bill as a priority bill for debate, Mr. Speaker, even though they said it was such a priority.

When it comes to a bill like Bill 33, which is the bill that I'm responsible for, I've had opportunity to speak to the Law Society, Mr. Speaker, about this particular bill. I've give them my assurance that there are many things, in fact, most things within the bill which we think are positive but we need a couple of days to debate it. It's a complete reform of the family law act, and that two days, which would amount to actually four hours, would not be an unreasonable

amount of time to debate that bill, and yet the government never called that bill as a first order of priority.

There are other bills, education bills, which we were prepared to debate and see pass in this Legislature, and yet they were never called as a priority. And yet the Education Minister puts out a news release saying that somehow they are being stopped when they were never prioritized by their own caucus. There's a bill on water surface, Mr. Speaker, which we have said that we support and we are prepared to see passed if the government would prioritize it, and, in fact, a few days ago, we went on the record and asked them to call it first in the afternoon, and then they refused to call it first and refused, then, to have it pass. So, clearly, that wasn't a priority.

And yet we're going to hear from this government, through news releases or other mechanisms, that they just wish there was more time, that we had more time to do things, and yet they've revealed themselves what their priorities are or what they're aren't.

Now, I recognize what is going on here, and I know that many others do. When I talk to different groups in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, they understand that the government is just trying to play a political game with bills and they want to have some—a little bit of politics about bills. I think that's unfortunate, on bills that are as important as some of these bills are, to play politics.

Now, I'm glad, and I made the assurance, as I've made the assurance of the government many times before, that the truth and reconciliation bill, we would've liked to have seen it debated last week. We asked for it to be called after the minister of Aboriginal affairs suggested it be called. We asked that it be called. We wanted it debated. We were going to pass it this afternoon. We believe it needs to be passed. We know there are speeches that members, important speeches, are going to make this afternoon, because they are their last speeches, and that makes sense, Mr. Speaker. And we honour those speeches because it's something important in the life cycle of a Legislature.

But for this government to now say that they just didn't have enough time, well, they set their own priorities, and by not calling bills as priorities, they've indicated, which are either not priority bills for them or bills that they just simply want to play politics with instead of actually having passed,

Mr. Speaker. So we'll hear the government again say, just give us a little bit more time, we just need a bit more time, even though they're only weeks from facing the electorate. I would say that after 16 years, after four and a half months, this government is out of time. I believe that Manitobans feel it's high time that they actually be called to account for an election. And that is not only something that's important for Manitobans, it's not only something that is vital for Manitobans, it's something that they really want, to be able to express their concerns about this government.

We've heard the government itself express concerns about itself and some very, very important and valid concerns, even this morning we heard. But it's going to be going to the people soon; the people of Manitoba are going to have their voice. So, when this government gets up at some point, either today or in the future, and say, oh, if we only had a little bit more time, that is no excuse, Mr. Speaker. They've had more time than any other government in Manitoba memory to do things, not only in this particular term but in the life cycle of their government. Sixteen years they've had time, and we've seen what they've done with it. They've increased the debt in the province of Manitoba. They've brought in the highest tax increases in the history of our province on Manitobans. They've failed on issues like child welfare. They have failed on issues in terms of having the kind of infrastructure that Manitoba really needs. They've failed time and time again, and yet they want more time.

And so we'll hear again, Mr. Speaker, where the government is going to beg for just a little bit more time. If they'd only had a few more minutes, if they only had another hour, if they only had this, if they only had that. Well, they've had everything that a government could hope for. They've had a majority government. They had the opportunity in terms of calling bills in the priority that they wanted to. They showed what their priorities were, they showed what their priorities were not by ensuring that bills would be prioritized. Even when we said and when I said to the Premier (Mr. Selinger), ensure that a bill like Bill 6 gets brought forward early in the session and we'll make sure that it gets passed, they didn't do that. They decided not to make that a priority.

So we're going to hear this government beg for just a little bit more time. I say that Manitobans are saying to them, April 19th can't come soon enough. They are out of time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any further grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

(Continued)

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be calling report stage amendments, concurrence and third reading on Bill 18, Bill 15 and Bill 33, then concurrence and third reading on Bill 5 and Bill 13. After that, second reading on Bill 6 and, finally, concurrence and third reading on Bill 7 and Bill 2.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker: Be—it's been announced that we'll be calling bills in the following order, starting with report stage amendments and concurrence and third reading on Bill 18, Bill 15 and Bill 33, and then concurrence and third reading on Bill 5 and Bill 13. And then after that, on second reading of Bill 6, and then finally, concurrence and third reading of Bill 7 and Bill 2. That's for information of the House.

We'll start now by calling Bill 18.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS Bill 18—The Path to Reconciliation Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll call Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise, Mr. Speaker, on a report stage amendment. I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson),

THAT Bill 18 be amended in Clause 5(2) by adding the following at the end:

The minister must also arrange for the report, or a summary of it, to be translated into the languages of Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibway and Oji-Cree, and make each translation available to the public.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs,

THAT Bill 18 be amended in Clause 5(2) by adding the following at the end:

The minister must also arrange for the report, or a summary of it, to be translated into the languages of Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibway and Oji-Cree, and make each translation available to the public.

Amendment is in order.

Any debate on this matter?

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Bill 18 is to be translated into the various languages, and so this provides that there will be a follow-up on the annual report that at the minimum that the summary also be translated into these languages, indigenous languages, to Manitoba, which are important, and this will be important in terms of a follow-up to all those who are affected in terms of reconciliation, and I think will be an important step forward in achieving the reconciliation that we aim to achieve.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on this matter?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question is—for the House is the amendment proposed by the honourable member for River Heights to Bill 18.

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

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— AMENDED BILLS

Bill 18—The Path to Reconciliation Act

Mr. Speaker: Now move on to report stage amendments—oh, pardon me—concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), that Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act; Loi sur la reconciliation, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

Encore une fois, Monsieur le Président. *[One more time, Mr. Speaker.]*

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, that Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act; Loi sur la reconciliation, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development

and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Any debate on this matter?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to say briefly this is an important and historic occasion that we're moving forward on the path to reconciliation, and I want to give credit to the Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs for showing leadership in this area.

I think it is historic because it moves forward on what the results of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were. We heard Justice Sinclair presenting at the committee stage and he presented well with a deep understanding that he has of this issue.

It is important, in addition, that when I asked at the second reading of the Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs whether this was a reconciliation not just with respect to the residential schools but also with regard to the '60s scoop and the more recent apprehension of many Aboriginal children from their families and the CFS system, and the minister said, yes, absolutely we want to move forward, and I applaud the minister for that.

There is yet much more to do before the work is done. This is just setting the path, and I look forward to working with others in this Chamber and continuing that work in the days and weeks and months and years ahead. So thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to this being passed and becoming law very quickly. Just very briefly, I also want to recognize the members who are not contesting the election. I want to recognize the works that they have all done here and wish them well in their future careers and thank them for all the contributions here.

I want to thank the Speaker in particular, as one who is leaving, for his valiant service here over many years and his impartiality as he—in his work as Speaker.

I want to thank the clerks and the staff, the House leaders, and all the other staff of the Legislative Assembly and, of course, particularly my own staff who really made my job possible here. It is difficult enough without that and my staff have been extraordinary.

I want to thank the Hansard staff, the Library staff, the security and the Human Resources staff and so many more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I will sit down and let others speak.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate?

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, it is my belief that in this House, there's a lot of very talented, very committed Manitobans who have put their names forward to represent our neighbours and our friends and our communities. So I'm going to ask for a favour right off the hop. My wife, Michelle, and my son, Alex, were looking for parking and couldn't get here in time to be introduced by the Speaker, so I want to introduce them; they're in the gallery up above, looking down on us. My favour to you—*[interjection]*—yes, I think she's parked the car; that's a nice offer from the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen)—my favour that I'm asking of you is to keep a secret because my son's supposed to be in school this afternoon, and there's a lot of his old man in him. So he's here instead of being where he's supposed to be. Well, I am thrilled that my boy is here, and I'm thrilled that Michelle's here. And I'm thrilled that I get a chance to make a final speech in this Legislature here.

* (14:50)

I love coming to work as an MLA. I have always loved it. I knew that I would love it even before I tossed my name in the hat back in 1995.

I'm very proud to have served the people of the Dauphin constituency for 21 years, every community within that. Yes, I've earned these grey hairs; I'm proud of my grey hair because I've earned every one of them in more ways than one. I'm very proud of being the longest-serving MLA in the history of the Dauphin constituency, and I want every single person in Manitoba to know that I am very proud to have served 17 years in a government that had, at the core of its being, the wishes of all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, I don't care what side of the House you're on, I don't care if you're in the media or where you're at, if you're going to take a run at our government, I'm going to take a run back at you.

What we did we should all on our side of the House be damn proud of the things that we did on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

When you get up to make your swan song, you know, you think of some of the things that have happened over 21 years, just in this Chamber. I can remember clear as a bell in 1995, after the '95 election, standing in the seat just over there, just

on the other side, that's the one, on the other side of the member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat), and we came into this House very first day and it happened to be in the middle of national forestry week. And it was a day when the Natural Resources minister, it was Albert Driedger at the time, put in—*[interjection]*—yes, give Albert some love, that's good. Albert Driedger had on every single desk a nice little seedling, and it wasn't just little cheap seedlings, Albert used to give us nice potted seedlings that we could then transfer onto our front yards.

Well I walk in and this took me by surprise. I wasn't expecting to have to get up and make my first comments in the House on that day. But I walked in, I looked at the seedling and I started asking some of my colleagues what this meant because I was the Natural Resources critic, and somebody said, well, you're going to have to respond. The minister's going to make a statement, and you're going to respond to that statement. Well, I was a little panicked, but Gary Doer and my colleagues were, I think, even more panicked, and they started sending me notes. Within about two and a half minutes I had like a stack of notes in front of me to help guide me through what I was going to say. This is the very, I was actually the very first person to speak on behalf of the NDP after the '95 election in this House, and so they were, I think they were kind of worried about what I might say.

So I listened to Albert speak, and then I got up. And I was kind of nervous, and I looked down in front of me and in front of me was Clif Evans. Clif Evans turns his seat around, he looks up at me and he pops out all of his 'fralse' teeth and gives me a great big smile. That kind of broke the ice for me. And I said, you know, in this House, we have to have good strategies. We have to have a good plan for forestry, and if the Conservatives every come up with one, I'll support it, and I sat down.

So I was little partisan right off the beginning, but you know what, I am a little partisan. We all should be. We come from where we think; we come from our philosophies. And there's nothing wrong with my philosophy being different than somebody else's. And you can bet within the NDP our philosophies are pretty much the same, and you can bet in the Tory Party and in the Liberal Party. And that's good for Manitobans, they get a choice. They're going to have a choice on April 19th, and they'll make their choice on that day. But a strong democracy depends on us thinking through our

positions, communicating them well and standing behind them. And that's what I think I've done for 21 years in this building.

I think I have been an absolutely lucky Manitoban to be a part of a subset of Manitobans that get to say they've been elected to represent their neighbours. Not every Manitoban can say that. Not every Manitoban gets to do that in this building and in their constituencies and all around the province, and sometimes at meetings outside of Manitoba. I very much think I'm a lucky guy for that, and I've got to say, and I don't want this to sound like, you know, Mr. Smith Goes To Washington, but sometimes I go out of my way to walk right up that grand staircase, right up between those two bison. Every morning when I turn off of Portage Avenue and I—was that Memorial Boulevard I turn into, and I look and I see the building, and I see the Golden Boy on the dome and then the shoulders of that building and I think, I'm part of that. I'm very lucky to be part of that.

There's no other job—I mean, I wanted to play centre with the Toronto Maple Leafs back when I was a kid, and that would have been a pretty cool job, too, back when—back in the days when the Leafs had a team and they used to hoist the Stanley Cup, I thought that was—I thought that's what I wanted to be when I grew up. But I also wanted to be a teacher and all the rest of it, but, in the back of my mind, I always wanted to be an elected official.

And I've lived that dream, and I work in a Chamber like this, a building and a Chamber like this so jam packed full of history, jam packed full of lessons. When I was first here, we were in opposition, and then I was a backbencher. That meant I had a lot of time to do House duty and listen to speeches and lay back in my chair and look at all the things that you can see above us right now. And I would see the name Alfred or Manu, and then I would go and look them up and learn about the traditions of this place and the—and kind of things that we need to do as elected officials because it's an important job.

I also have been very lucky to represent Dauphin. I'm a little biased, but I think that's the best constituency of the 57. I know I'm not going to get a lot of love on that one, a lot of support, maybe, but I understand that. The reason I'm lucky, the reason that I think Dauphin is a great riding is because it's full of people. It's just a little—yes, Riding Mountain's just a little south of God's country, but the—it is—my constituency is full of people living in communities

who step up. And it doesn't matter what their politics are. It doesn't matter if they're New Democrats or Liberals or Conservatives. They step up for the good of their neighbours and their communities, and they've made my job so easy. And we've done a lot of things in every community that I represent. I will miss that for sure.

I have—I'm standing on the shoulders of people who went before me. We have a tradition of winning in Dauphin. Forty-four of the last 47 years have been represented by New Democrats in Dauphin. There was four years there where the—Jim Galbraith in the Sterling Lyon days became the MLA, but between Peter Burtniak and John Plowman and myself, 44 of 47 years. I do think that is something to be proud of.

And do you know what else we have? We have a very good candidate in this next election. Her name is Darcy Scheller. Darcy's a very good candidate. She's been working hard. She understands how important it is to elect New Democrats, and Darcy's going to give it her best shot.

And, when I talk about people whose shoulders that I stand upon, the very first name that pops into my mind is Fred Zaplitny. Fred Zaplitny was the Member of Parliament back in the '40s and '50s. Fred was with the CCF. Fred energized a whole constituency within my constituency. At the time, there was a lot of guys like me, white Anglo-Saxon protestants that represented the Dauphin area and excluded the Ukrainian population. It was in their best interests to exclude the Ukrainian population because they weren't going to come out and vote for them. But Fred went out onto farm site after farm site, and he spoke with people in Ukrainian and energized them to come to the polls, included them—inclusion, which is at the base of, I think, the principals of the New Democratic Party. Fred got those people to come out, and, if he hadn't done that, I dare say, we wouldn't be holding the seat 44 out of 47 years. But he did that and I am one of the beneficiaries of it, and I'll always be grateful for that.

* (15:00)

There's two more people that I want to mention locally and I hope they're listening right now. One is Rosalie Pshebylo. That's Pshebylo with a P at the beginning, for those folks in Hansard. The—Rosalie and I have worked together for a long time, since 1998. And I remember, well, there's one story that sums up Rosalie. There's a woman from Roblin whose husband had passed away; she was elderly, and she'd gone—she'd had a disagreement with

Veterans Affairs and she went to the Member of Parliament and he didn't do anything for her, so she came to us.

Well, you give Rosalie an issue like this and she sinks her teeth into it and she gets results. She got results for this woman. It ended up being like a \$14,000 or so lump sum and then a certain amount of money every month. The woman wanted to share it with Rosalie; she wanted to bring Rosalie flowers. Rosalie said oh I can't do that. The next time we were in Roblin, this woman phoned up and said come have lunch with me, so Rosalie did and the woman made a nice lunch and sandwiches and soup to say thank you for the work Rosalie had done.

That's what politics is all about. It wasn't me, it wasn't anybody in here, it wasn't the Premier, it wasn't—it was Rosalie Pshebylo doing that kind of work on behalf of our democracy out there.

I've also been very lucky to have Pat Maksymchuk as my constituency assistant in Dauphin. Pat and Bill are a great couple, the kind of couple that'll give the shirt off their backs to help you. Much like what Rosalie had done, Pat digs into things and gets stuff done for my constituents, and I want to say very publicly: thanks, Pat.

As I said, I believe our government in over 17 years has made life much better for Manitobans. And part of the way we did that was that we were connected to Manitobans. We—when I say we, I include people like former Premier Gary Doer. Gary always understood what the people of Manitoba were thinking and he always wanted to be connected with that.

You know, I sometimes didn't look forward to going to Cabinet on Wednesday morning; you had to have your ducks lined up to face Gary Doer at 9 o'clock in the morning. But I always knew no matter what went on at Cabinet, I always knew that Gary thought things through politically and that he was there to protect the Cabinet and the government, and that things that we were doing, we have good policy discussions, but he knew his primary role was to understand the politics of it, to understand how this impacted Manitoba families. And he wasn't going to let you do something that ran counter to that. I want people to absolutely understand that I think that's essential when it comes to governing.

I was surrounded—well, not just 17 years, but all 21 years, I think, by MLAs; all of us, but particularly the MLAs that I shared caucus time with, people

who I think represent Manitobans, understand we need to be connected with Manitobans. And I want to very much underscore that we had staff, all the MLAs, all the Cabinet ministers, the Premier, we had staff that understood that too. We have and have had a talented group of people, New Democrats, people who believed that we were going to build a society based on cooperation, a society where those with the greatest, that people with—that give according to their ability and receive according to their need, people who live that daily, inject that into the policy discussions, inject that into how we communicate our stands, our policies. And I want to say we had chief of staffs like Bob Dewar, Michael Balagus, Liam Martin, people who understood that and were honest and forthright with us. I can remember being told by chiefs of staff, you want to do what? That was their job. If I was coming up with something that didn't fit in or maybe I hadn't thought through, there were staff that would say, Stan, how about this? We had people in Cab com who knew how to communicate policy, who knew how to communicate what—who could take a budget and dominate the airwaves for two or three weeks. It must have been frustrating on the other side of the House trying to deal with that. Well, I want you to know you were up against some very talented people, very talented.

You go down to room 14, issues management and discussions of policy, there were people down there who could slice and dice and parse and come up with good ideas, and then we'd translate that into our government policy and then we would communicate the daylights out of it.

See, we understood that we're not a think tank, we're not a left-of-centre think tank in this building. There's nothing wrong with think tanks left of centre, right of centre. That's not us; we govern. We make decisions that impact people's lives. We can draw from think tanks. We can draw from people with ideas, but we—the buck stops with us. We make the decisions that impact people's families.

The other thing I think we got right is that we used all the connections that we could. We were in the mall; we were in the shopping centres; we were all over the province, MLAs listening to people, and then taking that information back to caucus meetings. We didn't say we weren't going to look at a poll; I don't say we should govern by polls. But it would be absolutely wrong to think that we can't use a poll as a tool, or a focus group as a tool, to make better decisions on policy, on government stance,

and ensure that we're connected to Manitobans because, in my mind, if you say that we're not going to do polls, that we're not going to listen to them, you're further disconnecting yourself from the people that we claim to represent, and we're a representative democracy in here. The most important thing is that you're connected to people back home, and then you reflect that in the decisions that we make here.

Now how did we do this for—I think successfully for that many years? Something I refer to as progressive incrementalism. Progressive because it is based on the ideals, based on the principles of our party, building a society based on co-operation as opposed to a world where it's dominated by competition and dog-eat-dog, step on somebody to get ahead. I like our principles much better. It's the reason I joined the party. We were progressive; we didn't bite off more than we could chew. There were people who thought we could spend more political capital all the time; but we were smart in our decision making. And, as a result, I think we moved the goal posts in Manitoba quite a darn bit.

Now we had 17 years to do it, and I'm very proud of what we've accomplished in those 17 years, but I think it's hard just to superficially count the things we've done because I think we—and we should be proud of this on our side of the House—we fundamentally changed Manitoba. We fundamentally changed Manitoba for the better. The things that we believe in, Manitobans believe in. The key to our success was that we were patient; we worked with Manitobans; we took our cues from Manitobans. We moved things forward in such a way that we didn't tick off too many people, and we were able to string together four election victories. That counts for something. That means that people like the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the Cabinet and the caucus and all our staff and our volunteers and our party did a lot of good work to maintain that confidence of the people of Manitoba. We should be proud of that.

*(15:10)

We have—we didn't mind being populist either; I'd rather be populist than technocratic. Populism is—it's being connected—I don't mean Donald Trump populism; I reject that absolutely, completely—but we have been connected to Manitobans. We understood what they wanted, and for the—and, as much as we could, we gave it to them.

There are two challenges that I do want to address. One, I think—I'm very worried about the degradation of political parties. Politicians take a bad

rap; I think political parties do too. And what we have to remember is how essential political parties are to the future of our democracy here in Manitoba. The other thing that I'm worried about is the diminishing authority of MLAs. And I've sat on this side of the House, in opposition. I sat way over at the back there, in the backbench, and I sat 11 years in government; now I'm back here in the backbench. I want to say, clearly, that each of those moves served me well in terms of what I can contribute to this place. I learned a lot of things over there in opposition, and I saw a lot of very good examples of how to be a good politician. And I wasn't happy sitting way at the back there in the backbench, I'll admit. But, again, I learned a lot sitting in that backbench, watching people who knew what they were doing. And I had a blast as a Cabinet minister; I really felt part of a team and the things that we were doing.

Alfred is up above the—above you there, Mr. Speaker, up on the wall, Alfred the Great. He was a king of England. He was king of Wessex. He developed a system that was based on confidence. It was based on a mandate and receiving that mandate from people. Mostly, he was—you know, he would go off to battle and he'd throw out his policies, and he got consent from his warriors by them rattling their weapons. Pretty rudimentary, but it's a system that we have here in Manitoba. I don't want anybody out there swinging axes and things, but it's consent. And you don't get to govern without consent. And you don't just get consent at the time of the election. Consent has—means something in between elections. And, if you don't have that consent—not—confidence is the word I'm thinking of. If you don't have that confidence, then you don't get to govern.

Political parties have a huge role to play in terms of what they do. I do think, though, when you think of political parties, that no individual—premier, minister, caucus member—none of us are bigger than our political parties—absolutely none of us. And, when you start to think that you're somebody bigger than a political party, I think it starts to unravel.

We've had a tough time in our party the last little while, and I want to say to the Premier, I want to say very directly to the Premier, that I regret that he and his family had to go through what they went through. It was not easy on the Premier. It was not easy on anyone. There were people who sacrificed. There were people who got caught in some crossfire. There were elected people that I believe were mistreated. There were staffers, some of them in the

gallery today, who were mistreated. But I want to—I want it to be very clear: the Premier (Mr. Selinger) did—should not have had to undergone what the Premier underwent.

I think there's a way to deal with this. And I think this is a lesson not just for New Democrats but for other parties too. I think—I think—there'll be a lot of talk about an election over the next little while, but I think we have to sit down and talk about a mechanism that we can put in place based on what they do in Australia with spill votes, based on what they do in the British conservative party. We don't need to be putting people through what we've put ourselves through. It's time to move on.

I want to talk about the people that I've met along the way. I want to say that people who put their names forward on each side of this House are very good people, and they get involved for all the right reasons. I remember dealing with one Jim Downey. Jim made a swan song speech here that I think is one of the best that I've heard, you know, next to, you know, my friends from Fort Rouge and Seine River last week. And what he—what I learned was that you could come in here and you can duke it out and you can go at it, and then it's just like water off a duck with Jim. He'd talked to me in the hallway, and it's like nothing ever happened in here. But you knew Jim Downey was a partisan guy who was going to stand up for his principles and he was going to go out and fight you in the next election. There's nothing wrong with that. I encourage it.

I want to briefly mention Terry and Lester Vopni because those two gentlemen sold me my first NDP membership, got me involved in this. I have no regrets.

I want to talk very quickly about six people who I've got to know very well over the last little while. And we've been called a number of things. I like to refer to us—every now and then, in our offices down there, a six-pack of Rebel IPA comes in through the doors, and I want to say that it is a six-pack, not an eight-pack or a 10-pack or a two-four. But there's six people who I will have an undying respect for, trust, love, which is one of the reasons why I'm so optimistic about the future of our party. I think there will always be people like the six of us who will stand up and sacrifice, not sit back, not be wallflowers. But, when our party needed us, we were there. I'll never forget that.

Michelle and Alex, I've introduced you to before, were my—one of my proudest days was

introducing a budget in 2012, and you got to see Alex standing right up here. My mom was with him, Michelle was—is in the audience. Alex gave his Juan Perón kind of a wave when he was introduced. Back and forth between here and Dauphin, it—all of our family sacrificed. I also contend that all of our families benefit. Three and a half hours back and forth to Dauphin, Michelle and I solved a lot of the world's problems. You'd look in the rear-view mirror, and there's Alex sitting in his car seat with the cat, snoozing. You know, they made a contribution too, Michelle and Alex did. I couldn't do what I do without Michelle and Alex.

I couldn't do what I do without my mom and dad, who taught me how to grow up. Dad taught me how to stand up for myself and think for myself. My mom taught me how to be compassionate, how—what community means; we, not me, Mom would say. But most of all, I want to end my speaking time in this Legislature by saying a few things about my grandfather, Stan Paul. I introduced you to Stan Paul back when I made my maiden speech. I reintroduced you to Stan Paul when I did the budget speech. He has the most impact on me than anybody else in my life. He was a bridge builder. He had a truck and a Caterpillar. He built bridges in the Swan River Valley. He connected families to each other. He connected communities with each other. He connected the Swan River Valley to the rest of the world. There was no other guy like him. He always had a twinkle in his eye. He always said nice things about people, and the measuring stick that I use to determine whether or not I've done a good job is whether or not my grandfather would be proud of me. And I end my career by affirming that my grandfather would be proud of the work that I've done as an MLA.

I want to wish all of you good luck in the upcoming election, and for one last time, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you.

*(15:20)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): So today's my last speech. It's not as if these walls need to hear my voice anymore.

Actually, maybe I should have a caveat on that; I do want a caveat on that. I know former Mayor Juba, he did come back, he stood in the loges and got in an argument with the minister for Public Works at the time over a washroom in a park. I believe the Sergeant-at-Arms, who was quite frail, and I think he was around 80 years old, was sent over to get

Mayor Juba out of here. I think the story goes, it's Joe Borowski thought there was a rather awkward moment and intervened and got him out.

So I do reserve the right to come back and give a speech from over there, Mr. Speaker, and I know the Sergeant-at-Arms will have something to do about that.

I want to reflect back on the fact that I've actually been hanging around this place for, I think it's about 39 years. I was first introduced to the Legislature from up there. I was hired one summer as an information officer with Elections Manitoba, and the deputy clerk of the House, his name was Andy Anstett, known to many in this Chamber. He insisted that all of the students attend question period during the Schreyer government every day. So we sat up there and we became indeed students of politics, Mr. Speaker.

Well, then, it was a few years later, and I came back into this Chamber, sitting down there as a deputy clerk. We did about four years at the table. That was so long ago, Mr. Speaker; actually a few days after I came in here, Bob Wilson was thrown out of the House for—because he was convicted under the Criminal Code.

And you know how they say that things, you know, the pendulum swings, and things go in waves. That was so long ago, Mr. Speaker, Conservatives in those days sold pot. That's how long ago that was. I don't know if the pendulum will swing again. I don't see that coming.

During those years, Mr. Speaker, I had the experience of being in here during what has been called the French language crisis, and I got to sleep in the Chamber, on the loge. And I know people are saying, what do you mean, sleep? You know, people sleeping in the Chamber? Actually I remember a Cabinet minister in the Filmon government sleeping on the front bench—we don't do that. Maybe the second bench.

But that was so intense of an experience, I—during—as soon as the French language crisis was over, I got in my car, and I drove, I believe, to New Orleans. And I was walking down the street, and so a little fella came up to me, and he said, I know where you got your shoes. And I had got them in Duluth when I visited my sister, Elizabeth [*phonetic*], and I'm pretty sure I paid duty on them, but—I said, what do you mean? He said, I know where you got your

shoes. Give me a dollar and I'll tell you where I got your shoes.

So, by then, there was a number of tourists that were gathered around me, and I thought, jeez, well, I might as well go for it. So I gave him a buck, and he says, there's a sucker born every minute. You got your shoes on your feet, and you're right here in New Orleans. So I drove back home and went back to work.

So I say to the members of the table, I understand the pressures that you're under, I know how you carry this stuff home at night. It's not an easy job, but I really—I share, I empathize with you, but I do commend you for your effort. It's so important. You make this place work, actually. So thank you very much.

And, of course, I came back, just to test the clerks, working for Elijah Harper one day, and that didn't go too badly. But—so I know that there will be some that are questioning now whether the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is, in fact, the dean of the House after these old man stories that I'm telling you. I want to just assure the House, that when it comes to longevity in this Chamber, I believe the member for Thompson served in this House with Roblin, and I don't mean Duff, Mr. Speaker.

I think we're reminded on a regular basis of how transitory and how temporary our existence is in this Chamber, and I think no more so than the fact that we have this little tag on our desk. And, you know, when the pages go by, the thing ruffles away in there, and sometimes I come in and it's halfway out and think it's a metaphor, maybe that's the message I got. But—I'm going to keep this, I'll keep it as a bookmark, but it does remind us that each and every day is so important that we can't let any of this great opportunity ever go to waste.

I know it's been 23 years for me as an elected person, but I swear it's been six or seven years. The time is fleeting, but the opportunity is even so much more so unless we are indeed pledged to work so hard. Every—I remember walking to the Conservation office on the third floor, walking up those 88 steps, and every day, Mr. Speaker, I think—well, I'm out of shape—but how lucky I am to be here and I just have always thanked for—you know, given thanks for another day here.

So 23 years has gone by; I can't believe it. I—first of all, I want to pay tribute, though, to some very important people in my life. My father died, and I

have said this to the House before, when I was two years old and, sometimes I've actually wondered if it hasn't been that much different for my own family. This is a very compelling cause, obviously, and it's a vortex; it draws you in. I've been a lawyer. I can tell you that draws you in, too, but this has a 24-7 presence.

And so, to organize things in our family, Margy [*phonetic*] found this huge wall calendar, and she found all these secret, colour-coded markers. And what she did was, she had all the dates on there and, every month, she dutifully erased it and put out all of the commitments that all five of us had. It was a mess. It didn't look like the kitchens in those magazines, you know, but it worked. And I think it really helped move things along so that we were—yes, there was moments, you know, I didn't see that on the calendar, Gord, you're going to have to take the bus to Duck Bay, you know. So I think that, as much as politics is compelling for the member, it entraps the whole family. And the young children don't get a choice; this becomes their life.

I know that our family, the kids have met some that would never—people they've never would have met otherwise. And they've been to places. So I know it has enriched them, but, at the same time, I think there's been some burdens, absolutely. I want to just say that I have always tried to make time for family, and I've always thought it was the No. 1 priority, aside from health. And, if you don't get that right, nothing else is going to work.

But, you know, it has a way of—sometimes, when I was with family, I felt I was with them maybe in body only. I drove the older two kids to Gordon Bell school on the way to the Legislature for several years and, one day, I pulled up behind the school and stopped and no one got out of the vehicle. And I turned around and there was nobody in the back seat. And I suspect, Mr. School, they were home in bed, sleeping because the school year was over. I think I got away with it, at least until now.

I want to give thanks to the family. They're all here. Margy [*phonetic*] and my sister, Charlotte [*phonetic*], and Dorothy [*phonetic*] and Gordie [*phonetic*] and Kotel [*phonetic*]. And thank you so much for all your support.

I want to pay tribute to the strong people of St. Johns. First of all, I would not be here today without the wisdom and support over the years of Judy Wasylycia-Leis. Those are, you know, those are small-big shoes to fill, eh? What a tremendous

person, very important in my life. She taught me so many lessons, Mr. Speaker. But I've been struck by how many just truly genuine and earnest people I have been honoured to meet in the constituency. I can't believe I've been let into so many peoples' lives. I can't believe the support that they have given me, time after time, and been so respectful. I just have loved that work as an MLA. And I think, quite frankly—and I'm from a small town, Fort Francis—I always loved that, you know, being from a small town and knowing people—and it actually made my part of Winnipeg more like a small town, because I got to know people, and you had to get to know people. But it was an honour and a privilege.

I want to just thank staff. Paul [*phonetic*] and Dominique [*phonetic*] are here, today, from the community office, and they've done this amazing job while I'm here, doing the policy stuff and all that, and they've been doing the work with—you know, the cases that come in the door. So thank you so much, Paul [*phonetic*] and Dominique [*phonetic*] and Daria [*phonetic*] as well.

I want to, as well, just talk a bit about the members in this Chamber. I think we all know that exaggerated partisanship can get in the way of our service. This is a hard time to make that speech, because partisanship is part of the election season; I get that. But I know that, you know, we all conscientiously represent real Manitobans, and we can't let anything get in the way of that. We have to recognize that all of us, from—no matter where we are in this Chamber, represent people that have real concerns that must be addressed. The House is, in fact, a great, noble effort to convene representatives with diverse backgrounds and from diverse communities, each with a great life experience for a great purpose.

*(15:30)

I've always insisted to political staff, and I think sometimes to their bewilderment, that they must treat all MLA issues, constituent concerns, local issues the same. All MLAs are on an equal footing when they come for help.

I also want to say that I've learned that kindness is apolitical, and I thank members on all sides of the House for the support over the years and the camaraderie that I think gives us all strength in this Chamber to attend to the greater good.

I want to thank, in particular, the political staff that have made sure that I stay out of trouble as much

as they could do. Felix Meza is here and he's been with me since 2006, and I don't know how he's done that, but I want to say that he is the most amazing political adviser, a great political nose, and I want to thank you so much, Felix.

Bev Nagamori has been with me for all 17 years at the front desk, and she's away, maybe it's therapy; she's away for a couple of weeks, just been tremendous as well. And I think all of you in this Chamber have got to know Bev over the years, and she was here many, many years before, worked with Vic and Rosemary before me.

I want to, as well, thank—Rory is here. He's relatively new with the political staff, and just tremendous. Thank you so much, Rory, for all the work that you've been doing. To come in now and just really give it has been really inspiring, quite frankly.

I want to say something about civil servants. You know, they get badmouthed way too often, and I'm sick and tired of that, quite frankly. I say that even though the public does not hold them in high esteem, I sympathize, I empathize because I'm a lawyer—no; I sympathize because—I sympathize because I'm a politician, and I know that those who do-you-trust polls have consistently rated politicians near the bottom and—with car sales people and now telemarketers, apparently. And some people would say that should make politicians feel real bad. I think, given their standing, that would make car sales people and telemarketers feel really bad, Mr. Speaker.

We have an image problem, eh folks, and I think that the heckling in this Chamber is a big part of the problem, but there are other parts of that. But I really believe that we've got to do better and it's going to take more. It's not up to the Speaker, I don't think, to do that. I think you, Mr. Speaker, have tried consistently to bring the volume down and the rude remarks that we too often send from the benches here. It's up to all of us and our caucuses and individually, I think.

The first speech that I ever gave on election night, I made a passing commitment that I would never heckle, and I got this hearty—the biggest round of applause of everything that was in my speech, so I had to not heckle. I was compelled to comply, and I just want to share this with you. It hasn't been as much fun as I thought it would be. I'm holding it all inside, Mr. Speaker. And, in fact, as many of you know, I had to come down and actually share some

thoughts with Premier Filmon during the MTS debate because I couldn't yell it across, you know. That's how it had to go. I think we all have to work on that.

I just want to talk about some of the heroes and the people that have inspired me, and I think we should all celebrate. I think in politics you never can be sure if you're being followed or being chased. I know for sure that I've been chased a lot, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's always—it's been important to listen to those who have been chasing. I think that's what makes all the difference. You know, people are really insightful about what needs have to be addressed, and as long as you keep listening, government can be in touch and can be effective and can make change.

I first of all—I have the greatest respect for the environmentalists. I was at a federal-provincial-territorial meeting; I was shocked to hear some of my counterparts badmouth environmentalists. I think these are—I call them the servants of—loyal servants of Her Majesty—Mother Earth, that is. They are so critical to the future of our very existence.

I would think there—everyone in this House has to celebrate those parents extraordinaire, foster parents. You know, I—after—I just can't believe how people open their hearts and their homes for children in need and, to me, that is a force that is so critical to our well-being.

I've been inspired by the leaders of the multicultural organizations that strengthen communities and, therefore, strengthen the province, the community of volunteers that come out and help to strengthen local neighborhoods, the—Reverend Harry Lehotsky was another great inspiring individual and Sel Burrows. I mean, these two individuals have changed neighborhoods, and I think that the whole country should be looking at the work of those two leaders.

I celebrate all of those brave Manitobans that came down here, particularly during the standing committee hearings on same sex rights and benefits, Mr. Speaker. They shared their most, their deepest concerns, their fears, their hopes and aspirations. And, I think, with their stories, they changed the Manitoba public and acceptance so that those rights could be enshrined in law, in this province.

I think of the strong Manitobans that are survivors of wrongful death, Mr. Speaker, of homicide, impaired driving, of workplace fatalities;

they have changed me absolutely. Compelling lessons about how the justice system has to change to ensure that it was not revictimizing those who have been—actually, potentially disabled for life.

I think of those who have been exploited but have got out of that and now are helping others. I think of persons with disabilities and the lessons that I was able to learn, particularly in that portfolio who have taught without talking.

So, as I move to a conclusion here, I want to just focus on a couple of themes. First of all, it's absolutely a truth that children need, from even one adult, to know that they are special and not excess baggage. And I think that those who work to make this province better for children, I would say to them, you redeem us as adults because what adults do—or can't do for children is absolutely horrifying. But they do help redeem us as adults, and that, I think, my friends is the highest calling, those who work for children. And I commend them.

I think as politicians we spend a lot of money. I think about—well, hundreds of thousands of dollars telling people what we do. I think sometimes we should be a little more generous and give away to those who have advocated and worked for change, and let them take credit. I know that sometimes we have to show how we're different from other parties, and we have to show that we're moving and listening. But I don't think that legislators just doing their job should be robbing those who have been advocates and agents for change by taking credit from them. So we, I think, have to do a better job to celebrate the contributions that really give us the ideas.

And I think of ideas from my own neighborhood. A guy up the street that says: Hey, how come we have to go and get our own jackets for the citizen patrol? Why don't you do some—why don't you buy centrally and save a lot of money, you know, create this sense of identity for citizen patrols?

Well, that led to MPI then taking on the citizen patrol movement and buying jackets and radios and giving training. But that's just a guy up the street, Dietrich Lessen [*phonetic*].

* (15:40)

So, I think—by the way, I would say that any contributions of mine are really theirs over the years, but I'm not going to refund my pay but—so I, as others, made a tough decision, and I would never wish the decision-making process of moving on

on anyone. I wouldn't wish getting defeated on anyone either. Those are all, though, the realities of serving in public office.

I think it was recently Dalton McGuinty—and I think he was quoting LBJ, and he said that as much as it's hard—or, politics is like a hammock; it's hard getting into but it's even harder getting out of. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that that is true.

But I did feel a bit better when a couple of weeks ago, I ran into the trade minister from Saskatchewan Jeremy Harrison and he said to me, you've been in Cabinet for 17 years? How did you do that?

Oh, okay, there's a little vindication there. You know, maybe some things, you know, has happened—some things have happened to my body, not just the—you know, the size of it or the colour of my hair. But it is a high—there are high expectations and there are pressures, I'm sure, on the human body, on the human psyche over the years, but I loved every bit of it. And I've always felt I've been living the dream and I can say that today, Mr. Speaker.

There are a couple of regrets, perhaps, I could tease out for my remarks. We have a new federal government, Mr. Speaker, and I've been able to pinch hit for some ministers at FPT meetings in the last several weeks, and I am—there's fresh air and I'm very optimistic. I think there's a new willingness to work with the provinces that—in a way that we haven't seen for a long time.

I—but I was walking down Sparks Street in Ottawa and Cameron MacIntosh from CBC was coming the other way. I said, what are you doing here? And he said, oh, they've been calling in CBC reporters from across the country because there's so much more work to do in Ottawa. Ministers are giving interviews. You can actually quantitatively measure the difference in the approach, Mr. Speaker.

But I think, too, the welcoming of the Syrian refugees to Canada has reminded Canadians who we are. It has said once again to the world that we are the welcoming people; we are the welcoming place. Yes.

I just heard that the Red Cross line that is there for Manitobans that want to help with Syrian settlement has received about 1,500 calls, and that's who we are, Mr. Speaker. It's amazing 26,000 Syrians have settled in Canada and, in fact, I think about 72 per cent of the Syrians coming to Manitoba already have permanent housing. So, that's a great

success, and that's not about government; that is about Canadians and Manitobans.

So, I—you know, we seek social and economic justice, Mr. Speaker. We seek ways to do that. We want to make sure that the change that we can help to usher in is going to last longer than next fiscal year. I've always believed that the reason we are here—and, in fact, not just as politicians, but as human beings—is to help those in need, to help others, to help those that need someone on their side.

I've been very blessed by both the—from the appointment of the two premiers I have worked for, to have portfolios that I think have a moral and ethical dimension, Mr. Speaker. I always felt there was a compelling cause at hand, a high purpose. I never felt I had a job; I always felt I had a role. And it's up to others to remark on any accomplishments—and I know the opposition would say that would take someone with a vivid imagination. I know the people on my side would say, well, Gord, I know there's five-point plans and 10-point plans and some slogans and you're wandering with a teapot again.

But, Mr. Speaker, I said in my first speech back in 1994, and I'll just quote: The principle of responding to the voices of people without power and privilege and empowering them is a principle for all time. We often feel that problems are not ours, that they are someone else's. But I often say, if a neighbour has a problem, so do we. We are all in it together.

That statement, I think, is my interpretation of the essence of our party.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I pray that I have, even in some small way, given life to that principle.

Thank you. It's been a great honour.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and that's actually how I started off my speech in December 7th, 1999, by thanking the Speaker and all my newly elected colleagues in this beautiful building.

I was not going to say—or make very many comments, Mr. Speaker, and my wife texted me and said, you should use this opportunity, if nothing else, to thank all of your colleagues and everyone in this Chamber for 17 years of service, who I know many were elected in 1999, and may not be here much

longer as well. But I would just say there are many people to thank, and including my wife, Valerie, and family and others.

And in my particular case, when I got involved in politics, it wasn't that I had this huge urge to get involved in politics. I never thought I would be. But my wife's family—I do recall sitting at the table just prior to when we were married, sitting in Cliff Matthews's kitchen with Tommy Douglas and a couple of other elected officials. I can't remember who they were—members of Parliament—in Dauphin, sitting at their kitchen table talking about—I can't remember what the issue was at the time, but Tommy Douglas was there and I know my brother-in-law is named Douglas Matthews after Tommy Douglas. They were very, very close, and my wife's family was really involved in the CCF for many, many years, and her father and aunt both ran for the CCF and the NDP many, many years ago. In fact, Cliff Matthews ran for the leadership of the NDP in 1961. My wife's father was defeated and—but that's where the politics on one side of where I come from exist.

Ms. Jennifer Howard, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And so, when I was approached by Gary Doer to see if I would be interested at all, so not—unlike the MLA for Dauphin and others, I don't have any shoulders to stand on in La Verendrye or in Dawson Trail. I was one of the few New Democrats or CCF to ever be elected in the southeastern part of the province, and I'm very, very honoured by that. But I had to call on others for advice, like Jim Penner, for example. Jim Penner was here for a short period of time and passed away, and then we have a new MLA shortly after that who represents Steinbach very, very well. And Jim Penner and others are the ones who passed along a lot of great suggestions to me, including Albert Driedger and many others from the southeast, on their views as to what they thought a politician should be and what a politician—and how a politician should handle themselves.

And my politics are, I would say, more pragmatic, maybe, than my wife or her family in how I've conducted myself not only in the Chamber but, also, one may argue that without that pragmatism, I may have been maybe a one-term MLA. And had—have to have—I've worked hard to try to build bridges within the southeast but also throughout the province.

And my trial by fire came early in this Chamber. At the time, Darren Praznik was the—I can't

remember what he was critic for, but the minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and I were asked by the premier to look into Aboriginal casinos. And I soon learned in this Chamber how personal politics can be. Not only I was being attacked by being in a conflict of interest, but also one's family ends up wearing it. And that was really disheartening, actually, as a new MLA coming into this Chamber, and one's family being attacked as well. I got into politics because I knew that, you know, you're going to have to get a thick skin. And my mother often reminded me that, don't ever let your skin get too thick because you have to be sensitive and have some empathy for people who are going, you know, to—going through troubled times.

* (15:50)

But where I'm going with this, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that all of us in this Chamber, I believe, get into politics for all the right reasons. And the MLA for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) just articulated that. And I believe all of us are here for the right reasons and no matter what political stripe. There's different roads on how you can get to that goal of providing great government, and we all have our different philosophies and theories on how to do that and all of our values that guide us.

But that particular 1999-2000 was very stressful: stressful on my family, on your kids, and it's something that, you know, had I not listened to a lot of other people that are not necessarily of our political stripe, at least on this side, on the government side, one could have become very, very bitter, very angry about it. But you have to learn as you go, and I thank a lot of my colleagues that—some are, of course, are not here now but also former Premier Gary Doer for—with his experience just having a calming effect on how to handle it and how to learn from. Now, one would argue, Gary being a calming effect? Well, he was. He was, and there are many others. Some are here today and others who are no longer here were very helpful.

But it was an early lesson that I would—if there's a lesson to be learned at all from what I'm saying is that after April 19th, we don't know what the citizens of Manitoba are going to decide as far as government goes, but one should try to take that, you know, demonizing, personalizing politics to such an extent as we've seen in the US, I mean, it's terrible. It just shows you the kind of role each and every one of us has and how important that is because whatever we say can be not only hurtful but also can be very

positive. And with that, you know, we've seen what's going on in the US, and we would never want Manitoba to ever even come close to that where political parties or individuals are demonized to the extent that not only is it very hurtful to their families and other individuals but, you know, if you really believe that people are in politics for the right reasons, we should do our utmost to try to stay away from that if we can.

So, when my students that I taught asked me why did I want to get involved in politics—and you've heard many examples have given around the Chamber of why one wants to—and they said, well, why would you ever want to do it, why did you ever want to get into that? And these are from some of my constituents but also the—my former students and students that I had taught. They knew I was going to run in the 1999 election. We thought it might be in June, but Premier Filmon decided to call it after the Pan Am Games. But so for the year of 1998 while I was teaching, the '98-99 year, school year, my students were really quite dumbfounded why I would ever want to get into it. And some of the comments were—and you've heard them repeated often—about, you know, people in there look like a bunch of kids fighting over a toy in a sandbox and, you know, the disrespectful behaviour, calling each other names all the time.

And so I made a commitment. And when I took—look at my speech from 1999, December 7th, I—there's a couple of paragraphs where I devoted to, you know, I will never be like that and I will do my utmost to—and so it brings back some fond memories about telling Mavis Taillieu to move her Lexus out of the way and we'll pave her main street, or to Larry Maguire, get your birdbath out of the way because you're blocking progress.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And it might have been mild, but—[*interjection*] No, I won't say I'm sorry, but because I was having some fun. And you—that also has to be part of this Chamber. You have to enjoy it, and that's—you know, some of the things that when I think about my life in this Chamber for 17 years—[*interjection*] Yes, it's kind of ironic I'm now the minister of fun at the end of my career in politics with the portfolio that I have. But you have to have some enjoyment. You have to want to come to work because then it doesn't feel like work. You really have to enjoy it.

And the part I'm going to miss is actually all of you in many ways because everyone has different

relationships with different individuals for different reasons, and it's one of those things where we're so privileged. As Gary Doer pointed out to me not very long ago, you know, Ron, Minister Lemieux, there aren't very many people who've been a minister for 17 years, and you should think about that. And I never gave it much thought. And the MLA for St. Johns said something very similar where, you know, you should take a look at your career and take a look at, you know, is there—are there things there that you should be really happy about, and the kind of things that you've been—actually been able to, you know, instill some change in the province. And, when I think of it, before he appointed me as minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, he said, you know, you can just sit and warm a chair in the Chamber and just, you know, take the safe road all the time and, you know, just get by. And you might be able to be in this place for a while, but—or you can actually do something, and try to do something, and work with your colleagues—work with your colleagues not only on this side of the Chamber, but also work with the opposition, and others, and—to see if you can, actually, provide a difference—and make a difference—in Manitoba.

And, on this side of the House, a lot of what we've done, as was pointed out by the MLA from Dauphin and also the MLA from St. Johns, that we've really made a difference. We've made a difference in so many different ways. When we were elected, the team—the class of '99, we were just going to go into a new century. And there was so much hope, so much optimism as to where we were going into this new century. And it was an exciting time to be elected as an MLA. And there was going to be true change, and we made a lot of change in the province that we can be very, very proud of. And it's not to say that we're the only ones with great ideas, or that there's not more to do, but there is. But the fact of the matter was that, as the premier—former-premier pointed out to me that, think about those 17 years, think about the time and all those people that you've worked with around the province of Manitoba, all your colleagues that you've worked with, whether they're Conservatives, whether they're Liberals, just think about that and try to measure that in a way that you can feel very, very proud of what you've done.

And I would say today that I do feel that very, very sense of pride. That—and I know that the days ahead are going to be challenging for everyone. And there are some individuals, and some MLAs here,

that may not be back in this Chamber. And, as was pointed out prior to me, is that, you know, whether you choose on your own time, to leave, or whether or not your constituents choose that time for you, it's still hard. It's still going to be difficult on a lot of people and a lot of their families because they've dedicated so much time—weekends, Saturdays, Sundays, going to events, representing their constituents to the best of their ability, and one should feel pride in what you've accomplished.

And so, in all the portfolios I have, I really have to thank Premier Doer and Premier Selinger for giving me the opportunity that, as a classroom teacher or administrator, I would have never had that opportunity. And, from all the different portfolios, from Consumer Affairs to Education to Tourism to Local Government, all of those have provided me with such a great opportunity to not only see a lot of Manitoba, but learn a lot from a lot of Manitobans of diverse backgrounds. And that's something that will never leave. I'll always have that, and always have Premier Doer and Premier Selinger to thank for that.

I don't want to take too much more time, Mr. Speaker, but the table officers, the people that work in this building, that keep the—or have the job of ensuring that not only our Chamber functions and works, really, in a way that is so efficient, really need to be commended, as well as all the political staff. When I think of, well, in many ways with all the portfolios I've had, I've had everybody that worked with me as a team, the gallery would be completely packed, so it wouldn't be fair to the people here. But the people who are civil servants and dedicate their lives working on our behalf—to be a civil servant is as honourable or more so—equally so—as any elected official. And, in my bio, I put that I was a civil servant for a short period of time and know how government works intimately. Well, for five years being in the civil servant—as a civil servant, you really don't truly know what that means. But, as an elected official, as a minister, you truly appreciate all the dedication, the hard work where people, day in and day out, are trying to deliver programs on behalf of the government and really deserve—and I would ask everyone in here to put your hands together to thank all those civil servants and all the people who work so hard on our behalf.

* (16:00)

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to conclude by just saying thank you to everyone here and—for all your assistance, and I reflect back on the early days when

the MLA for Thompson was door-knocking with me in Ste. Genevieve and Ross, not really knowing what one should be doing when you're campaigning and out there door-knocking. Becky Barrett, who's no longer here but—and others who have contributed their time, the minister of mines door-knocking in Lorette, many, many occasions and—well, too many to mention, actually, but I've received a lot of help and a lot of assistance over the years, in my 17 years.

And I—my mother currently, and has for many, many years, lived in Dauphin and so everyone has their Baba Farena [*phonetic*], Baba Koshuba [*phonetic*]. I also have that weather vane in politics to let me know when I might be straying slightly when one starts calling opposition members howling coyotes. It took my mother all of about two minutes and the phone was ringing in my office saying, you know, one shouldn't be doing this. This, you know, this is the Lemieux name you're standing up for. And, oh, my goodness, like the worst critic in this place would be no comparison to what my mother had to say to me.

And—but—so I just had to say, in conclusion, that—and the MLA for Dauphin knows her well. And I just want to conclude by just saying thank you to each and every one of you. It's been a real pleasure to be here and an honour. Thank you.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, I presume we're—are we moving back to bill debate here? That's what I thought we were doing but—

Mr. Speaker: Your call.

Mr. Briese: Well, I'll make a few—say a few words and then I'll get into the bill debate.

I think that the—I've certainly enjoyed my time in this place and the camaraderie of everyone in here. There's a—I've always felt, and I think probably it's been noticeable, that you have to keep your sense of humour and you really have to keep your sense of humour when you toil in this place at times. And so I've tried to not only to keep my own but entertain quite a few other people while I've been here, and I hope I've been successful at that.

But, you know, after listening to the three people here that went before me that had a lot longer service in here and a lot more, probably, responsibilities because they were all Cabinet ministers at one time, it's interesting to hear and see the dedication that goes into this job.

I told my caucus the other day that I was a politician secondly. My first job was as a farmer and the love of my life was farming. There are very few jobs you can do on the face of the earth that are more rewarding than actually growing food to feed people, and that's what I did. I raised livestock, I raised—I grew grain, and probably provided enough things, enough food for hundreds of people over the years, thousands of people, and it's very rewarding.

I started off—and I don't want to make a long speech here—but I started off, I believe, as the—I think I was the sixth MLA for the Ste. Rose constituency, and that was six MLAs over a period of 94 years. And I was the MLA for Ste. Rose for four years. And I mustn't have done a very good job; they got rid of the constituency. But I was fortunate enough that they formed a brand new one called Agassiz in which I was the first MLA. And, as long as Agassiz lasts, I will be—have been the first MLA in Agassiz.

Agassiz as I—and Ste. Rose, it's basically the same constituency with a few boundary changes—is, and I have heard some comments in this place from time to time, it is the most beautiful constituency of Manitoba, bar none. I will take responsibility for it. I think the Minister of Conservation would back me up; he's flown over quite a bit of it at times.

And we're nestled between the Riding Mountain escarpment and Lake Manitoba, which—both of which can be pretty cranky at times. We do have a few water problems, and we will—we've had water problems for a hundred years, we'll have water problems for as long as man lives in that area. And I know—I think it was Mark Twain that said, whiskey's for drinking and water's for fighting, and I think he had it right, and we certainly have lots of water fights out there.

But it's an agricultural area. It's quite a cross-section of people that live in my constituency. We have Holdeman Mennonites, we have Old Order Mennonites, which are akin to the Amish; we have—when I had Ste. Rose constituency, we had three First Nations, and we now—with the change of boundaries, I only have one First Nation, that's Sandy Bay, but it's a very large First Nation. We have several Metis communities, and in the last few years, we've got probably one of the rapid—most rapid-growing, outside of maybe Steinbach and rural Manitoba, Filipino communities in Neepawa.

From about five or six years ago to—when I don't think there was a single Filipino in Neepawa, we must be around 1,500 or more living in Neepawa

now. Most of them come to Neepawa as labourers for the HyLife hog processing plant there, but many of them are branching out into other opportunities and other employments there.

So it's been kind of interesting to watch the dynamics of our town change somewhat. We were a sleepy town; the population hadn't grown for probably since when I went to high school, which is a number of years ago. *[interjection]* Yes, a few years ago. I was around 30 by the time I finally graduated, but even at that, it's still quite some time ago. *[interjection]* Yes, best six years of my life were in grade 9.

But anyhow it—we've—through the south, we have the potato-growing area, the irrigation area, very productive area. It's a—and a potato-processing plant at Carberry. And it's a very good agricultural area. We go from ranchland in the north to irrigation in the south, and pretty well everything you could think of in between. And with the last few years we've seen quite a change into growing corn and beans in our area, we've got shorter season varieties, and I suppose with changing climates and things, we're getting maybe just a slightly bit longer growing season, which is a good thing. I—not so sure I'm real opposed to climate change when you live in Manitoba. I could—what I see is mostly positive things out of it for the area where I've always lived, so.

Anyhow, it's—that's just a little bit of a background. I've always appreciated the treatment I get in here, and I appreciate the people that work in this building. I try and have a little bit of fun with them too once in a while, and—but it's—their jobs are—they do their jobs so well, that it's seamless. It keeps all of us—well, I guess probably the best way to describe their jobs is they're there to make us look good, and they do a heck of a good job of that.

* (16:10)

The Clerk approached me the other day and asked me if I'd be one of the mentors to the new MLAs when they—after the election. And I said, yes, I didn't mind doing that, but I said, the minute I'm out of here this time, my job changes. I then become a consultant and I'm \$500 an hour. For the others that she's approached, she said that'd be no problem, just so you know. Oh, pardon me, I must have misinterpreted that; I see somebody shaking their head.

I'm not going to go on for very much longer. I think it's time to—I wasn't too keen about making any kind of a farewell speech in here. I don't often think that people really want to hear the sound of my voice too much.

But I think I'll switch back to the bill now, and I am pleased to speak to the Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act. It's—as you know, we've went through second reading; you spoke to the bill; it went through committee. There were several presenters, two or three, all supportive of the bill, including Justice Sinclair. And there was a slight change made in committee, an amendment to the bill which is positive, as far as I was concerned, and I know there was another change made here today—or proposed and made, yes.

It's a bill that's based on repairing a relationship that was mostly stressed by the residential school programs that were in this country for a great number of years, and it's a reconciliation. It's a process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships and there's always a duty to consult. My only concerns with this bill—and it's a step in a process, and it's a long process, and it will be a long process, but my only concerns really are words. Words are good but actions are what make things happen. And we can talk the words for years and years and years. I want to see the actions that should follow up this bill and move this process along.

We've seen cases where—too many times where bills are put out there, talked about; credit's taken; people slap themselves on the back, congratulate themselves and years later, it hasn't moved beyond that. And it goes on and on and on and we've seen it over and over and over again—*[interjection]*

I listened to the member from Brandon East doing his retirement speech and I listened to his retirement speech going and it's a pretty interesting one, isn't it? At least I'm doing it voluntarily.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I—we on this side of the House look toward seeing this bill proceeded with and going to royal assent.

Thank you.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act, and was honoured to be at committee the other night and listen to the many speakers, and listened to many speakers here today and well-thought-out heartfelt speakers, great speeches from the MLA for Dauphin. He and I attended Brandon University

together, and we had a good chat about that last week, I think. *[interjection]* He insists he's older than I am, and that may be the case, but we won't test that, Mr. Speaker. But nice to listen to his words today. Indeed, family, especially when you're that far away from the Legislature here in Winnipeg, is a big challenge, and great speeches that we heard today as well.

And, indeed, the MLA for Agassiz—when I was first running, Mr. Speaker, there was a forum held by AMM in Brandon, and all of the candidates for Brandon East and West were invited. And the MLA for Agassiz came to guide us through that, because he knows a fair amount more, I have to say, an awful amount more—awful lot more—than I do about AMM and infrastructure. So I was very thrilled that he was able to join us at that forum and guide us through that.

So Bill 18 here, Mr. Speaker, some very 'helt'—heartfelt speeches at committee the other night, and I listened intently to them, and we had some good guidance. As I have had the good fortune over the past, since 2011, as the MLA for Brandon West, to attend many meetings of the indigenous community, whether it be First Nations, Metis or Inuit, I am struck by the positive approach they are taking to moving forward. And I think that we're all well served to work together and find a path that some of this bill sets out—steps forward to a more positive, inclusive Manitoba. And I think there are some great approaches taken here.

So I know that there are probably some others that wish to speak on this bill, but, I think, the approach that we're taking here, as I said, a step forward. We have a lot of work to do yet, Mr. Speaker, and I know all the communities—I hope all the communities will indeed come together and make Manitoba a much better place.

So I wish everyone well in the election campaign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your guidance. I've had good guidance from this particular Speaker. It's the only one, as I said, that I have had the fortune to serve under, so I think—or alongside, whichever way you want to look at it. So we'll proceed along into an election, and I'm sure we'll see many people come back to serve in the Legislature again. But I wish the retiring members goodwill, and enjoy the retirement, if that is indeed the path that it takes, or the other opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It is indeed a pleasure to speak to the third reading of this bill, I think, a historic bill and an important bill on what was become an important day here in the Assembly. And we've heard a number of speeches from members who have chosen not to seek re-election, Mr. Speaker, and that is always a bit of a time-honoured tradition here in the Legislature.

Not every member gets to choose the timing of their departure, and so not every member has the opportunity to make that speech and to make that farewell speech, because we don't all know when our last day in the Legislature here is, Mr. Speaker. So it is always important and it is touching to hear the different members speak from all political parties. And I always say that some of the best speeches that we hear in the Assembly are the initial speeches from members and their last speeches that they give in the Assembly. Then there's a lot of speeches in between, and I'm not saying they're not important, but they don't have always the same sort of reverence that that initial speech and the final speech do in this Chamber.

This particular bill that we're debating this afternoon—and it's one of the bills that I've discussed with the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) in terms of calling, and we support the bill and support its passage this afternoon. And it will receive third reading before the day is over, and I understand the Lieutenant Governor will be coming in before we adjourn for today and to go forward for the election, and this bill will receive royal assent. And that is something that we have not only called for but we certainly support, Mr. Speaker. We did hear, at the committee—it's been mentioned by other speakers—some of the tremendous presentations by individuals who were presenting on very, very difficult topics. And I have nothing but admiration for people who come to our public process of committees and who provide for Manitobans an insight and a glimpse into what can be very, very difficult scenarios.

* (16:20)

For example, the bills that we passed earlier this session related to domestic violence. In particular, I speak of Bill 11, which related to ensuring that protection orders are there in place for those who need them in a more efficient way, Mr. Speaker, in a way that is a little easier to obtain. Not that the checks and balances aren't there; there are always checks and balances within the legal system, but we want to ensure that it's not so onerous and not so

difficult that those who truly need protection are unable to get it because of the rules that are in place. So we made those changes with Bill 11. And similar to this bill, we saw people come forward at committee and who told very personal stories and very difficult stories, and we appreciated they could do that. There weren't a great number of people who came forward, and I think that the reason for that is because it's very difficult to speak of the difficult circumstances that some people have lived through.

Family members often come forward and speak on behalf of those who cannot, and we know that for every person who came to the—that particular committee, they were speaking for others. And it's not unlike this particular bill, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission bill, putting forward some of the recommendations and the steps forward. It's worth noting the things that have already transpired in Ottawa, and I want to recognize the former Conservative government, the Harper government, for bringing forward a great number of things to move us along this path. Mr. Speaker, I think that that needs to be recognized, and I would expect that the current Liberal government under Prime Minister Trudeau will continue in that same path that was set previously.

But in Manitoba we have a special recognition and a special duty to do more, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about trying to have reconciliation and trying to ensure that we are doing things right as we go forward, when we address the things that were not done right in the past. And we appreciate very much that we have had a great input from those in the communities who are most specifically affected. We've heard from family members. We've heard from MLAs in this Assembly, and I think of the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) who has spoken about family and has spoken about the experiences of family members. I know that those could not have been easy things to address. Those could not have been easy things to have talked about here in the Assembly, but they're important. Often, the hardest things to talk about are the most important, and we appreciate very much those who have come forward and talked about it.

Now, it can't just be talk; there has to be action with it. I know that this bill will be translated into a number of different languages, and I think that that's important. I appreciate the amendment that came forward from the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). Earlier it was accepted unanimously by this House. Mr. Speaker, I think that that is

something that will strengthen this bill. But it will be incumbent upon future governments, whoever the government is, and I'm not just talking about after the April 19th election which is now imminent, and we expect an election call within the next 24 hours. But following that election and following subsequent elections, it's—it will be important that whoever is in government continues to look and adhere to the issues of this particular bill, not just the letter of the bill but the spirit of the bill. I think that we've seen some of the guidance on that from those who came forward to committee and those who came forward and brought forward their experiences and how things can be strengthened and how things can be done differently.

So this is a historic day in Manitoba for many different reasons, and I want to say, first and foremost, that I think the passage of this bill will rank at the top of those reasons. But we also have heard many other things that are being important here in this Assembly.

But I want to thank the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak)—this may be my last opportunity to do so here in the House—for our opportunity to work together on the bills that have passed. And I know that we'll have disagreement on how many bills should have passed and how many bills didn't pass, and that kind of a disagreement is legitimate and it is fair in a democratic society. I believe that we did good work in terms of ensuring that there was the appropriate amount of time for bills to be debated that didn't allow for every bill to be debated and every bill to be passed. But we, as legislators, as MLAs, have a specific responsibility to ensure that every bill gets the type of scrutiny, gets the type of attention, not just from us but from the public as well so that we can ensure that due diligence was done on the bill, and then when it passes we can know that we've done our best.

Now, I recognize there are always unintended consequences that come with the passage of bills, and that is why bills are amended, and that's why bills are changed in the future, and that's fine and that's legitimate. But I do know, also, that it is important that we have the kind of debate and scrutiny on legislation that often lasts for generations before it passes third reading, Mr. Speaker.

So it's been—I think it's been a productive discussion that I've had with the Government House Leader on this particular bill and other bills that have passed. There are some bills that will not pass this

Assembly here in the Legislature today and in time for the election, which we expect will be called tomorrow, that might very well find their way back in a similar fashion or maybe slightly improved in another session.

Now, whether we win the government or the NDP win government or another party wins government, I think I would call upon any government to look at the different pieces of legislation that have not passed and to have a discussion about whether or not they can, in fact, go forward in another session of this House when the election is over, Mr. Speaker. I certainly, on Bill 33, for example, and I mentioned this earlier, I've had discussions with the Manitoba Law Society and we have talked about the importance of portions of that bill. There are certain things that I think can be improved upon that can be made better, but I've certainly given my assurance that there are many, many things within a bill like Bill 33 which we think are good and which we think could be proceeded with. And regardless of who forms government, I think that that is the kind of piece of legislation that'll be looked at and find its way back in some form or fashion before the Assembly here after the election. And that is regardless of who wins the election. I'm not here to presume the outcome. That is always up to Manitobans. It is always up to the people of Manitoba and we respect that outcome and the process by which that outcome is arrived at.

There are, of course, other bills which I've seen which have not been debated. I think of the member for St. Johns, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) who brought forward legislation, but it never came to second reading regarding police officers and the usage of their time. That is something that I've advocated for in this Assembly and I think that others have advocated for as well, and that is also a bill while it didn't have time in this particular short session before the election, that is something that should be looked at again following election. It could be, perhaps, improved, but the basis of it, I think, is something that is valuable and something that is important.

But I'm glad that we were able to prioritize this bill even in the short period of time that we had, because it sends a strong message. Now, my understanding is that we will have a recorded vote on this bill. I think that that's positive. I think that that is something that we can all support and I think that it is something that we will all support, and it will send a strong message to those who have been impacted

and who look to this bill as a sign of hope and reconciliation that they have an Assembly regardless of parties and regardless of political stripes that are behind them. And I think that that is important, and it's an important signal to send that I'm glad that we are going to be having that vote, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I understand almost all the farewell speeches have been done by those who know that they're leaving, but there is, I understand, one more important one to come, and I see that there are family members in the Speaker's Gallery who are awaiting that speech and they're probably wondering when the member for Steinbach will stop droning on and on and on and whether or not this is another filibuster, Mr. Speaker, but it's not. I can assure you it is not another filibuster.

So, I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to your address to this Assembly. You have served in an honourable fashion. I've had the great pleasure to work with you as the House Leader for our party. I've enjoyed immensely what I've learned from you and we've been through some difficult times—not the two of us individually, but sitting through the summer of 2013 was challenging for everyone on all sides of the House and certainly those who were employed and still are employed at the Legislature, but you handled that in a way that I don't know that any other speaker could have handled it. You helped all of us to get through it with most of our dignity still intact by the end of the summer, and that is a credit to you. I know some of the clerks are looking at me and saying that most of mine was gone, but that's okay.

* (16:30)

And I appreciate the fact that you had your guiding hand, and I want to say, while your family and your friends and your supporters are here, Mr. Speaker, that you will go down in history as one of the most distinguished Speakers that this Assembly has ever had. And it is my great pleasure, sir, to yield the floor to you.

Mr. Speaker: I understand by the rules I have to ask leave of the House to first permit me the opportunity to put a few comments on the record and to, if I understand it correctly and I'm looking to my Clerk for that guidance, to ask for a short recess on the debate that is under way currently to allow my remarks to be made.

Do I have leave to be able to do that?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable members for that opportunity.

This is an opportunity for me to give my last remarks, and in the true Canadian fashion, I'm going to say I'm sorry right at the front end of this process because I may inadvertently leave out some folks that have been instrumental in guiding me through my life and giving me the opportunity to be here today. So if I've missed anyone back in my community or in the broader sense of the province, please accept my apologies as I start my comments.

Like life itself, all things are temporary, including serving one's community and province. Like all members of our Assembly, I quickly learned that when running for public office you need the support of one's own immediate family, and I have my immediate family here today.

I also learned that a candidate's family quickly grows larger, as dozens of volunteers work tirelessly to get you elected, and I'm sure all members know that.

I was first nominated in April of 1990 and elected on 9/11/1990. Of course, that's a day that most members will know for another reason in world history, but it was an important day to all of us that were first elected at that particular day and time. And through six provincial general elections I've had the privilege of serving the Transcona community, so just about 25 and a half years.

I have canvassed every home many times and made many new friends and I quickly learned that no one person has the market cornered on good ideas. And, through my canvassing, I adopted many, many constituent ideas and suggestions and even campaign language that I've put into the literature that was distributed to the homes of my community. And I personally and very sincerely thank the people of Transcona for placing their trust and confidence in me to represent them for so long and also for their patience as I learned on the job how best to represent their interests.

Included in my first campaign team were Rob and Nancy Hilliard; John Doyle; Donna Potrias [*phonetic*]; John Pullen; my brother, Jeff Reid; and a very special adviser and friend, Boyd Crambell [*phonetic*]; and, of course, my parents, Diane and Norm Reid. And, of course, I had my immediate family and, of course, many, many dozens of railway workers because I am a-come from a railway

background and I had many folks that I had worked with that worked on my first campaign.

In later campaigns included folks that volunteered and participated and I'm sure you will know some of these names. Martin Johnson, who's now retired as a firefighter and currently the head of the Firefighters Burn Fund in Manitoba, was my official agent for several elections and I very much appreciate his efforts. And I always said to him that if something goes wrong in the campaign, he's the first one to go to jail and I would follow him short time thereafter. I was just kidding him, but we tried to make sure we followed the rules of Elections Manitoba very closely.

We also had Jim Neil [*phonetic*] and Dianne Cechvala who also works in my constituency office; Paul Gill, Louie Udo [*phonetic*], Janice Ducharme, Wally Scumore [*phonetic*], and many others I may forget with my advancing age.

Working in my community office over the years have been Lisa Bukoski, Laura Lumsden [*phonetic*], Jim Bardy, of course, Dianne Cechvala who's currently still there, all very special and dedicated, hard-working people who've made my work life less complicated knowing that we were—that they were very good at what they did for the people of Transcona.

And I know it's been mentioned here by other members of the Assembly who are retiring, and, if it was not for our constituency assistants taking care of that, it would be very difficult for all of us to come to this place and do the work that we do on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

I want to especially thank all of those folks that have worked in the Transcona community office. I never really defined why I ran for office in the beginning, I just—something I wanted to do until very early 1990s. I met Prince Charles in this building here, in the rotunda. And I remember quite clearly, and I thought well, it's a special day and members of the Assembly were invited, and as the Prince made his way around the room, I thought, well, maybe, I'll have a chance to talk with him. And I thought it would be nice to have just a few seconds just to say I was be able to do that.

And His Royal Highness made his way over to me, and maybe it was in those days when I had that long scruffy beard on my face, maybe something that was unusual for the Assembly, but His Royal Highness came over and he talked to me, and he

asked me a very, very important question that I never forgot. He asked me how long I had been elected but, more importantly, he asked me why I ran for office.

And after thinking for a moment, I replied that it gives me great personal satisfaction to be able to help others in my community and my province. I believe in my heart that also holds true for each member of this Assembly. I have shared that story with many school classes, and I speak with and encouraging them to be involved in ways of their choosing, making our community stronger through their volunteer efforts, and I encourage each and every one of them to participate in their communities, because without the volunteers, we wouldn't have a sense of community. They play a very important role, and I've learned that through my early years in coaching youth sports, both hockey and soccer, how important those volunteers were to make sure that those community clubs and those organizations continue to function. There are so many others beyond just the sporting environment itself.

As all the members know, we candidates volunteer for this job, as John Pullen once reminded me when I was having a particularly rough day in the 1990s, but our families did not directly volunteer, but nevertheless live the—live in the fishbowl with each one of us. What I did instead reflected upon my family and my community, and what they did instead was watched and may have reflected upon me and others in the community. And my immediately—my immediate family has risen to that challenge, and I want to thank them for letting me live my dream and serving our Transcona community and our province.

Our families sacrifice a great deal, as I'm sure all members know, and so much family time is taken up with the duties of being a MLA, and serving the people of Transcona. And I owe my family an immense debt to hopefully be repaid during my retirement, at least that's my fondest wish.

To my bride, Sheila, who's here, a better politician than I, you've never seen a person like this work a room better than any—than she can, and I'm quite proud to have her at my side as we've gone through this life together.

And to our sons, Kevin, Corey, and Tim, who are with us here today as well, I can never thank you enough for all that you have sacrificed. Each one of you has worked on our campaigns and has had a pretty good understanding of how campaigns work, and how government works, and what the life—most importantly, what the life of an MLA involves.

Normally, we are not born with confidence and something I believe is learned with life experience. My life could have taken a different path had it not been for three very important people in my early life. First, my parents—my mother, Diane Reid, who is here with us today, and also my father, Norman Reid, who has passed on and I hope is watching—helped shape my values.

As a skinny little kid—and I haven't grown that much since those days—lacking in confidence, I must say, something that's changed a little bit, I was often bullied in school. So my mother took control of the situation and read the riot act to the parents of the perpetrators, which I very much appreciate. This seemed to help until high school when one body-builder student consistently abused several small students including myself.

* (16:40)

The first principal of Murdock MacKay Collegiate, George Derenchuk, who is in the gallery with us here today, George was a teacher and also the principal. He noticed the abuse and took immediate steps to solve the problem, and make—and I don't know if I'm telling secrets here, George, but I'm going to put it on the public record for all to see for all time, George took control of the situation and took immediate steps to solve the problem, and he did it by making a bargain with Jim Macdonald [*phonetic*], who is a personal friend of mine, also a bodybuilder and a class colleague of mine. Jim would take care of the problem and, in return, skirting the pass-fail mark, passed his math allowing him to succeed in life.

This intervention by a very special teacher-principal gave many students, including myself, the confidence to succeed. And I want to thank him for rescuing me and many others and helping to put me on the path to success.

Thank you very much, George.

When George was let go from the high school, the student assembly wept openly, and I shall never forget George's intervention and caring. And George is here, and I'm very proud to have him here and call him a friend, even to this day.

Thank you very much, George.

How important teachers and principals can be in our lives, and it took me, oh, about 40 years to find out the true story behind the information that I just

shared with you. So, if you live long enough, you can sometimes get the full story.

Sometimes it is important to look back just to see how far we have come on this journey through our lives. And, during my years in the Assembly, I have learned something from each and every member of this Assembly that I have served with. And I have always made it my goal in life to learn something new each and every day.

I especially want to point out the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and the late Oscar Lathlin and former Speaker George Hickes for taking this rookie under their care and for what they taught me. And I always will remember often travelling to remote, isolated communities in northern Manitoba, meeting the people, sharing the food and hearing their life stories, especially the time when Oscar and the member—the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs took me to the place where Helen Betty Osborne met her end and very carefully explaining in great detail what happened on that tragic and fateful day. A haunting experience on the very place which continues to remind me how much more work we have yet to do with our First Nations brothers and sisters.

I also want to thank former MLA and Speaker George Hickes. George encouraged Legislature colleagues to attend community meetings in Churchill, where, after the meetings, the whole cowboys—all members I'm sure will remember George being referred to, and the—he took the member for Selkirk and myself out onto the flats near the grain terminal in Churchill and explained living life in their one-room shanty, on the edges of the Churchill River, next to the Hudson Bay, hunting and fishing to survive and capturing whales for the various aquariums around the world. For a time, I had been to Churchill so many times through the early—through the 1990s and into the early 2000s that I had considered getting an apartment there.

It was also—I also want to take this opportunity—and not to single out any particular member but folks that have given me the opportunity in this place that I very much appreciate. I had the opportunity to be part of the government's graduated drivers' licensing task force and also the 2020 Manitoba transportation vision. And I also want to thank the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) for entrusting government members to travel to every part of our great province, consulting with

Manitobans about graduated driver licensing and the 2020 Manitoba transportation vision.

We will never know for sure which lives have been saved, but I am still in awe of the testimony at the Brandon GDL meeting, where a young RCMP officer testified about his experiences of delivering, to unsuspecting families, the deceased notification of a young loved one who had died in a motor-vehicle accident. I am certain that there are complete families, Manitoba families, now sitting around the dinner table as a result of our work on the graduated drivers' licensing. And I thank my Legislature colleagues for the opportunity to work with them in bringing forward this change to ensure that our young drivers are given the skills necessary to drive safely in our province.

Now it seems somewhat strange to me, but, looking at today's Order Paper, it says No. 29 on the top. I am the 29th Speaker in the history of our great province, and so maybe it's a fitting time for me to take leave of this place, considering we have achieved that No. 29 as well.

During my years in this historic workplace, I have worked with and made many, many new friends on both sides of the House and through all of the Assembly operations here, and I very much appreciate those opportunities to work directly with those folks and to learn—most importantly, to learn from each and every one of you. To the three superstars whom I work with daily: Michele LaPointe-Dixon, Ellen Douglas, and JoAnn McKerlie-Korol and, of course, Judy Wickstrom, who's now retired, who instinctively know what to do to make the Speaker's Office function, and I thank them for being the professionals that they are. They made my life so uncomplicated.

I know all members know this, but I want to personally thank our Clerk, Ms. Patricia Chaychuk, and our Deputy Clerk, Rick Yarish, and our entire table officers team, our Journals Branch folks, our Sergeant-at-Arms, Blake Dunn, and the Chamber Branch folks, our Hansard, our Members' Allowances Office, our Administration and Finance, and also our pages, those that are present here and others that continue to serve this Assembly, for the exceptional work that they do each and every day to provide services to our Assembly. And from my experience in all the legislatures that I have been to—and I've been to every one in Canada—we have the best team here in Manitoba.

To the three House leaders, the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard): No words can adequately thank you enough for your guidance and generosity. The members of the Assembly need to know how important and co-operative the working relationship has been, and I thank each and every one of you for the guidance that you have provided and the collegial work environment that we have had here in this last number of years that we have worked together. Very much appreciate that, and I'm sure all members already know, but I wanted to say thank you on the public record for your efforts.

And to the members of the Assembly, to each and every one of us and all those that have been here in this place with me over the past 25 years, I say to you: Thank you. Thank you for letting me a part of the Manitoba team. Thank you for your trust and confidence electing me as your Speaker. I hope that I have met your test and upheld the very best values of democracy in this place and represented you capably wherever the duties have taken me.

If one is able to see further, it is by learning from others and standing on the shoulders of giants, and I have worked with fantastic people in this place that have given me that opportunity to continue to grow and learn as a person. I see this as a continuation of my education, and I hope I will be able to continue to learn and grow to my last breath.

One last observation I want—because I know this has been somewhat of a discussion point here in this Assembly. Some may say that this Chamber is occasionally boisterous and perhaps sometimes I have contributed to that by letting it go a little bit too far. Sometimes items that contain sugar are placed on desks, and members sometimes can point to that as being part of the reason why things can sometimes get elevated. After all, this place, and politics itself, is a contact sport. At least that's the way I've viewed it.

But, after the glare of the lights and the cameras are gone and the media has left the gallery here behind me, from my vantage point here in this Chamber, no matter the issue of the day, every single sitting day that I have been your Speaker, I observe members on both sides of the House leave their seat in the Chamber and walk around to the other side and engage in personal conversations with members of other parties. I have learned that the discussion

can be casework related, which one would—might anticipate, or something so human and—as genuine compassion and concern. And, even this week, we have seen hugs for the circumstances of another member of the Assembly. While we may have had our occasional difference of views, this human action tells me we have more in common that unites us than separates us. Manitobans first, politicians second. And I thank you for this strong show of our true character as Manitobans.

I hope to see each of you again, and wish each and every one of you well in your futures. It has been my very, very great honour and privilege to serve with you. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

* (16:50)

House Business

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

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A pretty hard act to follow, but I just want to ensure that it's been determined by leave; I understand that we're going to be having a standing vote and the Lieutenant Governor is coming. I just want to make sure that we don't see the clock after 5 o'clock in case we quite don't make it where we plan to be by 5 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader on this—on House business.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): We haven't had this discussion and I think we're seeking leave to not see the clock until Bill 18 has had third reading, and until the Lieutenant Governor has been able to come into the House and give royal assent to those bills which are eligible for royal assent.

Mr. Speaker: So the House is in agreement then, if I understand, to not see the clock until we've had the opportunity to give royal assent to the bills that have concluded, and Bill 18.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Speaker: Now, to revert back to debate on Bill 18, is there any further debate?

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Thank you for those words, and sharing your experiences as a legislator in this House. They are inspiration to many of us and to some newbies and it's—I will make

sure that I, you know, if I'm fortunate enough on April 19th to return, I'll make sure that I encourage many of the new faces in this Legislature to read those words and have an understanding and appreciation of the role that we all play and that—and how important it is for us to take those memories that are afforded to us—those very unique memories that are afforded to us as legislators and carry them with us forward, to make ourselves that much better as legislators.

There is one comment you made, Mr. Speaker, in your comments that quite struck me and I will have an opportunity, I'm sure, in the future to sit down with you and discuss those at a further time.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on Bill 18? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act.

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

Recorded Vote

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

* (17:00)

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

Order, please.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Path to Reconciliation Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Blady, Braun, Briese, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Cullen, Dewar, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Melnick, Mitchelson, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Robinson, Rondeau, Rowat,

Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smook, Stefanson, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight, Wishart.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 53, Nays 0.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Speaker: Now, I believe we'll prepare for the arrival of Her Honour, and, just as we're waiting for the arrival of Her Honour, I just also—one last, if you will indulge me, I just want to introduce my two grandchildren, Addison Reid [*phonetic*] and Braydon Reid [*phonetic*], probably the greatest reason why I'm retiring.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason): Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Her Honour Janice Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Mr. Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bills:

Clerk Assistant (Mr. Claude Michaud):

Bill 23—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2016; Loi de 2016 portant affectation anticipée de crédits

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, the Lieutenant Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

* (17:10)

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

At this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain bills that I ask Your Honour to give assent to.

Clerk Assistant:

Bill 8—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Leave for Serious Injury or Illness and Extension of Compassionate Care Leave); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé pour les victimes de violence familiale, congé en cas de blessure ou de maladie grave et prolongation du congé de soignant)

Bill 11—The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la violence familiale et le harcèlement criminel

Bill 17—The Manitoba Teachers' Society Act; Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba

Bill 18—The Path to Reconciliation Act; Loi sur la réconciliation

Bill 22—The Elections Amendment Act (Signatures Required for Nomination Document); Loi modifiant la Loi électorale (nombre de signatures exigées sur les documents de mise en candidature)

Bill 300—The Mount Carmel Clinic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la « Mount Carmel Clinic »

Clerk: In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour assents to these bills.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

God Save the Queen was sung.

O Canada was sung.

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated.

I know members are quite anxious to conclude the business of the House, but I also want to take this opportunity to recognize my niece, Jennifer Powell, who is also with us here today. You know, I was going to be in trouble if I didn't also introduce Jennifer, very much a very special part of our family.

And I'd like to thank all honourable members of the Assembly for the opportunity to serve as your Speaker, I appreciate your trust and your confidence, and for all of the work that you have accomplished for all of the years that we have been here together, I very much appreciate that.

And I wish each and one of you success in your futures. I wish you well. Please, those of you coming back to this place, please come back safely, and wherever your journeys in life may take you, I hope it—you find it fulfilling.

And thank you very much for the opportunity to serve here with you. And as is my last opportunity:

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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