

Fifth Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****INTRODUCTION OF BILLS****Bill 51—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2011**

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill 51, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2011, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, this bill implements measures in the 2011 Manitoba budget that makes various—and makes various other amendments to tax and financial legislation.

The tax measures announced in the budget require amendments to the corporate capital tax, The Income Tax Act, the retail sales tax, land transfer tax, tobacco tax.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there are some housekeeping amendments to the corporate capital tax, the fuel act tax and the health and education tax levy.

As well, there are amendments to The Municipal Act to allow for the increase of one-seventh of the estimated retail tax revenues going to municipalities, and it includes The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act which moves this government's agenda forward.

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

Bill 222—The Sexual Assault Awareness Month Act

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the member from Minnedosa, that Bill 222, The Sexual Assault Awareness Month Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this bill designates the month of April of each year as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and April will be designated that on an annual basis as a time to raise public

awareness about the serious issues of sexual assault and violence and to educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence. Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported violent crimes, and as many as nine sexual assaults out of 10 might not be reported.

I would point out that there are several jurisdictions in North America that designate April or May as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Ontario being one of them. Saskatchewan has just begun that process and in the United States there are many states that actually designate a month as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

So I hope, in keeping with non-partisanship on this issue, Mr. Speaker, I really hope that this House will approve unanimously this private member's bill. Thank you.

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

PETITIONS**PTH 16 and PTH 5 North—Traffic Signals**

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by T. Kenney, J. Sylvester, B. Hollier and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

Auto Theft—Court Order Breaches

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

On December 11th, 2009, in Winnipeg, Zdzislaw Andrzejczak was killed when the car that he was driving collided with a stolen vehicle.

The death of Mr. Andrzejczak, a husband and a father, along with too many other deaths and injuries involving stolen vehicles, was a preventable tragedy.

Many of those accused in fatalities involving stolen vehicles were previously known to police and identified as chronic and high-risk car thieves who had court orders against them.

Chronic car thieves pose a risk to the safety of all Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all court orders for car thieves are vigorously monitored and enforced.

And to request the Minister of Justice to consider ensuring that all breaches of court orders on car thieves are reported to police and vigorously prosecuted.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by N. Suga, S. Kita, G. Barley and thousands of other concerned Manitobans.

Bipole III—Cost to Manitoba Families

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been directed by the provincial government to construct its next high voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba.

This will cost each family of four in Manitoba \$11,748 more than an east-side route, which is also shorter and more reliable.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to build the Bipole III transmission line on the shorter and more reliable east side of Lake Winnipeg in order to save each family of four \$11,748.

And this petition is signed by L. Kerr, R. Vermette, K. Lee and many, many more Manitobans.

Oak Lake—Flood Protection Measures

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

And these are the reasons for this petition, Mr. Speaker:

The background to the petition is as follows:

Already affected by high spring moisture levels in 2011, Oak Lake has been—has also been inundated by record flooding from the Pipestone Creek.

Flood protection measures for homes, cottages and shoreline around Oak Lake had to be reinforced this spring as a result of water being held back.

The Oak Lake dike and dam system was breached this spring.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider reconstructing the entire Oak Lake dam and dike system.

To urge the provincial government to consider a compensation program that supports the costs homeowners at Oak Lake beach have endured due to this spring's flooding.

To request the provincial government to consider creating a task force comprised of government officials and local persons to examine future flood protection strategies for the area and how to address them.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by R. Plaisier, K. Batho, M. Plaisier and many, many others.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Third Report

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

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

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

Meetings

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

- *December 12, 2007 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *March 10, 2008 (2nd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *July 8, 2009 (3rd Session – 39th Legislature)*
- *June 6, 2011*

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2007*
- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2008*
- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2009*
- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2010*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2007*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2008*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2009*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2010*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2007 to 2011*

- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2008 to 2012*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2009 to 2013*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2010 to 2014*
- *Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2011 to 2015*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the December 12, 2007 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. ALLAN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. MAGUIRE*
- *Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Mrs. STEFANSON*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Committee Membership for the March 10, 2008 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. ALLAN*
- *Ms. BLADY*
- *Ms. BRICK*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. MAGUIRE*
- *Ms. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Ms. SELBY*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Committee Membership for the July 8, 2009 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. ALLAN*
- *Ms. BRICK (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. FAURSCHOU*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE*
- *Mrs. MITCHELSON*
- *Mr. REID (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. RONDEAU*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU*

Committee Membership for the June 6, 2011 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. BRIESE
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. REID (Chairperson)
- Mrs. ROWAT
- Mrs. TAILLIEU
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Substitutions received during committee proceedings:

- Mr. CULLEN for Mr. GRAYDON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS for Mr. ALTEMEYER

Officials Speaking on Record at the December 12, 2007 meeting:

- Tom Farrell, Chairperson
- Doug Sexsmith, President & CEO

Officials Speaking on Record at the March 10, 2008 meeting:

- Tom Farrell, Chairperson
- Doug Sexsmith, President & CEO

Officials Speaking on Record at the July 8, 2009 meeting:

- Doug Sexsmith, President & CEO

Officials Speaking on Record at the June 6, 2011 meeting:

- Michael Werier, Chairperson
- Doug Sexsmith, President and CEO

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2007
- Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2008
- Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2007

- Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2008
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2007 to 2011
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2008 to 2012

Reports Considered but not Passed

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

- Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2009
- Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2010
- Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2009
- Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2010
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2009 to 2013
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2010 to 2014
- Five Year Plan of The Workers Compensation Board for 2011 to 2015

Mr. Reid: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:40)

Standing Committee on Justice Second Report

Mr. Frank Whitehead (Vice-Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on JUSTICE presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 6, 2011.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 16)** – *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment and Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et la Loi sur la confiscation de biens obtenus ou utilisés criminellement*
- **Bill (No. 18)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act/Loi modifiant le Code de la route*
- **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Senior Judges)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale (juges aînés)*
- **Bill (No. 25)** – *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'établissement et l'exécution réciproque des ordonnances alimentaires*
- **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act/Loi sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes*
- **Bill (No. 31)** – *The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba*
- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Accident Reporting Requirements)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (exigences en matière de rapports d'accident)*

Committee Membership

- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Mr. JENNISSON
- Mr. MAGUIRE
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. SCHULER
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mr. WHITEHEAD
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Your Committee elected Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. WHITEHEAD as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings:

- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI for Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Senior Judges)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale (juges aînés)*:

Ken Mandzuik, Manitoba Bar Association

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Accident Reporting Requirements)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (exigences en matière de rapports d'accident)*:

Keith Atkinson, Chief of Police, City of Brandon

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 16)** – *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment and Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des collectivités et des quartiers et la Loi sur la confiscation de biens obtenus ou utilisés criminellement*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 18)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act/Loi modifiant le Code de la route*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be replaced with the following:

Coming into force

3 *This Act comes into force on the day it receives royal assent.*

- **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Senior Judges)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale (juges aînés)*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 25)** – *The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'établissement et l'exécution réciproque des ordonnances alimentaires*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act/Loi sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 31)** – *The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Accident Reporting Requirements)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (exigences en matière de rapports d'accident)*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Whitehead: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Lord Roberts (Ms. McGifford), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flooding and Ice Jams Update

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, again today we're seeing rain and wind in areas of the province already hit by—hard by both. The continued bad weather is adding to a very stressful time for Manitoba families, communities and farmers. For example, rain is falling in southwestern Manitoba which has already seen up to 300 per cent of normal rainfall in May. Due to the extremely high moisture levels in this area, the percentage of seeded acres is expected to be low this spring.

On Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg, near gale-force winds are expected today and overnight, affecting communities on the south and western edges of the lakes. This includes, Mr. Speaker, Delta Beach, Sandy Bay First Nation, Gimli, Dunnottar and Winnipeg Beach. On Dauphin Lake, further evacuations took place from Method and Ochre beaches last night due to high winds. I can advise the House that in addition to detailed lake level and forecast information, wind set-up maps for major

lakes are now available on our website and will be updated daily when winds are a concern.

Due to the already saturated soils, additional rain falling today and in the coming weeks will run-off into lakes and streams and contribute directly to high water levels. New forecasts for Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg and the Souris and Assiniboine rivers are available based on last week's rain. However, these forecasts may need to be revised again based on the additional rain we are now seeing once it falls and can be calculated.

On the Souris River, water levels in Melita, Souris and Wawanesa are expected to crest slightly higher than the previous peaks this spring and, again, this depends on the weather. The Assiniboine crested earlier this week in Brandon at higher than 1976 levels, but flows continue to increase at Portage. As much water as the dikes can safely handle is being sent down the Assiniboine River downstream of Portage, but due to the major storms we saw in May, Diversion inflows are currently at approximately 29,000 cfs and rising. The Fairford outlet continues to operate at maximum capacity to help to take as much water as possible out of Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, continued unfavourable and unpredictable weather means information will continue to evolve, but I want to assure the Assembly that our forecasting staff continue to work around the clock to provide the best and most up-to-date information possible to be made available to Manitoba communities and families to help them prepare for this extended and very challenging flood.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I thank the minister for the latest update of the flood situation. Manitobans affected by flooding, especially on the larger lakes, are watching the weather closely today and trying to take steps to protect their properties from potential wind-driven water surges.

The provision of the new wind alert system and information about winds in the flood bulletins should provide—should prove beneficial to Manitobans situated on bodies of water where wind-driven waves could prove threatening.

The RM of Lawrence is one of the latest municipalities to declare a state of emergency due to rising water. A number of people have been evacuated in the Ochre River area due to the flood risk as well. The assistance of the provincial personnel and floodfighting efforts will be welcome in that area, and the Ochre Beach area at Dauphin is

experiencing a shortage of volunteers at the present time and needs more help in that area.

I understand the federal employees will be joining provincial staff in flood protection work being undertaken in the RM of Coldwell, and that assistance is also appreciated.

The provincial government has revised its forecast peaks for both Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba with peak water levels now not expected until July. For those dealing with flooding or the threat of flooding, the longer the lakes remain high, the greater the risk will be.

As always, we urge the government to provide the most current data available to Manitobans so they can prepare accordingly for flooding. We look forward to continued updates on the impacts of flooding, such as the latest information on damaged provincial and municipal roads and the forecasted impacts on our agricultural sector. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his update and his description of the very serious situation we have in significant parts of Manitoba. What I hear on the ground southwest of Brandon to the southwest corner is that probably only 10 to 20 per cent of the land is seeded and that with the wet weather in the last—or currently, that it's not optimistic in terms of how much more may be seeded, although we can always hope.

Certainly it will be important to review the supports for the agricultural community in areas like that and to see if some of the programs like the support for acres which were seeded and flooded which was in place last year would be repeated this year.

And certainly the situation around our lakes is very serious, and, of course, particularly Lake Manitoba, Dauphin Lake, and I'm hearing from communities from Crane River to many others that—of this area's problems and the serious needs that they are having.

Certainly around Manitoba there's a lot of concern with the revised forecast of a high water level of 816.3 to 1,816.5 at July the 5th, and communities like St. Laurent, of course, very

thankful for the increase in the advance. But with the increased estimate for the water level, they're feeling almost overwhelmed and they need, I believe, some additional provincial support and help in the decision making as to what can be done to further protect homes there which are still at significant risk. And if the water is higher, perhaps more parts of the community could be at risk, so measures need to be taken and taken fairly quickly.

So I think it's very important that we have these updates on a daily basis and the seriousness of the situation becomes very clear, and I thank the minister for the measures that have been taken. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Centennial School, we have 19 grade 4 students under the direction of Ms. Cathy Renaud. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

And also in the public gallery we have Kelvin High School, we have 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Harald Hommel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

And also in the public gallery we have with us from Nellie McClung Collegiate, we have 19 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Grant Caldwell. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

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

*(13:50)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Flooding Water Level Forecasting and Preparation

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, all members of this House have been distressed to hear the stories of terrible damage to homes and property, farms and businesses around the province of Manitoba as a result of the current, very significant flood. As it stands today, many hundred Manitobans remain evacuated from their homes, and we know that people from Lake St. Martin, Sandy Bay, Lundar, Twin Lakes Beaches, Delta, Amaranth, Dauphin Lake and very many other places around the

province today are under—or experiencing very significant anxiety.

I want to ask the Premier if he can indicate for these individuals what steps the government is going to take to deal with the rising concern about constantly changing forecasts and a lack of preparatory work done in those areas prior to the current event.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we work very closely with the municipalities and their local emergency operations committees. We provide support to them through the Emergency Measures office as well as through the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation. I was in the Lake Dauphin area on Saturday and I saw, again, the community mobilizing in an unprecedented way. A major Hutterite community was working the sandbag machine very vigorously. Volunteers were very active up and down the lakefront that was threatened in sandbagging homes.

We had officials in there from our department as well as Manitoba Hydro, and everybody was pulling together to do everything they could to protect people's homes and cottages.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, part of what we are hearing from Manitobans from all walks of life is a concern about either lack of information or constantly changing information coming from the government concerning the current situation. It makes it very difficult for people to plan and to anticipate what they may be dealing with. Certainly nobody would blame the government for the weather, but there is a concern about the constantly changing forecast numbers and the lack of preparation.

I wonder if the Premier can direct his comments to the issue of poor forecasting and poor preparation that people have seen to date.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, virtually every single day that the House has been in session, the Minister for Emergency Measures has stood in this House and given a report on the latest conditions as they affect communities around Manitoba.

He did that again today, and as the weather forecasts change and as soon as the information's available, we've reported it in the House. We are—people are reporting it to the local municipalities and emergency operations committees. We have indicated today there is a wind website now, so

people can know what is going to impact their communities in terms of wind conditions.

So we are constantly providing information at the local level to citizens so that they can take all the measures necessary to protect themselves, and we are continuously upgrading and updating that information every single day.

And, as the member knows, opposite, there have been unprecedented amounts of moisture and precipitation in this province this spring, as well as in Saskatchewan, as well as in North Dakota, as well as in other jurisdictions around us, and everybody is doing their level best to deal with this extraordinary amount of precipitation which has hit the prairie provinces this spring.

Mr. McFadyen: And the Premier has made the point about reports being provided in the House by ministers. Today's report from the Minister for Emergency Measures indicates, for example, that the Souris River may—will be cresting again at higher levels than earlier in the year. Last week the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) provided a report that said the Souris River had already crested.

And so I think what Manitobans are looking for, Mr. Speaker, is some indication as to whose reports they can attach weight to: the Minister for Emergency Measures or the opposite reports that are being given by the Minister of Water Stewardship.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Emergency Measures did report to the House that in the month of May, we have seen precipitation levels two to three hundred per cent of normal. And here's what's going on. There are more than one crest occurring along these waterways. Crests occurred earlier this spring. Additional precipitation has come. Additional bad weather has come. This has resulted in new crests occurring along these waterways.

And the same thing is happening in Brandon and, as that information becomes available, we have reported it to the House and we have reported it to Manitobans.

I'm glad the member opposite said that we don't control the weather. We do get information in a timely fashion and put it available to the public and then mobilize resources to deal with it in terms of flood prevention works, flood mitigation works and all those things necessary to ensure Manitobans have

the best opportunity possible to protect their homes, their properties and their families.

Lake Manitoba Flooding Water Level Forecasting and Preparation

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to the fact that the forecasts change from day to day, never mind from minister to minister, Mr. Speaker, the government is now claiming that they had no warning and no ability to prepare for the current high waters around Lake Manitoba when, in fact, within their own January 24th, 2011, report, it was indicated that unfavourable weather in the Assiniboine River, in the basin, would lead to higher levels on the Assiniboine and higher levels on Lake Manitoba. That is a warning that their own forecast report provided five months ago.

And what people around Lake Manitoba and other lakes are asking today is: If they knew five months ago about this possibility, why weren't those people warned? Why weren't steps taken to protect their property?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there were warnings provided to Manitobans that the Assiniboine Valley was going to have high amounts of precipitation. We knew that the soil saturation conditions were very high in Manitoba. This is why we started early planning for the prevention activities. This is why the Emergency Measures Organization in Manitoba started reaching out to the local municipalities early and provided training for the new councillors that were elected and the new volunteers that were getting involved.

Everybody knew that it was going to be a challenging year. The extent of that was not completely clear. Nobody predicted a one-in-300-year precipitation level in Manitoba. People knew it was going to be challenging, but it is now the flood of record for western Manitoba, the flood of record.

And Manitobans have done an extraordinarily good job and a courageous job in mobilizing and working doggedly and diligently every single day to provide protection to their families and to their neighbours, and we have been with them every step of the way, and we will continue to be with them every step of the way.

Mr. McFadyen: And the Premier just said that nobody predicted a one-in-300-year flood event. Mr. Speaker, that is actually not accurate. In July of 2003, the Lake Manitoba Regulation Review Advisory Committee issued a report. In that report, at page 49, that committee indicated that high waters along the Assiniboine, in the range of 1976, would lead to significantly higher levels on Lake Manitoba because of the operation of the Portage Diversion.

So as the government claims today that nobody could have predicted this event, in fact there was a prediction made seven years ago that this could happen. I want to ask the Premier why he ignored the red flag that was raised seven years ago with respect to this situation.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping the member opposite will table the appropriate number of copies of that report because I do know this: I do know, in the past when he has tabled information, we have found it is very helpful in understanding the complete story that's being told.

The reality is the forecasts have been updated on a regular basis since the fall. There have been warnings throughout the Assiniboine Valley that with high soil saturation conditions, that there is the possibility of a very challenging year. That has come to pass.

The member opposite will remember there were people, including members opposite, that were saying that we're overdoing it, that we're putting too much preparation in place, we're spending too much money in preparing for the flood. No amount of resources were spared in preparing Manitobans for this very difficult spring that we've had, and no amount of effort will be spared as we go forward.

Just yesterday, dozens and hundreds of volunteers, including civil servants in Manitoba, made themselves available, on their own time and their own effort, to go out and fight the flood along Lake Manitoba. Manitobans have been magnificent in their willingness to share their labour, their energy and their resources to fight—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:00)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have been magnificent in their response to the current disaster. We agree with the Premier on that point. The challenge is that the information those Manitobans are getting from their government

changes from day to day; it changes from minister to minister.

And as the government goes around and the Premier goes around and does 23 photo ops, Mr. Speaker, in advance of the situation, in none of those did he address the fact that seven years ago, in a report to the Manitoba Minister of Conservation dated July 2003 by the Lake Manitoba Regulation Review Advisory Committee, the government was warned that water levels in the Assiniboine in the 1976 range would add significantly to the level of Lake Manitoba.

Manitobans have been magnificent. Their government has let them down. Why?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Emergency Measures people always prepare for the flood of record, which is the 1976 flood. They prepared for the flood of record and, in the case of diking projects, prepared for that plus two feet of additional freeboard.

So that is how they do it. They take a look at what's coming. They look at a median forecast. They look at the upper range of the forecast and they take a look at the flood of record and they prepare for that.

Manitobans and all of our local organizations did prepare for that, but the events we've seen this spring have gone well beyond that. They've gone to levels never seen before in the Assiniboine Valley, and that has been the challenge. We have seen precipitation levels at two to three hundred per cent of normal. This has created an enormous challenge all around Manitoba.

And Manitobans have responded through their locally elected officials, through provincial civil servants working full time on it, over 700 of them, through them volunteering over and above—beyond the call of duty. Federal civil servants have joined in this effort, and volunteers from many walks of life have come together at the local level to fight this flood.

They should be commended for focusing on working together instead of the member opposite pretending he knows how to predict the weather.

Water Management Policies Government Record

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government likes to use catchphrases when it

comes to water management issues and flooding, such as "perfect storms".

Over the last four years, my colleagues and I have raised many questions and written many letters about this NDP government's failure to address serious water management challenges facing Manitoba. The NDP-crafted flooding around lakes Dauphin, Manitoba, Winnipegosis and Shoal lakes are water management disasters of epic proportions.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of weather—Water Stewardship apologize today for the chaos that has been caused by her lack of leadership on water management issues?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, to say we're dealing with unprecedented flooding in this province is an understatement, and throughout the last several months, Manitobans have come together to deal with that challenge. And I must say, as someone that's been involved day to day in the management of the floods, I am beyond disappointed that that member would get up and try and turn this historic, unprecedented flood into a day-to-day political issue.

Believe you me, not a minister, not an MLA, not one person created this massive weather system and the massive flooding that we have to deal with, and if we're going to deal with it, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be by working together, by pulling together.

That's how we dealt with the last three months, and if we're going to deal with the challenges ahead, I'd urge the member to join with us to fight the flood, not to fight each other.

Mr. Briese: For the last four years, water has been backing up on marshes and on agricultural land on the Westlake and Interlake areas of the province. Despite repeated warnings about the severity of the situation, the minister of waterships took no action. When all the retention areas are full and left full because of poor provincial drain maintenance and more water is coming in, the only possible outcome is flooding. Mr. Speaker.

The flooding of lakes Manitoba, Lake Dauphin, Lake Winnipegosis, Shoal lakes was predictable. Why didn't the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) take preventative action?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody would underestimate the impact of a one-in-300-year flood.

And, by the way, Mr. Speaker, for members opposite, that exceeds 1976 which was the flood of record. No one would underestimate the impact that we've had in May of upwards of two to three hundred per cent in terms of precipitation in the affected areas. We've had three major storms.

I tell you what, Mr. Speaker: Nobody on the front lines, including the people who are impacted—more than 2000 Manitobans—underestimates that.

I'm really surprised that the member opposite would suggest it had something to do with issues over the last number of years. This is a historic flood, and I would suggest to the member opposite, either he's part of the solution or he's going to be, I think, only joining with members in this opposite because everybody else in the province is pulling together. I don't know why that member and members opposite don't, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, after 11 years of gross mismanagement of water issues by the NDP government, we have now come to the eleventh hour. Hundreds and hundreds of Manitobans' lives and livelihoods are being affected with no relief in sight. The flooding and high lake levels we're seeing now are the result of chronic mismanagement and poor planning by this NDP government. The Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) was obviously unable to understand the long-term effects of ignoring the water management file.

Mr. Speaker, where were the members from Dauphin, Interlake and Gimli when the Minister of Water Stewardship needed them? Why weren't the government members putting their heads together to come up with a sorely needed water management strategy? Flooded Manitobans deserve answers.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, there we see the real agenda. It's about, you know—and I know we have an election coming up in October. It's about trying to turn this into a political issue.

Well, I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, no one on this side of the House—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. We don't need no yelling here. Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

The honourable minister has the floor.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that no one on this side of the House sits down with a constituency map when it comes to the historic

flooding we're dealing with, and, quite frankly, I think it's an insult not only to this House but to the people of Manitoba for the member to suggest that. Either change it or withdraw that; apologize.

When it comes to floods, Mr. Speaker, we put politics aside. We deal with the flood. We pull together.

The choice for the Conservatives opposite is are they part of the historic flood fight or are they going to play politics?

Positive Parenting Program Advertising Budget

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): What this—what Manitobans are looking for is leadership from this government, and they failed in that regard, Mr. Speaker. The government has failed.

Mr. Speaker, since January 2001—or 2011, the NDP government has been running various feel-good advertising campaigns around the province, including their feel-good positive parenting ads. Instead of completing a report to measure the program's accountability, the NDP choose to spend taxpayers' dollars on an enormous advertising budget worth nearly a half a million dollars in the last two months.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister responsible how—of Healthy Living—have these ads on buses and newspapers, on radio and on TV done anything concrete to help become—parents become better parents?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors): And I am pleased to provide support for parents. I am pleased to provide programs that give the parents some advice on how they can help support their kids. It directs them to resources both within and outside government. It's a collaborative effort for multiple organizations, whether it's Family Services or Health or Education or student—or Children's Special Services.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's passing strange. They want to get efficiency. We have a single window which provides services to poor parents in multiple areas of the department, and more parents are accessing it and getting assistance when they require it.

Mrs. Rowat: We asked for those numbers and that verification, and he can't provide it, Mr. Speaker. Through a freedom of information response, we found the Triple P advertising budget to be an

outrageous \$446,000 or 891—or, sorry, \$446,891.88 for January and February only. That's 40 per cent of what Healthy Living spends annually on smoking cessation programs for young people. It seems to me that there's more value expenditures in feel-good advertising that doesn't directly help families or children.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid to ask, but I'm going to ask the question: Will this minister please provide the costs for the months of March, April and May 2011 for the Healthy Living campaign to promote Triple P programming?

* (14:10)

Mr. Rondeau: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I thought I provided that information during Estimates to the member. And not only that, during the discussion, I said that it's a short-term campaign to provide access. And, by the way, although the Conservatives do not believe in this, Triple P is currently used in more than 20 countries. Manitoba has implemented it. It provides support for children who have severe behavioural, emotional and developmental problems. It provides assistance to parents and it's been scientifically proven in 20 countries.

And what's interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the members opposite wanted to eliminate the Ministry of Healthy Living, get rid of prevention and just focus on the problem. We're focusing on preventing the issues early, working with parents and the whole focus on prevention.

I know the members opposite don't believe in prevention. They believe in just leaving parents to hang out to dry. We believe in supporting parents when they need it.

Mrs. Rowat: This is a minister that is actually trying to promote his own agenda. We know that he's responsible for the Spirited Energy campaign, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't have the strategy—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Rowat: Manitobans are continually seeing this NDP government create and produce failed campaigns and poorly planned programs with no benchmarks in place to determine success or failure, Mr. Speaker. We know what the Spirited Energy campaign did for this province. When it comes to program evaluations and spending accountability, this NDP government gets a failing grade.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister spend a half a million dollars that could have been spent directly on programs to help children and families? Instead, this amounts to half of the annual budget of many of the non-profit organizations that work directly with families, what that funding could have done for organizations that directly work with children. That would have been a great program.

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Speaker, I make no apologies that we focus on children and families and prevention, unlike the other members. I look at the members opposite, and I look at where they—did they support the Healthy Child program? No, they did not.

Did they focus and support the Healthy Baby program, which provides support for young mothers, for nutrition, for proper behaviour, proper support for young mothers, and do they support giving milk to mothers? No, they do not. Do they support breastfeeding campaigns? No. Do they support the home visitor program that helps families? No.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of our record, and I know what the members opposite support. They support nothing when it comes to healthy children and supporting families.

Education Department Advertising Budget

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government ran a feel-good public advertising campaign regarding education this past spring. After 12 years in office and on the eve of an election, they are desperately trying to portray the image that they are listening to Manitobans, and they are spending taxpayers' dollars to do so.

I ask the minister: How much will this conversation on education cost taxpayers of Manitoba?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): Well, I know that it is a novel concept for members opposite to have a conversation with anyone about education. We believe we should be having a conversation about education not only with our stakeholders but with communities and parents all across this province, Mr. Speaker, and we believe it's an investment in a quality public education system here in the province of Manitoba.

I know that their vision of education is to, you know, they—that education doesn't need any more money because enrolment is declining. And they

made cuts in public education five consecutive years in a row, and now they have their head in the sand and are terrified to talk about education.

We're proud to talk about our public education system any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, for the House record, the minister had budgeted \$367,000 for this advertising campaign.

And, Mr. Speaker, while we value Manitoba's public education system, we should be able to find more valuable ways to spend \$367,000 that would help children directly. Manitobans have the right to be suspicious over the timing of this advertising campaign. This government has taken the top-down approach and has moved many initiatives forward without proper consultation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Could this \$367,000 be better used directly in the classroom for children who need help? Perhaps autistic children and other children with special needs could use this support in class.

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that the member opposite talked about funding for children with autism. We have the most comprehensive autism program of any jurisdiction in Canada, and we're very proud of that.

We've also made significant investments for children with special needs, and, in fact, the last budget announcement that we made in January had an additional \$1 million for children with special needs. They voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd also like to talk about how important it is to—*[interjection]* We're very proud of the consultation that we have had with communities all across this province, Mr. Speaker, because they want to participate in our public education by providing us with the ideas that they think can contribute to developing a great public education system here in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we know there are many children who need support in the classroom, including special needs children and those who are learning English for the first time. The NDP government has instead chosen to spend valuable resources to the tune of \$367,000 on advertising.

Mr. Speaker, when will the results of the campaign be available? What does the NDP plan to do with any information they receive? And will this

help in the design of their election campaign coming forward?

Ms. Allan: Well, I can guarantee members opposite that when we have the report on the results from our conversation about education, we will be transparent. We will provide them with the information. They can come to my office. They can have a discussion with me about it anytime they want, unlike what happened when the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) was trying to figure out what he was going to do in regards to public education, went around Manitoba having discussions and private meetings with people, and he had a meeting with a retired educator who told him he should do common report cards, and he said, oh, I'm not going to do that; that's too political; that's too controversial.

You know what? We have a vision for public education here in the province of Manitoba. They can stay behind, do nothing, and we're going to continue to work with Manitobans to have a great public education system here in the province of Manitoba.

Five-Year Economic Plan Advertising Budget

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, according to a freedom of information we received, between January 17th and February 13th of this year the Minister of Finance spent more than \$200,000 on advertising for the Manitoba five-year economic plan that she tabled in this House more than a year before.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister of Finance justify spending more than \$200,000 on something that she tabled in the House more than a year ago?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the member that this is a five-year plan and it is updated every year, unlike the members opposite who had a one-year plan, and that was to cut \$500 million out of the budget.

That's their plan, Mr. Speaker. Our plan is to work with Manitobans and we do budget consultations.

We get input from Manitobans right across the province, and I can assure the member that those consultations are very important and, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans said to us: Please don't make that \$500-million cut. What they said to us is: Stick to your five-year plan; make sure that front-line services are protected; make those investments; keep Manitoba

moving forward; don't pack—put it back into the dark ages of the Conservatives.

* (14:20)

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pretty sure that Manitobans aren't out there begging the government to spend more money on advertising. I can guarantee them that.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance also spent more than \$236,000 on advertising the budget this year. That means more—she spent almost half a million dollars on the first part of this year on advertising for her own department.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when they're running record deficits in this province, why is it that they're wasting so much money on advertising their own budgets?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, when we had this downturn in the economy, we made a decision that we would put in place a five-year economic plan. We put that plan in place in consultation with Manitobans. We continue to work on this plan just as every other jurisdiction is doing.

I'm proud of the budget that we have put forward, Mr. Speaker, because we have addressed the issues that are important to Manitobans. Whether it's in education, whether it's in health care, in justice, in family services, we have put forward a plan that will ensure that those front-line services are maintained.

We know the plan of the opposition: cut and slash \$500 million. Our plan is to move Manitoba's economy forward. Our economy is growing, and our plan is working, and we're proud of it, Mr. Speaker, and we will share it with Manitobans.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess it's the NDP way, that there's a downturn in the economy, so we better run out and take out advertising—big advertising campaigns. It's the NDP way.

Mr. Speaker, advertising for positive parent work—parenting works, conversation about education and the finance spring ads all add up to about \$1.3 million. How can this government honestly say that they are—that they have the priorities of Manitobans in mind?

Why did they waste \$1.3 million in feel-good ads just prior to an election campaign when they should have put it towards priorities areas and certainly not running the deficits that they are?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite would look at what the economic forecasts are for this province and the growth that's taking place in this province, she will see that we have made the right decisions. We've made the right decisions on small businesses. We've made the right decisions on taxation.

The member opposite doesn't want to spend money on families. She doesn't want to spend money on positive parenting. She doesn't want to spend money on education. She doesn't want to spend money on families. We know what their plan is, Mr. Speaker. They would cut \$500 million. They would cut all those services.

Our agenda is different. We will stand by those families. We will support them. We will educate their children. We will ensure they have health care and we will continue to grow this economy, not what we saw in the '90s with the members opposite, where they couldn't even support anything and they lost the hockey team. They lost everything, Mr. Speaker. We are—they fired nurses. We're growing those. And this economy is growing and will continue to grow.

Sexual Assault Rate Reduction Strategy

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the safety of women in neighbourhoods like Fort Rouge is of great concern. Now, according to CrimeStat, in the first five months of this year, sexual assaults in the Fort Rouge area are up by 167 per cent from last year.

Violent crime, of course, was an epidemic in the 1990s, and yet women in places like Fort Rouge are even less safe now that the NDP are in power. Violent crime and sexual assaults are on the rise under this government.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice tell Manitobans why the NDP government is putting the safety of women at risk?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Certainly the safety of all Manitobans is a top priority for us, and we're making sure that Manitobans continue to be safe in their homes and in their communities.

And we know we do that a bunch of different ways, and I know when the Leader of the Liberal Party's sidekick, Kevin Lamoureux, was around, of course, he used to tell people, we don't need any more police.

We don't believe that's the case. That's why we've invested in police. That's why we've added 261 more police officers and, of course, every single member of the Conservative Party has voted against every single one of those police officers. And I'm afraid to say that the Liberal member has also risen each and every time he's had the chance, and he's voted against those supports in our community.

I don't understand why that's the case. I don't understand why the Conservatives don't support police officers, but certainly we do as a part of a balanced approach to making our communities safer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, in the first five months of last year, 8 per cent of the sexual assaults in Winnipeg occurred in the Fort Rouge area. In the first five months of this year, the proportion of sexual assaults in Winnipeg which occurred in the Fort Rouge area rose from 8 per cent up to 18 per cent, a drastic increase.

I would ask the Minister of Justice why it is that the NDP have been so ineffective in addressing this problem of sexual assaults in the Fort Rouge area. Why is the Minister of Justice trying to play politics with this issue, instead of addressing the safety concerns of women?

Mr. Swan: Well, I think it's important to note that the member is referring to CrimeStat, which the City of Winnipeg Police Service has brought in. We, frankly, support that move and it's part of the overall support, first of all, this government has given to the City of Winnipeg and, second, the overall support this government has given to the Winnipeg Police Service, as well as police services across this entire province.

And, indeed, I speak frequently with the Chief of Police and other members of the police service, and the idea of CrimeStat is if there is a problem in a specific area, I have confidence in our police department of making the necessary measures to put the right officers in the street, making sure the right people are there.

If the member for River Heights wants to criticize the Winnipeg Police Service, let him do so. Let him explain to the men and women that keep us safe why he's voted against more resources for the police time and time and time and time again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, there he goes again, trying to make excuses for his poor performance.

When women are afraid to walk by themselves in Osborne Village and the NDP minister acts like it's not an issue and it's not his responsibility, Manitobans know full well why this government is broken in this province.

Sexual assault continues to rise each year in Winnipeg, and city-wide it's up by 14 per cent from last year and, of course, much more in places like Osborne Village where the NDP are not paying attention. And the NDP answer, as you've seen, Mr. Speaker, is to play politics with safety.

I ask the Minister of Justice why NDP policies have made Manitoba streets unsafe for women.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take that question as Minister responsible for the Status of Women. I think it's a very important issue that the member has raised, and I've spent much of my life working to prevent sexual assault and violence against women.

I was very, very proud on behalf of this government when we had the opportunity to speak clearly out against an attitude that how a woman talks, how she dresses, the signals she sends makes her a victim of sexual assault and makes it her fault. I was very proud to stand up on behalf of this government and say clearly that no means no and launch a complaint with the Canadian Judicial Council on behalf of this government.

We take sexual assault extraordinarily seriously. That's why we've put in place not only resources for the police, but resources for community organizations, community organizations that I worked for when the member opposite was sitting around the federal Cabinet table cutting resources to them.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I am pleased to rise today to recognize the accomplishments of a fellow caucus member.

The MLA for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), has been elected by her peers from across the country to become the chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. She will serve a three-year term in this capacity, which will conclude in the summer of 2014.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Women Parliamentarians is a non-partisan organization that was established in 2005 to foster close ties between Canadian women parliamentarians.

In addition to holding business sessions at the annual Canadian Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Regional Conference, CWP has the goals of increasing female representation in legislatures, providing opportunities for strategic discussions and having ties with Canada and discussions, strategizing and acting on gender-related issues in Canada and internationally.

CWP also conducts outreach programs to explain the political process, encourage female and youth engagement in the political process, explain the multiple roles of parliamentarians from the provincial and territorial legislatures and the federal Parliament.

Membership in CWP is open, free of charge to all female parliamentarians from the provincial and territorial legislatures and the federal Parliament.

All of us in the Manitoba Legislature should be proud to have one of our MLAs serve as the CWP chairperson. Myrna is only the third person to hold this position. The two previous chairs came from Québec and from Ottawa.

Myrna has previously served for three years in the position of vice-chair for CWP, and during that time she developed a database of all women parliamentarians in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like this House to join me and all of us in congratulating the MLA for Charleswood on her appointment of chairperson of CWP. We in the PC caucus are very proud of her, and I am sure we all wish her well as she takes on these duties.

Thank you.

John Nascapow

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): Today I would like to recognize an outstanding member of Opaskwayak Cree Nation, John Nascapow.

John is the director of OCN Parks and Recreation Program. He and his team work hard throughout the year to provide a wide range of activities and services to the community. The beautification program is one example of this, ensuring that the local roads are always free from debris and that our parks and recreation grounds are always in immaculate condition.

His team takes pride in their work, and it shows. As a result, people are proud that their community is always clean, and they themselves play a role in keeping the community clean. John and his crew are always charged with running a variety of summer recreation programs. This includes a day camp for kids run by local high school students during summer, sports, and other opportunities for youth. They are also essential in organizing many of our annual events and festivals.

John's kind character and love for the outdoors are two reasons that he's perfect for the job. He grew up in OCN, leaving for a short time to complete his recreation training in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. John strongly believes that when your community gives you something, such as a good education or opportunity, that it is important to give back. He credits this as one of the many lessons he learned growing up under the guidance of the late Chief Gordon Lathlin. Having seen all the things that Gordon did for Opaskwayak Cree Nation, John was inspired by him to choose a life path that would allow him to do the same, by giving back to the community.

It is evident, when speaking with John, that he truly enjoys his work. Through his work, he is creating both beautiful space and opportunity for the people of OCN for generations to come. This is especially appropriate, as John and his wife, Nadine, have four girls and five grandchildren. His grandkids are known as the "ducklings" that follow him around when he's on the job. He's an excellent communicator and a natural leader.

John is a person who goes well beyond his required duties to make life better for the community. For your many years of service and dedication, we thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Lieutenant Colonel T.R. Young

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): On June 23, 2011, the 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery will host a change of command parade to celebrate Lieutenant Colonel T.R. Young's years as their commanding officer and will, in turn, welcome incoming Lieutenant Colonel L.J. Hammond.

Change of command ceremonies mark a significant point in the battalion's history, providing both an opportunity to reflect on the events that characterize the outgoing commanding officer's tenure and a chance to think about the challenges and

opportunities that await the incoming commanding officer.

As the MLA for the Minnedosa constituency, I would like to take the time today to honour outgoing Lieutenant Colonel T.R. Young. Since Lieutenant Colonel Young arrived in Shilo in 2009, I have had the opportunity to visit the base on many occasions as Lieutenant Colonel Young's guest and learned more about the inner workings of the regiment. Last fall, I had the opportunity to visit CFB Shilo and participate in the annual fall training exercises with the 1st RRCHA B- and C-Battery with the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen). It was a fantastic day and an opportunity to see first-hand the great work that our military does.

Last June, while visiting with the lieutenant colonel at CFB Shilo, he asked me for a Manitoba flag. He explained that he would like to fly it overtake it over to Afghanistan to fly it at the base. The Manitoba flag was a significant symbol of support for lieutenant colonel's men. Upon the soldiers' return at the welcome home barbecue at CFB Shilo, hosted by the Manitoba Cattle Producers, the 1st RRCHA repatriated the flag in a special presentation. It was a wonderful gesture which speaks to Lieutenant Colonel Young's strong faith in his men and his station within Canada.

Lieutenant Colonel Young has had an honourable military career which has taken him to many posts throughout the world. Throughout his tenure, he was deployed in Hungary in 2000, and then Bosnia in 2001. He returned to the Royal Canadian Artillery School to serve as the chief instructor in gunnery. In 2003, he was posted to National Defence Headquarters where he assumed the appointment of Chief of Operational Plans for Headquarters Joint Task Force Afghanistan in 2008 before being posted to commanding officer of the 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery in Shilo in 2009.

Lieutenant Colonel Young has characterized his leadership with integrity and a high sense of duty; for this, we are thankful.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Lieutenant Colonel L.J. Hammond all the best as he assumes command of the 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery. I would also like to thank Lieutenant Colonel T.R. Young for his service as a commanding officer for the 1st Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, and I wish him well in all of his future endeavours.

Ben and Juliana Foord

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that my last member's statement should be dedicated to a wonderful couple whose warmth, generosity and positive traditional values symbolize all that is good about the people of northern Manitoba. That couple is Ben and Juliana Foord from Snow Lake.

Not that long ago, my wife and I were delighted to attend Juliana's 80th birthday at the Northern Lights Manor in Flin Flon. Ben, an active 91, still lives in Snow Lake. Ben visits Juliana regularly and makes a particular effort to celebrate February the 14th with her, Valentine's Day, the day he proposed. Ben and Juliana were married in 1949. He had joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, and in 1945 took part in the last European battles before victory was claimed by the Allies. Ben worked diligently for Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting for many years. He was an early member of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation.

Ben and Juliana raised two sons, Greg and James. Greg and Val have two girls and one grandchild. James and Gwen have three children and one grandchild.

Ben has been a Legion member for over 55 years. He is an avid curler. He has a green thumb and gives away vegetables from his garden to friends and family. He loves to hunt and fish and take the grandkids to their trapper's cabin on Tramping Lake. Ben has been a master angler many times. Ben, the family patriarch, was almost 90 when he shot his last moose. He's a community volunteer par excellence.

Juliana is equally kind and generous. Her background is Hungarian, and she was known for her Hungarian dishes and her baking. She loves singing and was active in the glee club and the knitting club. The Foords were renowned for their generosity and kindness. I feel privileged to call the Foord family my friends. I always felt welcome in their homes.

Ben and Juliana are people of faith and faithfulness. They have been faithful to their God, each other, their family, their friends, their community. They have remained faithful to social democracy. They have remained faithful to northern Manitoba.

On behalf of all their many friends, of all northerners, of all members of this Legislature, and, indeed, of all Manitobans, I pay tribute to this great

couple, a true gentleman of the north and his loving wife, Ben and Juliana Foord.

* (14:40)

Philippine Heritage Week

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It is my pleasure to rise today to recognize Philippine Heritage Week. This annual celebration is one which celebrates the heritage, culture and traditions of this vibrant community. This year, Philippine Heritage Week is June 4th to the 12th.

June 12th has great significance for the Philippines as it celebrates the Philippines' Declaration of Independence from the colonial rule of Spain. Independence was realized on June 12th, 1898.

The first immigrants to Manitoba from the Philippines arrived in the 1950s and '60s. Most of the first to arrive were women who came to work as nurses. Today the Filipino-Canadian community in Manitoba has grown to a population of approximately 40,000.

Presently, the Philippines is the largest source of immigration to Manitoba. Thousands of people come to our province because of our reputation as a welcoming place to live and the established Filipino-Canadian community here makes many of these newcomers feel at home.

The Philippine Heritage Council was started in 1963 to facilitate this week of celebrations. Since then, the council has begun organizing events year-round that promote Filipino culture, heritage, traditions and positive integration into Manitoba society.

A flag raising and opening ceremony took place on Saturday at the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba. Throughout the week, the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba has events planned all week long including an independence ball, a Philippines film festival and an all-day picnic at Assiniboine Park.

Philippine Heritage Week is an opportunity for the Filipino-Canadian community to showcase its rich culture and heritage. It also gives people from a wide range of backgrounds an opportunity to learn about and experience some of these great traditions.

In addition, Filipino-Canadians have made significant contributions to Manitoban society and have a reputation for commitment to community and

family life. This week we also celebrate these contributions.

Congratulations to the organizing committee of the Philippine Heritage Council for planning this week filled with exiting events. I encourage everyone to join in the celebrations and enjoy the events this week has to offer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business.

Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar). The title of the resolution is Improving Education and Helping Students Succeed.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to rule 31(8), it's been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one that will be put forward by the honourable member for Selkirk. The title of the resolution is Improving Education and Helping Students Succeed.

The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Ms. Howard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on further House business, would you call second readings on bills 15 and 33, please.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 15—The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll deal first with second reading of Bill 15, The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Amendment Act.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), that The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'arbitrage relatif aux pompiers et aux travailleurs paramédicaux, be now

read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: Bill 15 proposes to amend The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Act. My understanding of the current legislation is that it applies mainly to those firefighters and paramedics who are employed at the municipal level, so those, for example, working for the City of Winnipeg and, I believe, the City of Brandon. Many other paramedics, of course, are employed by regional health authorities.

Unionized in this act means that for those firefighters who are considered full-time firefighters who are employed in that relationship and who belong to a union have the right to arbitration. They don't have the right to strike.

Recently, of course, there have been attempts by part-time firefighters to organize and unionize, and so in order to make sure that they are also covered in the same legislation, we're proposing this amendment. The proposed amendment will ensure that collective bargaining disputes for part-time firefighters who are employees of a municipality will also be subject to The Firefighters and Paramedic Arbitration Act. Collective bargaining disputes for these firefighters will be settled in the same manner as full-time firefighters by binding arbitration with no work stoppages. Traditionally labelled as volunteers, the Manitoba Labour Board has determined that part-time firefighters have an employment relationship with the municipality, and thus have the right to form a union under The Labour Relations Act.

Of course, there are public safety concerns with the unique bargaining situation for part-time and full-time firefighters with respect to strikes or lockouts, so what this bill aims to do is to expand the definition of a firefighter under The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Act to include part-time firefighters. They'll also be—so they will also be covered under this act.

There have been consultations with many organizations that are involved in firefighting: the Manitoba chapter of Canadian volunteer firefighters association, the Manitoba Professional Fire Fighters Association, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs, the Manitoba Government and General

Employees' Union and the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg, all of whom support this amendment.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, this isn't the first time that this government has brought forward legislation to make part-time firefighters equivalent to full-time firefighters. I think probably one of the more recent examples of that was the amendments that we brought forward to The Workers Compensation Act to deal with the presumptions for firefighters who come down with some kind of cancer or other condition as an occupational risk of firefighting.

Of course, Manitoba was the first province in Canada to recognize cancer as an occupational risk of firefighting, and that legislation has been the template now for seven provinces and two territories since 2002. Almost every province that has brought in similar legislation has used that Manitoba legislation almost word for word. This legislation has, of course, also not stayed in Canada, but that presumptive legislation applying to both full-time and part-time firefighters has spread across the United States in various jurisdictions such as Ohio and Alaska.

And, of course, we've spoken in this Chamber before of the contributions of the president of the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg who is also, I think, an international trustee of the firefighters union, and he, of course, has led that fight in other countries around the world. We spoke of him last week, and I had the opportunity to speak with him and recognize his work, but he's made presentations to, for example, countries in the European community three times in the last two years, and countries are now proceeding with legislation of their own, based on the Manitoba model. Those countries include Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Ireland, Iceland and various other places, and we know, I believe, as we speak, Mr. Forrest is in Australia talking about the importance of presumptive legislation for firefighters, speaking in front of the Australian Parliament. And we hope that we will be able to see legislation forthcoming from Australia within the next few months. And, again, the template for that legislation will be from the Province of Manitoba.

You know, recently, Mr. Speaker, I attended an event of celebration and recognition for firefighters and firefighter-paramedics, and we spoke about the road of this legislation and presumptive legislation in the Workers Compensation Board, and I remember overhearing somebody as we were talking about

where this has come over the last few years, how incredible it was that such, you know, really a small province like Manitoba was leading the world in changing legislation so that firefighters who put their lives at risk for our safety are protected when they come down with occupational diseases.

* (14:50)

And I think, you know, it's important to note again, Mr. Speaker, that the fight for that legislation was not—did not just start in the year 2000. That fight has been going on for more than 20 years. I think the first time in this Legislature that that issue was raised, I believe, was in 1988, and it was raised again in 1990. So it sometimes takes a long time to bring important legislation forward.

Now, on the subject of part-time firefighters, and the equivalent—equivalency to full-time firefighters. Of course, the first time we brought forward the presumptive legislation it applied to full-time firefighters. And then, subsequently to that, I believe in 2005, we extended that definition to include part-time firefighters.

And, over time, of course, has—research has continued and advanced. And I think it's important to note that this group of workers is one of the most researched in the world when it comes to occupational risk and occupational cancer. And so we added those part-time firefighters because we believed that they also deserved that kind of coverage and that kind of protection.

Over time we have made several changes to legislation to help protect firefighters and we've added different diseases along the way. In 2002, as I was saying, we were the first—and that presumption means that certain cancers and heart injuries within 24 hours of attendance on a fire scene, are presumed to be occupational diseases unless the contrary is proven. So the onus of proof is not on the person who's trying to claim compensation, the onus of proof is actually on the board. And, of course, it doesn't preclude other conditions and other cancers that firefighters suffer from—those firefighters from coming forward and making a claim to the Workers Compensation Board. It simply sets up a process for those cancers and conditions for which there is scientific evidence that, in all likelihood, barring other risk factors such as smoking, for example, that cancer was caused by the work that they do.

So in 2002 we started with five cancers: primary site brain, bladder, kidney, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

and leukemia were included in the presumption. In 2005, three cancers were added: primary site colorectal, ureter and lung. And then, in 2009, two additional cancers were added: esophageal and testicular. And all of those amendments, I do think it's important to note, occurred with unanimous consent of this Legislature. There are, of course, issues we know, in this Legislature, that we can all support and this has, at least in the last 10 years, has been one of them.

Since 2002, seven other Canadian jurisdictions have added these presumptions, the most recent being the Northwest Territories. And as research continues, new connections are being made between the occupation of firefighting and the development of various forms of cancer. And the Northwest Territories legislation includes multiple myeloma, primary site prostate cancer and primary site skin cancer in its statutory presumption. And so, of course, last session we brought forward legislation to include those cancers.

We also took, I think, a very important step when we also covered, for the first time in Canada, primary site breast cancer and that was very important for many women who are now involved in firefighting. And in the process of doing this, of course, I found that Winnipeg, and I didn't know this, and I believe it's still the case, that Winnipeg is one of the largest percentages, or proportions, or number, of female firefighters, certainly, in Canada and, perhaps, North America.

And so I remember on that day when we brought forward that legislation to add breast cancer to the list. We had the gallery filled with female firefighters, which I think—and I think the most senior among them had been in the firefighting business for just maybe 20 years. So we've seen a tremendous shift in the last few decades of women coming into firefighting and taking their positions in those jobs. And so with that, we felt it was important to take that step to say that they too should be protected from harm. They, too, should be protected when it comes to occupational cancers that they suffer. Now, of course, breast cancer is not confined to women. Men, of course, can also come down with breast cancer, and that presumption, of course, covers both genders.

It's interesting to note, I think, Mr. Speaker, that once again, Manitoba played a leadership role on adding breast cancer. And in the last few weeks, or in the last month, in fact, Alberta has followed suit

and will also be adding breast cancer to its presumptive legislation. So in this respect, we have, once again, been a leader.

I think it's important that we bring in this legislation that will extend the right to arbitration of part-time firefighters because of the nature of the work of firefighting and the way that we, all of us, do depend on those firefighters. I think it's, you know, one of the many jobs that we are thankful people volunteer for, we're thankful that people sign up for and we know that they'll be there when we need them. We hope we will never need them, but I know that we feel safer, knowing that they are there and they are there to provide us with that service.

At this celebration recently where we got to talk to firefighters, I think the most moving part of it was a gentleman there by the name of Ed Wiebe, who had been injured in those horrific, horrific fires, I think we all remember, in St. Boniface a few years ago, that horrific fire on Gabrielle Roy Place that took the lives of two fire captains, and this gentleman had been injured in it. And he told his very moving story and very—it was a story that was emotional and that we could connect to, as he described that experience, an experience that most of us, thankfully, will never know, of being trapped in a burning house.

He talked about the details of that, of trying to find a window to get out and, instead, you know, finding what he thought was the window because he thought he felt glass and proceeding to try to smash through it with his arms, only to discover that actually what he was smashing was a picture frame and that there was no way out behind that picture frame.

And then he went on to describe, you know, losing consciousness and waking up and knowing that he was in trouble, that he had to get out and trying to get out and finding that his legs were stuck enmeshed in the melting carpet fibres of that fibre. That, for me, Mr. Speaker, is an image that I took home with me that evening that still is in my brain, of how panicked he must have felt, to know, and knowing, as a firefighter does, what the consequences of being stuck in a burning house can be, knowing what those consequences are, how he must have felt, enmeshed in that carpet and not being able to free himself.

He also spoke movingly of his colleagues, of his brother and sister firefighters who were on that scene that night, who did not give up on him, who risked,

perhaps, their own safety and their own lives to go back for him and to get him out.

And he spoke of, you know, the time that he was in an induced coma because of his injuries; I believe 70 or 80 per cent of his body had been burned that night.

And I think—I certainly remember as a child being in the Children's Hospital here in Winnipeg and I was on a ward that was one floor above the burn ward. And so one of the great things about the Children's Hospital and I hope they still do it, was that they provided a school program, because when you're in hospital as a kid, especially if you feel relatively well, it's extraordinarily boring, but you also need to be able to keep up with your school work. So all of us would go down from the different wards to the school room for the mornings, and there would be also some of the kids from the burn ward who were able to get out.

And, of course, as kids do, we would talk about, you know, the treatments we were undergoing and our time in the hospital, and we all kind of asked each other what we were in for. And I remember the graphic details and the excruciating pain that those kids from the burn ward would tell me about when they had to have their dressings changed and their wounds debrided.

And certainly when Ed Wiebe was talking about some of the pain—some of the physical pain—that he went through because of his injuries—pain to remove the dressings. He talked about, I think, when his dressings were changed, it took four hours to change those dressings on his burns, and he talked very movingly about his wife and how his wife, of course, was there with him. And I think, you know, in the first days when he was in that induced coma, nobody knew if he was going to live or not, if they were going to add another fatality to that list, and how, when he did finally come out of that coma, his wife had to tell him the very sad news that he lost two of his colleagues that night.

* (15:00)

He, of course, was off work for several years doing rehabilitation, undergoing many painful surgeries, but I think the redeeming part of the story for me, the part that is not only shows his heroism but inspires me to continue on, even when we think we might have a bad day, is that even after that experience of being in that fire, even after four years of surgery and pain and rehabilitation he's chosen to

stay in the firefighting field and is now at work training new recruits, training new firefighters.

And I know that his capacity not only to draw on his I think 25 or 30 years of firefighting experience but also his capacity to draw on that very personal experience of what happens when things go wrong is going to inspire those new recruits, and he's doing a tremendous service, still, to the field of firefighting.

So we know that we depend on firefighters, and we know that in situations where there may be collective bargaining disputes, we need them to stay on the job, and that's why this legislation to make sure that part-time firefighters are included in that definition and also have access to arbitration are so important.

I want to briefly touch on some of the other things that we've done to support firefighters. Certainly part of my department is the Office of the Fire Commissioner, and they provide all fire departments in the province of Manitoba with free-of-charge training opportunities scheduled to fit the diverse needs of the volunteer fire service. In fact, Manitoba's the only jurisdiction in Canada to offer that kind of training to all fire departments. Of course, many people in this Chamber will have had the opportunity to visit and tour the Manitoba Emergency Services College, which offers 29 internationally accredited programs ranging from firefighting and rescue to emergency management.

It's sort of an interesting story, Mr. Speaker. One of my first jobs, in university, in the summer was working at that fire college, and my job there was to help put together fire education kits, fire prevention education kits that were going to be used in the schools in the fall, and that entailed counting magnets and counting pamphlets and putting those together. But also what happened, because it was the summertime, is there were many forest fires, and, so, of course, when there was a forest fire everybody left the Office of the Fire Commissioner, who were trained firefighters, to go help put out those fires, leaving me and one other admin staff to essentially run the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

And so we would answer the phones and get people's questions, like can I build a shed out of cardboard— is that all right? What about this and the other thing, and I hope that we gave good advice, but I fear a bit for the people that called the office that summer relying on my advice of how to prevent fires. And then, of course, they all came back from the forest fires, and one of the things they had to do

was clean the equipment. And so they called me into the garage, and they had one of those big fire hoses on the ground and got me to hold onto it while they were going to clean it. But, while I was holding on to it, somebody turned it on and I promptly landed on my behind, on the cement, which, of course— *[interjection]* I did not have my hard hat on. Unfortunately, that was under a different government, workplace safety and health not so well enforced as it is now, but I did end up on my behind on the cement, and many of the firefighters had a good chuckle at me trying to hold on to that hose.

So then it was—you know, I sort of came full circle. When I first became the Minister of Labour and Immigration, I went out to Brandon to tour the college and meet with some of the staff there, and there was still at least one of the people that had worked there when I was a student, and she remembered me. Our Fire Commissioner was brand new at the time, and I think he was a bit nonplussed to learn that I had actually worked at that college some, I don't know what, 15, 20 years ago, and that this woman had been my boss. And so he wanted to make sure that I had been treated well, as a student, when I was there. It's an interesting moment when you come full circle.

But that college has trained countless firefighters and emergency staff, and getting the opportunity to tour it, as I hadn't been in there for many years, showed me how much they've expanded and worked to provide those kinds of services.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner does many other things to help support firefighters, Mutual Aid District funding well known, I think, to members of this Chamber, especially those who've been involved in municipal government.

And, you know, the other thing I want to talk about with respect to the Office of the Fire Commissioner and firefighting and volunteer firefighters which is the subject of this bill, over the past three years the Office of the Fire Commissioner has been working with First Nations on the issue of fire prevention, and they've undertaken several initiatives to enhance fire and life safety training and education and emergency response services to First Nation communities. They've recruited and employed two full-time staff to help with service provision in northern and remote locations and, in partnership with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, they've been working on further prevention and education initiatives in First Nations.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this legislation that's in front of us today, Bill 15, is just another step in the many steps that this government has taken to support firefighters, because they, of course, are there when we need them, and we want to be there when they need us.

And so, with that, Mr. Speaker, I certainly recommend this bill to the Chamber and look forward to hear other people's comments. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 33—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan), that Bill 33, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: This bill has a lot of hands. This bill is further amendments to The Pension Benefits Act, Bill 33. The major effect of these changes to The Pension Benefits Act are to extend the powers to enforce the act, to strengthen and update those powers of enforcement of the act. So these—this legislation, of course, in addition to enforcement, also provides authority for Manitoba to enter into the new multilateral agreement on pensions with other Canadian jurisdictions, which would provide a clear legal framework for a regulating of pension plans with members in two or more jurisdictions.

The amendment to strengthen and update enforcement of the act does some of the following things: It expands the powers of the superintendent to issue orders for contributions that a corporation has failed to pay into a pension plan; it allows the superintendent to file orders in court so they may be enforced as if they were a court judgment; it strengthens some of the existing lien provisions by authorizing the superintendent to register a lien in the Personal Property and Registry Land Titles Office against all property of the employer, including real estate, in the amount of the contributions the employer failed to pay into a plan; it strengthens the director's liability provisions by holding directors of a corporation to be liable to pay any contributions to a pension plan that the employer has failed to pay as

subject to certain exceptions; and it permits that superintendent to issue administrative penalties, such as under a workplace and employment standards acts to parties who fail to comply with the act or regulation and administrative matters such as filings and filing deadlines. Penalties, of course, would be appealable to the Pension Commission.

And I think some of the reasons that some of these amendments are necessary is just to update some of the current provisions for enforcement. Currently, the provisions for enforcement under the pension act are limited. And the pension superintendent, when she is faced with non-compliance of a plan, has a few options. She can cancel the plan, which often will come at the expense of the beneficiaries, or she can encourage the beneficiaries to go to court, which is usually not a very satisfactory outcome either.

* (15:10)

So the Pension Commission took a look at this legislation, at this idea of how do we give her some more tools for enforcement that can actually get the beneficiaries the money that they require, and these are some of the suggestions that they came up with.

I think it's worth noting, for the House, that the Pension Commission that reviewed this and has recommended it, of course, is made up of representatives of employers and employees, as well as people who have a lot of experience in the pension area, both in public pension plans and private sector pension plans. So they've taken a look at this and they have recommended these provisions.

The other part of the legislation has to do with providing a clear legal framework for regulating and enforcement of multijurisdictional pension plans, and I think this is something we've had some discussion and questions in this House before. So what it does is it permits the minister to enter into a proposed new multilateral agreement between Canadian pension jurisdictions for the regulation of plans with members in two or more jurisdictions, known as multijurisdictional pension plans, and provide Manitoba with the authority to adopt the rules of another jurisdiction to ensure the pensions of workers in that jurisdiction are protected.

I think it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that as employers are increasingly globalized or increasingly have operations in many provinces, I think we're going to see more and more need to have these kind of multijurisdictional agreements, to make sure that

the rights that employees have in one province can be enforced in another province, and I think we also saw this recently come into effect when we were finally able to execute an agreement with the Province of Québec on the Employment Standards Code provisions.

Previously, we'd not had an agreement with Québec, and what that meant was that if a company who had a head office in Québec wasn't meeting their obligations under the Employment Standards Code, we didn't have an agreement with Québec that they would be able to go after that country for wages owed or other things owed to employees here. So, really, it was the Premier (Mr. Selinger) who initiated those discussions with the Premier of Québec to make sure that we had that agreement and so that employees here also enjoyed that kind of protection.

What—when we're talking about the multijurisdictional plans, what this amendment will do is—talked about allowing the minister to enter into an agreement but also allowed the superintendent to order a split of a pension plan and its assets to protect the rights of the Manitoba members, and also to permit other Canadian jurisdictions to be designated as reciprocating jurisdictions, to allow for their reciprocal enforcement of orders requiring money to be paid to a pension plan and improve the superintendent's ability to administer and enforce a new multilateral agreement. Reciprocal enforcement is presently provided for under Manitoba statutes, including those relating to retail sales tax, family maintenance and employment standards, as I've spoken about earlier.

Of course, as I've said, this legislation enjoys the support of the Pension Commission. In fact, the chair of that Pension Commission, Robert Ziegler, said of this legislation that we are moving in the right direction and that the proposed changes ensure Manitobans will get the protection they need and deserve when enforcing the strongest pension legislation in the country. Of course, it builds on other significant amendments to The Pension Benefits Act that were initiated in 2005, and with the regulations coming into force in 2010 that also strengthened our pension legislation in Manitoba.

So I've talked about some of the current mechanisms for enforcement under the act and how this will be improved under this act. I think it's also important to talk about what the penalties are for non-compliance with the act. The maximum penalty

is \$10,000, and the regulation will set the circumstance for and the amount of the penalty based on the contravention and the number of plan members affected. Now administrative penalties exist under other Manitoba statutes, such as the Manitoba income tax, consumer protection, workplace safety and health and employment standards legislation. And, really, part of what we've tried to do with this legislation is to look at some of the powers and tools that we have under the Employment Standards Code because the Employment Standards Code exists to ensure the rights of those workers who may be owed wages, who may be, you know, working overtime and not being paid for that.

And, really, pensions are deferred wages, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's important for us to remember that. A pension is something that we pay for through our working life and that our employer contributes to, and often that—those pension benefits are done in lieu of higher wage or higher salary. And so the same kinds of rules that apply when you're owed a wage also are beginning to apply when you're owed a pension.

In addition to the Pension Commission taking a look at this—at these changes, we also have the Manitoba Labour Management Review Committee, which is comprised of representatives of business and labour, be consulted on these changes and they've developed consensus support for the changes.

When legislative changes are contemplated by government, we usually talk to the LMRC. They act as a great consultative body and I'm very thankful that they act in that way, Mr. Speaker. And I know former ministers of Labour also very thankful for the advice of the LMRC. They always take their work seriously. They execute it quickly and they give us very good advice.

Now, I think, probably one of the questions that members might ask is: Why would we—why do we have to proceed with this kind of legislative change now, especially with regards to multilateral agreements?

Well, over the years, we've seen some divergence in pension laws across the country. In the case of multijurisdictional plans, this divergence has made it increasingly impractical and often impossible to simultaneously apply the rules of several jurisdictions to matters affecting a plan as a whole. So, the plan may have members, may have

employees in several provinces; each of those provinces has different rules.

The Canadian Association of Pension Supervisory Authorities, or CAPSA, has proposed a new multilateral agreement that will provide a clear legal framework for regulating and enforcement of multijurisdictional pension plans. And, as we move forward and have those discussions and those negotiations, we'll also be wanting to ensure that these kinds of plans also have strong enforcement provisions, because there are circumstances when the regulation of these kinds of plans do present challenges to pension regulators, especially if the employers' corporate offices are in another province.

So a new provision will permit other Canadian jurisdictions to be designated under Manitoba's pension legislation as reciprocating jurisdictions to allow for the reciprocal enforcement of orders requiring money to be paid to a pension plan.

Reciprocal enforcement of orders will improve the superintendent's ability to administer and enforce CAPSA's proposed new multilateral agreement for the regulation of these plans. And, as I've said, you know, reciprocal enforcement is not a new idea. It's certainly not unique to pension legislation, but it's presently provided for under other certain Manitoba statutes, including those relating to retail sales tax, family maintenance, and employment standards.

In discussion about some of these new agreements with regards to multijurisdictional plans, there have been some concerns raised, particularly regarding the funding rules and distribution of plan assets. So the proposed agreement requires that when a pension fund is allocated on a plan termination—in a plan termination, priority is given to those members and jurisdictions that have solvency funding rules, which could have an impact on those jurisdictions that have permanent solvency funding exemptions.

So Manitoba requires solvency funding rules for all its multijurisdictional pension plans. So, in these situations, I want to assure Manitobans, who are members of those kinds of plans, that if a plan is terminated, they would be given priority under the proposed agreement.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, I know there are many others who would like to speak about pensions, who've had a role to play. It is one of the very important issues that we deal with in this government, because people depend on those pensions. They depend on them for a decent income

as they age. As I said, they are deferred wages. They are benefits that people have worked hard for, and so I hope that we will be able to move this bill to committee and have further discussion there.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I am—I would like to say how pleased I am to be able to put a few comments on the record in regards to the Minister of Labour's (Ms. Howard) legislation that will provide protection to Manitoba's pensions and will also provide a stronger enforcement in regards to non-compliance when employers don't have sufficient funds and pay into Manitoba's pension plans.

* (15:20)

Our government understands that one of the most important social benefits that Manitobans can have is a pension. Money that is basically deferred wages. Money that is there for them so that they can live in comfort and live in dignity when they get older. And we are very fortunate here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, because Manitoba has the second highest rate of workplace pension coverage in Canada, and it might be surprising to members in this House that that percentage is 46 per cent.

And we would certainly like to see that percentage higher in Canada because we believe that this is a social benefit that is very, very important to people once, you know, they are no longer earning a living wage. Because, if they don't have a pension plan, many people have to rely on social services, and they have to rely on the government to support them in their elderly years. And we believe that if there are pension plans in place for people when they are working, that this is an opportunity for them to be independent after they've quit working.

We have done a lot of work in regards to ensuring that pension plans are there for people here in Manitoba. We have taken many steps to ensure that there is sound, fiscal management in regards to pensions. We were the first government in Manitoba to address the pension liability. When we got into government, we had the unfortunate situation, we realized that our pension plan for our government employees and our teachers was in dire shape, and there was a huge unfunded liability. And we had to, Mr. Speaker, invest a serious amount of money into our pension plan for those employees because we believed that it was our public responsibility to ensure that once those individuals retired, that that

pension plan would be there for them when they were into their later years in life.

And just our budget this year in 2011, we continued to take significant steps to pay down debt and address the unfunded pension liabilities because we want to ensure that there is full funding for the employer's portion of pension costs so that we can make sure that, regardless of when people retire, that funding is there for them when they so choose to make that decision in their lives.

The changes—legislative changes to The Pension Benefits Act is just the first time—the second time, this act has been changed. There was a huge review of The Pension Benefits Act previously and this was a review that had not occurred in almost 25 years, a broad review of the complete Pension Benefits Act, and this was a difficult piece of legislation. I believe at the end of the day it was 54 pages, and I do have to put on the public record that I would like to thank Deb Lyon, the pension superintendent, for her incredible support to me as the minister when we did that legislation. I used to tease her that—did she ask for a calculator for Christmas when she was a little girl because she was phenomenal in regards to helping me understand the pension issues, and she was really terrific in helping us craft a piece of legislation that we were very proud of.

One of the divisive issues in that pension legislation was the whole issue of unlocking pensions. And it was a very difficult issue because there was—the Credit Union Central that had had some success in Saskatchewan with 100 per cent unlocking of pensions, and they thought that that 100 per cent unlocking should happen here in the province of Manitoba as well. And our concern about that, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that, you know, at the end of the day, as the previous minister has said, pensions are there. They are deferred wages and they are invested for an individual and there is always an employer contribution and that money is there to provide security for people when they retire.

And we were able to get consensus with the credit unions in regards to only going with 50 per cent unlocking of pensions, and that gave us a comfort level with that pension legislation so that we could proceed with a broad review that brought our Pension Benefits Act into the Canadian mainstream.

This pension legislation that the minister is bringing in is going to provide, you know, further changes that will make our pension—pensions stronger here in Manitoba. These changes will

strengthen the act by providing the Pension Commission's Office of the Superintendent to take direct action against employers who have a pension plan in place and who fail to make the required contributions to that plan. And that is important to us, as a government, because that is an agreement that is made between the employer and the employee in regards to contributions to a plan and, obviously, if the employer is non-compliant in regards to those contributions, then that is a serious issue for the plan and for that individual who needs that income when they are about to retire.

We're also pleased to have additional changes that would provide authority for the government to negotiate agreements with other jurisdictions in Canada to ensure Manitoba workers' pensions are protected regardless of where their employee's head office is located. And that will provide more protection for people here in the province of Manitoba, and we're very pleased that these changes have been supported by the Manitoba Pension Commission. They are very pleased that this is going to provide further protection and enforce stronger pension legislation in the country, and will be a model, perhaps, for other jurisdictions here in the country to strengthen their pension legislation.

I also would just like to comment that, you know, pension legislation is very important to us, as a government, and, you know, the other pension legislation here in the province of Manitoba that we have taken strong measures in regards to strengthening, obviously, is our Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund. And, you know, we found an unfunded liability in that pension when we got elected, and we have put \$1.75 million into that pension legislation to ensure that it remains stable and is there for many years to come. We've also committed to matching the contributions of new entrant teachers on a go-forward basis as of the year 2000, and we've made the first increase to government and teacher contributions in over 25 years.

Ms. Erna Braun, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

So we will continue, obviously, to work on pension initiatives for workers in our province, and I'd like to take this opportunity to compliment the Minister of Family Services for bringing in pensions for those individuals, our child-care workers in this province, who have done some—who are doing phenomenal work as early childhood educators,

providing safe and learning environments for our young people.

And this is another way that we are going to encourage people to go into that profession that is so important to our education system, and a compliment to all of the work that is done in our education system. The work that is done in early learning centres and in child-cares is getting young people ready for school, and the more work that they do getting our young people ready for school, the more success young people have in school.

So we would just, you know, like to continue, as a government, making advancements in having pension legislation that protects the workers in our province and ensures that those pensions are there, because people deserve to be able to retire and live in dignity and not have to worry, quite frankly, about their income, because they have spent their lives, quite often, paying into their pension, and we're here to support that, Madam Acting Speaker. And we will continue to work on behalf of all Manitobans in regards to ensuring that pensions are there for people when they retire. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I move, seconded by the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* (15:30)

House Business

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Braun): Honourable House leader, on House business?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Madam Acting Speaker, on House business.

Would you call debate on second readings on Bill 47, 45, 48, 24, 46, 49 and 27?

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker: Okay, further House business, we'll be dealing with—we'll resume debate on 47, 45, 48, 24, 46, 49 and 27.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 47—The Accessibility Advisory Council Act and Amendments to The Government Purchases Act

Mr. Speaker: So right now I'm going to call Bill 47, The Accessibility Advisory Council Act and

Amendments to The Government Purchases Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

What is the will of the House? Is the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member from Morris?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: It's been denied. Do you have any speakers?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs): I just wanted to put a—some brief remarks on the record because it was a tremendous privilege of mine to be the minister responsible for persons with disabilities for a period of time during which the now-Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Howard) worked very tirelessly with me on several issues. It was—and a very important learning and life experience for me. I gained great insights, particularly from people who were living with disabilities in this province, and had a much greater appreciation, even despite my earlier experiences with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission about the challenges that every day face Manitobans with disabilities.

We very quickly came to the conclusion that we had to launch a new round of efforts and initiatives to address those needs to ensure that all Manitobans were able to fully unleash their potential and participate in the economy, participate in family life and travel, and all of the benefits that citizenship should bring for individual Manitobans. As a result of efforts, particularly in involving the now-Minister of Labour, we were able to produce for not just the direct stakeholders and those living with a disability, but for all Manitobans to look at where we can go as a new-level approach to ensure that great potential is realized.

I very early on became aware that the word "disabled" is one that we should be very careful with because I think that, by and large, if there—if a person is disabled, it's not intrinsic to their own self, but rather to our attitudes and the environment that we build. So with Opening Doors we were able to look, for example, almost immediately, at the buildings that the Province has in place, some very historic buildings, for example, courthouses around Manitoba that are very inaccessible, not just for people who may be called to face justice, but also those that are called to be witnesses and—and I think sometimes we forget this—people who should have an equal

opportunity for employment in the justice system or at those other offices where services are being provided in the court facilities.

This building, though, was more than just another government building. When we looked at the inaccessible main entrance, it was important that we send a very strong signal to all Manitobans that this building is theirs, that they belong here and that we can change even historic designs and facades that have a great historic significance because there's something even more important, and that is the right of all Manitobans to enter their building through the main entrance. It's just a matter of dignity, of common sense and of equal opportunity.

So it was a proud moment when we were— we concluded that it had to be an investment priority to have the ramp at the front of the Legislative Building, and I think what a tremendous job the designers did of that. The Tyndall stone complements the historic attributes of this building.

But, of course, whether it's buildings or accessibility in other senses of the word, Opening Doors went to work with other new ideas. When we think of physical accessibility, we do think of buildings, we think of curb cuts, we think of the transit buses and all of those physical barriers. But it's often the other kinds of barriers that can disable individual Manitobans, sometimes to a greater extent, and that, of course, is the attitudes.

That's why we were very insistent on proceeding with the marketAbilities strategy to ensure that we addressed those issues of attitudes and remind employers that they'd be making a financial mistake, a bad business decision, if they exclude, from consideration for employment, Manitobans with disabilities, based on prejudging or prejudices. And so we launched many initiatives under marketAbilities, to not only change attitudes by way of public awareness strategy, but to provide a fund to provide initiatives to recognize the leadership of some Manitoba employers in bringing persons with disabilities into their employment and onto their staff.

And, in fact, I've seen studies done. I think it was one in British Columbia that showed that persons with disabilities, when employed, actually are even more loyal than persons without disabilities, which is a—quite a fascinating study. And I think we can only speculate on what is behind that. But it is a reminder, another reminder of why it's critical that all employers, public and private, look beyond

someone's appearances and also make reasonable accommodation of persons that may have certain disabilities.

So, when it comes to some of the actions that were taken in the last few years in the Opening Doors discussion paper, which, by the way, I'll remind Manitobans, was not a conclusion in and of itself, it really was the launch of the beginning of a new level of ways to address the needs of persons with disabilities. We have to, as well, remind ourselves that the Manitoba Human Rights Commission—and I was minister responsible, and I was a former employee of the Manitoba commission and the Canadian commission—responds to complaints. In other words, it is there to receive the problems that Manitobans with disabilities come across in their everyday life because they have been denied access, because they have been dealt with unfairly, because they have been dealt with illegally. Is it really the best way to move ahead by waiting for a complaint to come in the door? Is that the best we can do as a community? I think not. I think we have to be more proactive. We have to go out there, all of us, collectively, and look for those shortcomings in our establishments, and in our attitudes and our programs and in our materials. Look to discover where we can make improvements to ensure accessibility in its true sense.

So that's what led to the legislation introduced by the honourable minister. I was very pleased to see the effort that went into the development of the strategy here because it's one that does not have a lot of precedent in Canada. We know that Ontario has taken some steps—that have to be commended—to move in this direction. We know that in some other countries they have taken some steps. But we really have to be informed from the work in Ontario.

* (15:40)

One of the leaders of the initiative in Ontario came to Manitoba and shared insights with us in terms of how to ensure success of an accessibility strategy. We were reminded of how critical it is to engage those who will have to make change. It's important that we not proceed with accessibility regimes top down. We have to engage people so that they can fully understand what's in it for them as well.

For example, Ontario, the business community did jump into a leadership role once they were fully consulted and the due respect was given to them to be a part of the strategy. And they were reminded,

over and over again, how important it is to expand the consumer base. That's what you're doing, you're opening the doors for more consumers. And, as I said earlier, you're opening the doors and giving opportunities for those who could be your best workers.

Aside from all of those moral arguments that this is good for business, but it has to be one where business embraces the approach, because that is the way to make progress in a way that is sustainable and is respected by all of those who must make—must pursue betterment.

So Ontario gave a very, very clear message to us, to engage the business community, look for those leaders and those champions in the business community. Look for leaders in the municipal or other government sectors, not just provincially, that can provide leadership, that can pave the way for accessibility in all of its forms.

Ontario's development, too, which, by the way, I think, has already come to about 10 years of work, reminds us that the accessibility standards have to be very carefully drawn up. The timelines are absolutely critical. It's not like flipping on a light switch, Mr. Speaker. These changes will, by necessity, take some time. It has to be done fairly, and it has to be done in a way that can be managed in every sense.

So this legislation is an absolute critical step, not only because it establishes the process that is required and, as again I say, is informed by what Ontario went through. But the legislation signals that here we come in this province, as well. That we will not be left behind when it comes to moving ahead, proactively, to ensure accessibility for all Manitobans. It sends a clear signal that we will not sit around and wait for complaints to be received and dealt with by human—the Human Rights Commission. As good as they are, we recognize that we have to do this systemically and together.

So I commend the minister for this very thoughtful, sure-footed approach to what really is a legacy, I think, of any government. And I can understand why there are some advocates who would want something faster in terms of legislation, because that is their job to get things done faster. We're not slow in this province, I will argue. Yes, Ontario was out there, and they were beating—they were cutting some path for us, but we will catch up in our own way. But we need, as well, those advocates to say that. It gives birth to what really is a movement that's articulated in here in its—in more

than even its formative way. So a great step forward for all Manitobans.

And I do want to say—put an exclamation mark to some comments that were made by the minister in introducing this legislation, when we talk about accessibility we often conclude that that is only about persons with disabilities. And sometimes we should just be reminded that it is about people who would not think of themselves as having a disability whatsoever, but maybe having some mobility restrictions. I don't think we would ever call a mother pushing a baby in a pram as someone with a disability. But when we can open up our doors, when we can have visitable housing as the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Ms. Irvin-Ross) is so bound and determined to grow in this province, we have to celebrate that when we talk about accessibility we mean accessibility for everybody. And it might be somebody that just has a broken leg some day. But the core element has to be those that are living with a permanent disability, obviously. But the benefits go far beyond that.

So I say congratulations to the minister. This has not been an easy task because of its sea change in how we approach what really is a compelling moral and legal obligation on all of us, and that is to open the doors.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River East. *[interjection]* I already recognized the honourable member for River East.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I move, seconded by the member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), that debate be adjourned.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): I think there was some confusion in the House, and the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) is interested in speaking to this bill. So perhaps she could go next and then you could adjourn. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for the member to— for Kirkfield Park to speak first and then whatever takes place takes place, because, normally, under House—when we're debating bills, I normally go back

and forth, government, opposition, government, opposition. That's why I recognized the honourable member.

But we'll—there is—leave has been granted, so I'll recognize the honourable member for Kirkfield Park.

* * *

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): And I thank the honourable member for River East and I guess I apologize again for the confusion. We both jumped up.

It's really a pleasure to speak on this legislation because I've spent, probably, I guess, since about 1985-86, working with the disabilities community on a number of things. It started with my own background in architecture and working with Professor Claude deForest on what was then called barrier-free design and what we now tend to refer to as universal design.

I also have the privilege of having had as a former student and now a colleague, a Paralympian, Colin Mathieson, as someone that I work with, and I'm very, you know, thrilled to be able to both support him in his Olympic goals but also in the work that he does around barrier-free design.

And so the one thing that I've come to learn through my experience with architecture and then, also, in working, for example, on Bill 238, The Service Animal Protection Act, is just how much needs to be done in terms of getting responses from the grassroots, from people that are actually encountering barriers.

And I think that the legislation and with the creation of an advisory council, it does move us that one step closer to a fully-accessible Manitoba, because one of the things that has to really be done is to consider all of the situations that people encounter in a daily life and where barriers are presented. And I think, as the Minister for Family Services and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Mackintosh) just mentioned a moment ago, that it's not necessarily just about disability, it's about barriers.

And the one thing that I've always loved about universal design is the fact that it's about eliminating barriers. And there's some of those things that might seem obvious to many of us is the things like the placement of a ramp, for example, like the ramp on the front of our own Legislative Building. It might mean the special tiles that some of us have probably seen along the intersections of Broadway. They kind

of look like embedded Lego blocks at the intersections. And that's just something that, again, if you're walking and if you have any kind of limited vision, can give you a sense of what the ground is like and know that there's an intersection.

There's a number of different things that might, again, some might seem obvious, but others are much more subtle. And they're those kinds of things that really—it can't necessarily be done off a checklist. And I, you know, I look forward to a day when, you know, across the planet there is some sort of universal building code that takes all of those things into consideration. But I know we are not near that point. We make steps; we progress a little bit at a time, and that also, too, situations evolve.

I mean, I think, again, in terms of accessibility and barriers, the fact that we've had an increase in electronic technologies. It's amazing the number of friends that I have with visual impairments that now use apps on their iPhones and other kinds of smart phones that help them do particular things. Now that's something that I'm pretty sure not everyone in this Chamber is familiar with.

So how would we go about drafting legislation if many of these things are outside of our daily experience? Maybe something that we could research or come upon second-hand but, really, what the purpose of this advisory council is is to really work with those who have the knowledge and let them work in that advisory capacity to shape the direction that legislation and other policies will go in future.

So it—again, it might not be as big a step as some would like, and I know I would like to see things moving a lot faster, but there's no sense running forward too fast and tripping over your own feet, as opposed to moving at a move prudent pace that allows you to do things the right way. Do it once and do it right and then tweak as you go along as needed as technology and situations evolve.

* (15:50)

And so I'm really, you know, impressed with the work that the Disabilities Issues Office has already done on so many things, and, for example, the Opening Doors, and that initial provincial commitment of \$30 million towards more affordable and accessible housing.

But, again, so much of that is reliant on feedback from those in the community, and I really look forward to the kinds of people that are going to be

brought together by the advisory council. I look forward to how they are going to consult and how they are going to work with individuals and organizations to really bring this together and so that we can work on a multi-level interdepartmental kind of way, work with municipalities, work with employers and businesses, because, really, when we build a society that is barrier-free, then it really works for everyone.

And, again, so those things like a ramp: again, that might be useful to someone who's got mobility issues that either uses a wheelchair or cannot maybe climb steps for extended period of time, but, as mentioned earlier, it's the things like the stroller. As someone that's had to carry a *chariot* of groceries up a three-floor walk-up in, you know, Paris and Toronto, I can tell you, I would have really appreciated if somebody had retrofitted those buildings from the 1750s with elevators. It wasn't likely going to happen, but it's those kinds of barriers that people face on a daily basis, and the more universally accessible spaces are, the better.

But it's not all just about architecture. It's also about attitudes, and I think that's the other thing about this advisory council is that it will help us build a society where barriers are dropped, not just on an architectural or physical level, but where we develop a different kind of society where attitudinal and behavioural barriers are also eliminated. And I think that's a really huge part of it.

That was something that I really became aware of in working with service animals and coming to realize just how few people have a true understanding of the etiquette that is required around service animals, whether they are in private or public service; and that, by educating people about the etiquette around service animals, it literally eliminates barriers for those who use service animals for whether it's as guide dogs, hearing dogs, therapeutic animals, those kinds of things; that, by changing the environment that these people are in with their service animals, it really does make their lives so much better.

And so I think that's the other thing that I really look forward to and why I'm really proud of the minister for having brought forward this legislation, because it is going to do so much more than just, again, dress-address some of those obvious things like, let's change the, you know, the layout of this building, or let's do something very visible and architectural. It's really going to be about how the

community will become further empowered and be able to shape the direction that we take things.

And I really appreciate that partnership that she's developed with the community and with this council. I really look forward to how that's going to go forward because I do think it's something that will, again, lay the groundwork and do so much to change attitudes. I think, I mean, we've really got to look at how so many things, to this day, are still built with barriers inherently within them, and, again, whether they are social barriers, whether they are physical barriers. And again, I think back that really again it's a first step, but it is part of a larger comprehensive set of commitments, and whether that's been commitments to visitable units, including in the new Manitoba Housing construction renovations, whether it's \$1.6 million to improve access to diagnostic services and expand resources for Manitobans living with things like Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, those are tangible commitments to dealing with barriers that people face, and I think this is just one more confirmation of the direction that we're taking in terms of committing to that.

Again, I think of things like the marketAbilities initiative within the Rewarding Work strategy to help people find and keep jobs. And again employment: barriers to employment can be one of the most—pardon the expression, but one of the most crippling things in someone's life. If you cannot find employment that is both satisfying, challenging and rewarding to you, then the removal of physical barriers is really almost a non-issue; it's irrelevant. And so the ability to work within that program, within that marketAbilities, and doing things like increasing income assistance for persons with disabilities, you know, an increase of 30 per cent, how the Provincial Civil Service Diversity Strategy is—continues its commitment to increasing the number of well-qualified persons with disabilities in the civil service to 5 per cent from the 2.8 per cent it's been at and now we're currently at 3.1, so we're on the way.

Again, we've had a multimedia campaign targeted to encourage employers to hire Manitobans based on what they can do not what they can't. And, I mean, one of the greatest examples of that is actually one of the women that was part of the advertising campaign. You'd see her with her service animal—it's my friend Janet Hunt, and she's amazing. Again, it's not about what Janet can't do, it's about the bazillion and four things that she can do, and, oh boy, you better try to keep up with her.

So it's one of those things, Mr. Speaker, where I really do think that this legislation is of immense value. Again, it is only a first step, but I do really look forward to where that first step is going to take us. And so, with that, I would now turn the floor over to other colleagues that would like to say a few things on the legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): And I guess just for clarification, do I have to adjourn debate for a second time?

I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 45—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2011

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I'll now call Bill 45, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2011, standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Just hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Hold on. Is the bill—will the bill remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris?

An Honourable Member: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. I'll explain the process first, okay? We have a little confusion here. When a bill is standing in the name of a member you deal with that issue first. Either you leave it standing or you deny it and then you move on if someone wants to speak to it. But you have to deal with one issue at a time, and the first issue we have to deal with is standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris. So we have to deal with that issue.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes?

Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris? *[Agreed]*

Okay, so the bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris. But we have a member that wishes to speak to the bill.

The honourable member for River Heights, to speak to Bill 45, please.

* (16:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to Bill 45, and since this is, of course, a bill which provides for amendments to a whole lot of bills, and I want to speak specifically to one of the bills which is under discussion here and that's The Residential Tenancies Act. And a—sometime ago we brought forward legislation which would amend The Residential Tenancies Act and which would provide for changes to The Residential Tenancies Act, which would permit—be much more permissive of having pets in apartments and end the no-pet policy. And, in this respect, I continue to receive a lot of support for changes to The Residential Tenancies Act, including the following letter from Melanie Schmidt, which I will read parts of, and a petition which accompanies it.

She says: We, the undersigned, believe the current no pets blanket policy to be outdated and highly inappropriate in a society that views their pets as an extension of the family unit. Too many responsible pet owners are forced to choose between having a roof over their heads or keeping their beloved pets. We ask for reform by way of a new pet-friendly policy that encourages responsible ownership yet continues to provide landlords with the tools they need to protect their property from unsavoury tenants.

The following are 10 key points that we would ask you to consider in regards to this issue:

(1) A comprehensive study conducted in 2003 showed that landlords spend less than one hour per year dealing with pet-related complaints, proving that incorporating pets into rental buildings is not a disaster waiting to happen, as we are continually led to believe.

(2) Numerous research studies show that having pets promotes better health. Denying this to renters is saying that only a homeowner has the right to improved health and well-being.

(3) Animal shelters would see a great reduction in the number of pets, both relinquished and euthanized, as many more owners would be in a position to keep their pets, and more homes would become available to adopting and shelter animals.

(4) According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "discrimination" is defined as "the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually." Therefore, landlords discriminate each time they deny tenancy or evict a tenant, based solely on the presence of a pet, without sufficient proof that the pet has caused, or is causing, damage, odour, noise, et cetera, to the property.

The law places pets under the category of personal property. Thus, landlords should not have the right to decide what personal property a tenant may own. Only when sufficient proof can be presented that a tenant's personal property is causing destruction to the property or causes health and/or safety concerns to other tenants should a landlord have the right to take appropriate action.

(6) Carpeting could be removed from suites to prevent accumulation of pet hair and dander. This would allow a suite to be fully disinfected between tenancies, effectively preventing allergy sufferers from exposure to pet hair/dander left by previous occupant pets.

In the first phase of incorporating pets into rental complexes, landlords could assign one particular floor to pet owners.

(8) There should be no restrictions as to species, breed, size, age, or the number of pets a tenant is allowed, so long as local animal bylaws are observed and the owner can prove that they are capable of controlling and providing proper care for their animal or animals at all times.

(9) Indispensable tools that landlords could utilize: (a) screening and background checks; (b) a three-month probationary period for both prospective tenants with pets or current tenants wishing to bring in a pet; (c) annual inspections.

(10) And, finally, landlords have many legal options for recovering lost profits due to damages caused by tenants or their pets in the form of damage and pet deposits as well as the right to seek additional compensation when deposits do not cover the cost of repairs.

In closing, we would like to thank you for your time and consideration on this very important issue. We hope that a new, sensible pet policy replaces the current outdated one, a policy that will better reflect the importance that pets play in our lives.

And the accompanying petition has many comments and helpful suggestions from many, many people and is signed by 1,163 people, and, Mr. Speaker, I would table this petition.

Mr. Speaker, the government rejected such legislation previously and has showed no inclination to change its view, but, clearly, the view that there should be a changes to The Residential Tenancies Act to make Manitoba a more pet-friendly province is one view that is widely held. And I put that forward, and it's too bad that, you know, such legislation was not brought forward this time round, but perhaps it will be in the future. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers?

Okay, seeing none, when this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

Bill 48—The Planning and Land Dedication for School Sites Act (Various Acts Amended)

Mr. Speaker: Okay, now we'll move on to Bill 48, The Planning and Land Dedication for School Sites Act (Various Acts Amended), and is standing in the name of the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese). It's standing in the name of the honourable member for Ste. Rose.

What is the will of the House?

Is the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Ste. Rose? Or the member want to speak?

Okay. So it'll remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Ste. Rose.

Do we have any speakers?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): I'm pleased to speak to this bill. I think that many of us in this House can agree that buying a home is one of the biggest and most important purchases one will ever make in their life. I know I remember the day that I was looking to buy my first home, and I'm sure like many people here when they were trying to figure out can I do this and how will I manage this, and a little bit nervous about the whole process. It's important to know that people

can trust the process and that's why I think this is a particularly important bill.

And we know that more and more people are moving to Manitoba. More and more people are choosing to make their home here and we certainly want to make that as smooth a process as we can.

This particular bill, of course, Mr. Speaker, speaks about protecting new homebuyers in new developments. And, particularly when we're talking about schools, which is, of course, when you are going to buy a home, for many of us, that's one of the most important things that you look at.

I know, for me, that was an important factor in choosing where I wanted to live was choosing to live in an area with a school that I thought was going to best serve my family, and it's turned out to be a fantastic school and neighbourhood for me.

And so we know that Manitobans benefit from a well-planned community. We know that having fairness when they go into buying their house, and having an ability to trust everything that's presented to them in making that most important purchase, is an incredibly important thing, and public schools, of course, being one of the most pivotal and important public features of a community.

We know that they do more than just educate our children, which I won't underestimate how important that is, but, of course, the school often provides a centre to the community and becomes more than just the place where you drop off your children in the morning. It also becomes a place where you often make many of your friends through your school, through the children's friends that they have at school. And, of course, also we know that the schools are used in the evening to take on many other various activities, whether it's sports things or scouting or that sort of thing. So they should be fully included in the planning of the community.

This bill, of course, Mr. Speaker, if I can talk for a moment about what it will do. It will ensure that prospective homebuyers in new residential areas have the most accurate information available on the location of their future school sites, because it's certainly important when one is looking at buying a house or maybe looking at building a house and seeing where there might be, potentially, a school and knowing that they can trust that information.

This amendments to The Planning Act in the City of Winnipeg Charter will prohibit developers from advertising any site as a school site that has not

been approved by the Public Schools Finance Board. And we know, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that this sometimes happens and it's not the right thing to be going on when somebody is given the impression that perhaps an empty field will be a school someday, and perhaps that's never been the intention of the local school board. So this will make sure that that sort of thing doesn't happen.

It will also require that the school division provide public notice of their intention if they don't plan to build a school on the land. And I think this is really important as well, and the fact that it will be presented in an open meeting. This gives members of the community not only a heads-up of what will be going on in their community and whether that means there'll be a school built, whether that land would be turned over for residential use or whatever, but also gives people a chance to speak in the community about what that means to them and whether they think that that's the right decision and whether they agree with the decision and an opportunity to speak to those making some of those decisions. And I think that ensures a lot more transparency in the process.

The legislation will also ensure a collaboration between the planning authorities and the school division in the planning of new residential developments and provision for sites for schools within those developments.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this helps, of course, not only the community and the school division, but this helps the developers as well. I've spoken to developers in my area and one of the concerns that they have is that they certainly do want to put aside school land. I think that the developers are keen to build the same kind of communities that we all want to see with lots of opportunities for schools and daycares and active living as well.

* (16:10)

But, when the developers and the school divisions aren't speaking, it's hard to be clear of what exactly it is that they would be looking for in that plan. So this actually helps the developers in that it will be a clearer process to them of what the school division needs. It's difficult for the developers to try to plan a school after they've already planned some of the other developments around it. I know that they spend a lot of time and a lot of money figuring out exactly where to lay the roads, the parks, all the amenities that a new development needs.

So, having that information up front and knowing that nowadays the schools that we build,

being that they're, for the most part, community schools, are perhaps larger than they were a few years ago or a few decades ago, we now look at land being about 10 acres large for schools, knowing that those schools often have community use after school as well and, certainly, soccer fields and all the other activities going on as well.

So much more helpful for the developer to get that sort of information up front and knowing that they can set aside not only land that's large enough for a school but in the right placement. I know school divisions have particular needs, of course, keeping in mind of where children are going to be walking and buses are going to be pulling up and parents are going to be stopping, and all these things, it's much easier to plan for them in advance. And I see that the—from what I've—the discussions I've had with developers, they'll appreciate knowing this information sooner.

This also—the legislation will also require mandatory dedication of land as a condition of the subdivision approval, or the provision of funding in lieu of land with the price set at the assessed value of land before the development takes place. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, this is just a better use of tax dollars, of course.

We know that, right now, the planning between the—the planning of schools is inadequate, and some of those conversations aren't happening, and that leaves buyers in new developments a bit confused as to what they're getting. It leaves developers not sure exactly what they're supposed to be doing, and it leaves—school divisions get the impression that perhaps a school is going into a community when it wasn't—when it was never planned to be there.

We know that, often, that communities are planned without enough consideration for future school sites, and I spoke about that a bit, that sometimes, and I have certainly seen this in some developers' plans, that they don't set aside necessarily large enough land for a school; they may not sell aside appropriate land for a school. So there's a side of both sides. Sometimes the developer puts aside more land for schools than the school division can forecast that they see kneeling—needing in the next few decades, and sometimes that particular land is not actually in the right place to suit the school division's needs.

We know that in Winnipeg, some developers do have agents that advertise in their promotional 'materia' that—promotional material of particular

areas for schools and give the impression that a school is going in. But without consulting the school division, it's really not a fair thing to home buyers to be given the impression that they will be buying a house within walking to a school, when the school division, and in looking at their projected numbers of student enrolment, may not see that that would be the best use of the tax dollars.

And we can see that this situation, where it's not clear and not as transparent as it could be, and this bill will make sure that that is amended. The situation, of course, leads to frustration for homeowners who feel that they have been told some misinformation. It's frustrating for school divisions who are trying to go in at a later date and perhaps looking at buying land, and, as I've said, it may not be sufficient in size or in placement, and, certainly, also, in terms of the costs of land that school divisions are sometimes faced at trying to purchase.

We know that municipalities would like to have this sort of thing worked out. It's clearer for them to have an idea of how the community is going to be built around the school because, quite rightly, Mr. Speaker, quite often, communities are built around the school. The school becomes the heart of the community, much like community centres do as well. And, as I said earlier, this helps developers give them a clear understanding and early recognition of what it is that they'll need to put into their school.

This legislation will fix this problem by ensuring that school boards and municipal governments and property developers work co-operatively to benefit the entire community. And, Mr. Speaker, I mean, it's—it makes logical sense for all these folks to be coming together early in the process so that we don't have situations where there's either a misunderstanding or perhaps some misleading information, and homebuyers, of course, are the ones that are left on the hook for that.

This legislation is about transparency. It's about consultation. It's about making sure that everyone is aware of what is going on in the community and what the future of the community is, and I think that we'll see that this leads to a much friendlier community and a much more accessible community for families as well.

As I said a little earlier, Mr. Speaker, the bill will introduce several changes that will significantly improve on the current situation. As it stands right now, there is no requirements in The Planning Act or the City of Winnipeg charter for involvement of the

school authorities in the residential-planning process. And, of course, it only makes sense that school authorities be involved in the planning.

They're the ones that best track the numbers. They're the ones that have a better sense of the future of the school. And, of course, in new divisions that does attract, often, new, young families, but the school authorities are well aware of where there are populations that are aging out-of-school and perhaps not turning over as much to new families, and where new areas are probably growing in the area of new families.

But the proposed legislation also makes a consultation and collaboration between the planning authorities and the schools authorities mandatory. This is something that they will have to sit down and do. It won't be an option, and so we know that the community's needs and the school's needs will all be met.

And the people can trust that, when they do go into a developer's office or an agent's office and see one of those lovely maps that show what the school and community will look like in a few years, that, in the future, once this legislation—and I hope it's supported in this House—but once this legislation is enacted, that people will be able to trust that, when they go into a real estate agent's office or a developer's planning office, that if a site is marked for a school, they will know that that is because the school division agrees that a school will be needed there. And it won't be a question of hoping that they get a school. They'll know that it's been set aside and, should anything change, they'll know that that will also be clearly stated. And they'll have an opportunity to discuss it, to ask questions, to present their point of view of why or why not they agree with that.

We'll also ensure that the land identified for school sites is suitable land, is appropriate land, is large enough. I know in some divisions the land that has been set aside is about half the size or even less of what we need for schools nowadays. As I was saying earlier, our schools have become more than just a place—and perhaps they always were—but, certainly, more than just a place where we drop off our kids in the morning and pick them up. Our schools are also community schools. I know the schools in my area, when school lets out at 3:30, 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock, different times that they let out, the school is still bustling right afterwards, and right up until about 9 or 10 o'clock with different

groups coming in and using the facilities. So the school really becomes almost a part of the community, much like a community centre.

There's also no mandatory requirements right now to dedicate land for schools in existing planning legislation which, of course, Mr. Speaker, could mean that a developer can develop a land and have a really popular area that has no space at all for a school, which is not in the benefit of either the developer, the school division or, of course, the people who are living in that area. Clarity and transparency is always a better way to go.

This proposed legislation also says, as a condition of subdivision approval, applications for the subdivision of four or more lots will trigger mandatory requirement that a portion of the land be sold to the respective school board at a set price. And this, Mr. Speaker, of course, is just a better use of taxpayers' dollars. We know that we found a balance in this legislation between finding a fair price for developers, who we know do have to purchase the land upfront when they are planning a subdivision, but also a fair use of taxpayers' money that goes towards purchasing land to build a school on it as well.

I think it's important that it's fair for both sides of it, but also to keep in mind that, once a school has been identified as being built in a particular developed area, that usually that triggers more and more people wanting to live there when they know that a school division has committed to building a school, as they have done in Sage Creek in my constituency. You can bet that a lot of people consider that a good reason to come in and look at the houses in Sage Creek and consider moving into Southdale as their neighbourhood of choice, knowing that a new school will be built there as population warrants it.

School divisions also will be required to pay, based on the assessed value of the property prior to the proposed development, to ensure fair treatment for both the school division and the developer. Of course, as I said earlier, that knowing that the school division is supporting a school in a particular development is good news for a developer, as well, in terms of sales of their houses. But we want to be fair about this. We want to make sure that developers get a fair price for the land that they're offering, but that taxpayers also get a fair rate for the land being bought through the school division in order to place the school there.

The changes in this legislation would also give the school board the option of requiring cash in lieu of land equivalent to the specified-specific price of the land that would have been sold to them, Mr. Speaker, and, again, I think this is a good use of taxpayers' dollars.

* (16:20)

This bill will also make sure that homebuyers in new residential areas have transparent and accurate information about any potential schools that are going into their neighbourhood. It will take away unrealistic expectations that misleading advertising can do. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that unfortunately, there are some people that take advantage of this situation and the fact that, up until now, the legislation—we didn't have it clear in the city Planning Act, and that will be changed—that we see that some unscrupulous people do put down areas as being potential school sites and perhaps lead buyers to believe that it's already been a decided and done deal that a school will be built in a particular area when we know that the realistic and transparent consultation, perhaps, has not actually occurred.

Under this proposed legislation, developers will not be able to advertise a site as a school unless it's been approved by the Public Schools Finance Board. So not only does this help homebuyers, but developers as well will be able to confidently know that their homebuyers are getting accurate information. And I know that the developers that I have spoken to, of course, want to deal honestly with people and do that as well, and it's unfortunate that there is a few people that perhaps taint the entire process.

But this way homebuyers will know that, when they see a sign marked that a future school is coming to your neighbourhood, such as we know is coming to Sage Creek in Southdale, they will be able to be confident that it is happening. And, should somebody try to mislead the public, a substantial fine will be applied if they fail to comply with this prohibition of advertising sites that they haven't done proper consultation on.

The school division will also be required, under the changes of The Public School Act, to give public notice when they decide to dispose of the land that they received for a school site and make it a public presentation at a public meeting.

And, again, I think this important because, you know, Mr. Speaker, that our school divisions do track the numbers of population and have a very good sense, from what I can tell, of where they expect to have increasing populations and decreasing populations, and usually have quite a good sense of where they expect to need a school in the next few years or looking ahead at where they expect growth.

But, occasionally, Mr. Speaker, that may change. Certainly, in different times, different economic times, they may see people build less for various reasons, have a particular area that people thought might be popular and then people have chosen to build down the street, so to speak, and it means that the school division may change their mind in the future. But this way everyone will know what's going on. It will be a transparent process, and the community will have a chance not only to come out and listen to the reasoning but to also present their reasons of why they agree or disagree with this particular decision.

Mr. Speaker, I know I've had several discussions with my constituents about this. This is an area that is important to them because I do represent a lot of constituents who have built their homes in the last—even some of them, in the last five years for the majority of my constituency, and, certainly, clear and transparent process is important to them.

But I also know that the Manitoba School Boards Association is very pleased with this proposed legislation as well and are happy to hear that this government has responded to the concerns that they have raised about school site acquisition and development procedures.

And, Mr. Speaker, as well, I've spoken to several developers in my neighbourhood. Because I have so many new homes in my neighbourhood, I also have new developers living there as well.

So, from what I can understand, Mr. Speaker, everybody is quite happy to see that we're bringing in a clarity and a more transparent process, and I look forward to seeing this bill move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers?

Okay, seeing none, when this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese).

Bill 24—The Innovation Funding Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, now I'm going to call Bill 24, The Innovation Funding Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon West?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, okay. It will remain standing. Any speakers?

Bill 46—The Save Lake Winnipeg Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll move on to Bill 20–46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it will remain standing. Any speakers?

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): It's my pleasure to offer some very supportive comments in the context of Bill 46, a very, very important piece of legislation and one that I'm particularly proud of, given the strong environmental message that it contains which, certainly, meshes with the strong environmental priorities of the citizens of Wolseley and my own background in this area, professionally and academically.

Let me just, very briefly, highlight the major components, and then I'll say a few words about each of them. This bill is going to amend no less than five different pieces of legislation, including The Crown Lands Act, The Environment Act, The Mines and Minerals Act, The Planning Act and The Water Protection Act, all of this geared, Mr. Speaker, towards saving Lake Winnipeg.

Now, anyone who happened to see the quite excellent documentary done by *The Nature of Things* and none other than Dr. David Suzuki, recently, on CBC, they now know that Lake Winnipeg is in serious, serious trouble. There is literally no time to lose. We have an opportunity to still make an enormous difference in the future of this lake for the better, but there is new scientific evidence, which our government has been recently made aware of, and

we are continuing our efforts to improve Lake Winnipeg with this very important legislative proposal.

And I do want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, this is by no means the first initiative that our government has taken to try and improve the ecological health of Lake Winnipeg. We have been working very hard for years and years, since I came here as an MLA, to make a difference on the nutrients levels that are heading into the lake, on the research that is so desperately required. There is very little baseline data or even a fundamental understanding of the ecology of the lake and how the nutrients were changing that until we came along and funded such excellent initiatives as the former Coast Guard ship, the *Namao*, now docked in Gimli, which is providing such valuable info and which, of course, played such a prominent role, and deservedly so, in David Suzuki's most excellent documentation.

To—just to let you know, the most recent scientific study that we've been given now tells us that, to restore Lake Winnipeg to a level of health, one of the things that absolutely has to happen is that phosphorous levels have to be cut in half. They have to be reduced by 50 per cent. This is significantly higher than what earlier scientific studies told us, where a 10 per cent reduction should be our target. We agreed to that target at the time; we followed the science, and we're doing exactly the same thing now.

It is my further hope that—thank you very much—it is my further hope that, as we did in the past, that we might have some success working with our neighbouring jurisdictions to help us reduce the phosphorous levels heading into the lake. Numerous states immediately to the south of us, who are part of the Red River Basin which, of course, drains into Lake Winnipeg, also agreed to reduce the amount of phosphorus heading into our territory by 10 per cent. And when we are able to present them with the new data showing that a 50 per cent reduction is now required, my hope is that those jurisdictions will also step up to the plate.

This is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, because only a fraction of the overall phosphorus, which ends up in Lake Winnipeg, is actually phosphorus that we have any control over here in Manitoba. Much of it comes from other jurisdictions, not just to the south of us, but also to the west of us from Canadian provinces in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and to the east of us in Ontario.

So we need to work with as many people who are willing to work with us. And it behooves us if we are going cap-in-hand to ask people to cap the amount of phosphorus they're sending our way, we must look after our own territory, as well, and be as aggressive as we reasonably can.

The science is also telling us that the excess phosphorus, which is ending up in the lake, is coming from primarily three different types of activities. These are cities; these are agricultural activities and these are the loss of wetlands. And, in order to make a significant difference, we need to move aggressively in all three areas.

* (16:30)

So the five different pieces of existing legislation that I mentioned that we will be amending through Bill 46 are going to accomplish many specific things on the ground, and I would like to highlight some of these. In order to reduce the amount of phosphorus heading into the lake through agricultural activities, we will be expanding the unprecedented pause that was put on the hog industry, such that there will be no expansion of any hog operations now, anywhere in the province, unless they meet very strict environmental criteria for their operations, which ensure that excess phosphorus is not ending up in the lake.

Previously, of course, Mr. Speaker, you'll recall we brought in groundbreaking legislation, previously, to protect the lake, which blocked the expansion of hog operations in three specific areas: the Red River Valley, the Interlake, and an area around Steinbach. We've now found from the science that we need to go further, and so we are extending that ban and that—the ban on the expansion of hog industries throughout the entire province.

We have also recognized, Mr. Speaker, the incredible value that wetlands play in the protection of Lake Winnipeg. Wetlands are the environment's natural water filters. That is where excess nutrients and pollutants of many, many different types can be absorbed by this remarkable ecosystem, one of the most productive ecosystems in terms of biomass anywhere in the world, actually. Certainly, in our part of the world, it ranks very high, right up there with the boreal forest, in fact, and the destruction of wetlands is not something that is helping Lake Winnipeg at all. The natural filters such as the Netley-Libau Marsh need to be regenerated and supported, and so these new legislative changes will

give us additional powers when it comes to governing the actions that can take place on Crown lands. And, simultaneously, we will also be banning the expansion of peat extraction operations which, ultimately, quite often, get their raw material, the peat moss, from existing wetlands. So, action is going to be taken to correct those activities as well.

And third, but, by no means, least of all, Mr. Speaker, certainly, in my neighbourhood, this is the most immediate situation: We will be requiring the City of Winnipeg to finally, at long last, agree to upgrade their North End Sewage Treatment Plant. This is a discussion that we have been, of course, having with our city counterparts for far too many years. This is the facility which had an enormous sewage spill not all that many years ago in 2002; 427 million litres of raw sewage ended up in the Red River because of a breakdown at this sewage plant, which is the equivalent of 170 Olympic-sized swimming pools. This is just not acceptable.

I was very disappointed to hear that the City has publicly said that they are going to be resisting our requirement that they actually upgrade this 80-year-old plant to meet modern standards. I could say a lot more about that but, suffice to say, we'll just say that I am very disappointed to hear that and I hope that saner heads prevail. We are very strong on this position. We will not be wavering on it, and it is time for the City of Winnipeg to enter the modern era when it comes to their sewage treatment. We appreciate there are costs involved. We will be there to discuss with them how those costs can be covered, but the health of Lake Winnipeg, one of the very largest lakes in all of the world, is simply far too important for a matter of the City of Winnipeg to ignore any longer.

There is also—and I hear members opposite have woken up as I've started talking about the sewage treatment plant in Winnipeg. They have an interesting position on this. They somehow believe that the water treatment plant could be sufficiently upgraded to biological nutrient removal standards by whacking the budget for this project by \$350 million. They are trying to skate a very thin line, Mr. Speaker, where they, on the one hand, say they can take out that much money from the budget for the project and still end up improving water treatment in Winnipeg. That's simply farcical. There isn't any way that you can do that to that budget and still end up with any project at all. They are talking about cancelling this upgrade altogether.

If we just cut through the political rhetoric and get to the truth of the issue, and that stands as a very stark contrast between what our government believes and what the opposition believes is the appropriate way to respond to the crisis in Lake Winnipeg.

It's all the more remarkable that members opposite are taking that position because Winnipeg is the only major city in all of western Canada that has not upgraded its sewage treatment plant to modern levels. How on earth are we going to go to Saskatchewan or to Alberta or to Ontario or Minnesota or North Dakota or South Dakota and say, hey, our lake is in trouble, we need you to cut phosphorus by 50 per cent, and have our capital city with almost 700,000 people living in it feeling that an 80-year-old sewage treatment plant is acceptable in this modern era?

You cannot square that circle. Either you believe in protecting the environment and protecting water and ensuring that we're doing our part for future generations, or you don't believe that. And it's quite clear right now that the City of Winnipeg doesn't believe it. It's been quite clear up until now that members opposite, the Conservatives, do not believe in this approach.

The sewage treatment plant is only one area, in fact, where they have come out with some very strong language, being opposed to what are really quite sensible and necessary initiatives by our government to protect water. The ban on the expansion of hog barns that I mentioned, that was in three different regions of Manitoba, members opposite have said that they would repeal that, that they did not agree with that initiative at all. They have said that they would, in fact, repeal The Water Protection Act that we brought in, which is groundbreaking legislation no one else in Canada has had.

We remain the only province in the entire country which has a Minister of Water Stewardship. Who knows what the fate of that very important minister—ministry would be? Heaven forbid that the members opposite would get to make that decision. There are enormous stakes on the table here, Mr. Speaker.

I'm exceptionally proud of the important role that our government is playing to correct mistakes of the past. And, to put this into perspective, people can read over what a new treatment plant at the North End treatment facility would do and decide if these are unnecessary or not worth the investment as they

see fit. This new facility will be able to take care of ammonia, which is a frequent substance in—when treating human sewage. Ammonia is a toxic substance in the environment. Particularly, it can kill fish stocks quite easily and lots of amphibians and other aquatic life.

An upgraded North End treatment plant will treat E. coli, which, I don't have to tell anyone, is in the news these days, and it's what plays such a prominent role in closing the beaches in Manitoba. It will be able to not just remove the phosphorus from our sewage; it will do so in a way that makes that phosphorus usable as a fertilizer and an exceptionally valuable fertilizer, Mr. Speaker.

Not many people realize this, but phosphorus is actually a non-renewable resource. There's only so much of it in the world, and our agricultural producers and anyone else that's using phosphorus for any other application, much of that actually has to be imported from the far corners of the world. It simply does not make sense to allow that to enter into a lake where it causes harm, when it could be extracted, separated and reused in a productive and responsible manner.

So an upgraded North End treatment plant will help us on multiple fronts there. And removing phosphorus, of course, reduces the algal blooms which are causing so much problem—so many problems on Lake Winnipeg. And the expanded capacity of our vision for the future of the North Winnipeg plant will be able to accommodate the population growth which is happening in our capital city. It's something you have to plan for if you believe in growing your province. And, certainly, we do believe in that, and we're very proud of that position.

So, I mean, we're taking pollution out of the water; we're capturing valuable resources for reuse; and we're planning for the future. All of those things, I would suggest, the vast majority of Manitoba and the vast majority of people around the globe would see as pretty straightforward priorities that any government with its head screwed on straight should be doing.

* (16:40)

I look forward to convincing the City that this is the right course to go. I look forward to hearing what members opposite have to say about this. They've been opposed all along, and I don't have high hopes that they will change their tune. They're pretty stuck

in their ways—many decades behind as they are on many fronts. But it is encouraging to see our government take these important steps forward, and I would certainly encourage all members of the House to consider supporting this legislation. Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to put a few words on the record in terms of Bill 46, The Save Lake Winnipeg Act.

You know, it is a real disappointment that there is not a target in this act for phosphorous reduction. The government proceeded with great fanfare last week to say that they were going to reduce phosphorus by 50 per cent in Lake Winnipeg, but I expected to see that in this act, but it's not here.

Why is there no target here? What is happening? I mean, when we're talking about greenhouse gases, we at least—we're finally, after calling for this for many years, we finally got a target in legislation. But something that is vitally important, so important as Lake Winnipeg that it is—but we don't have a target. Why is there no target?

If it were as important as the member from Wolseley were saying, there would be a target in here. Not only should there be a target, but, again, as with the greenhouse gas legislation, there should be a timeline, perhaps timelines for reduction, but this is missing. Why is this not in the act?

You know, these are central elements to what should have been in the act, but they're not here and, again, as with the greenhouse gas reduction, there's a requirement for having a plan in which you can show that this measure will be associated with this kind of a reduction, and you can add these up to get to 50 per cent.

Well, we don't have that kind of a plan here. So, you know, this Save Lake Winnipeg Act is nowhere near what it should be. It should have been much better. You know, compared to a Liberal approach, it's quite clear that the NDP are behind, you know, what should be. Five years ago, I was calling for a 50 per cent reduction target, and now it's taken five years for this government to catch up with where they should have been five years ago. And now that they've got to a 50 per cent target announced verbally and in a press release—but it wasn't in the act. So how many years are we going to have to wait until the target is in the act?

This is a government which is constantly behind, and instead of being where we should be, where

we're cleaning up Lake Winnipeg, where we're reducing the algal blooms, this government has had a situation where we have had a big increase in the phosphorus in Lake Winnipeg, and there's no adequate indication that they're going to reach the 50 per cent target with all these measures. So that is pretty disappointing.

Now, on the hog measures, this clause 40.1(1), you know: Except as authorized by a permit issued under this section, no person shall construct, expand or modify a confined livestock area for pigs or pig manure, a storage facility on land within any other area of Manitoba, or any area of Manitoba, it looks like. So the—this, what I think from what we've got in the press release is that the government's intention here is that, where there is a science-based approach which reduces the phosphorus and ensures that the hog operation won't be polluting our waterways with phosphorus, that they will allow it to be constructed or built or amended or expanded or what have you, given that this is also approved—as it has to be—locally.

You know, Mr. Speaker, for 10 or more years, we've been talking about the need to have science-based approaches to hog construction facilities, which will not pollute the waterways with phosphorus. So this government has taken 10 years to get to this point?

You know, it's—we want to make sure that there's science-based approaches which are going to reduce phosphorus and yet allow there to be construction of—expansion, investment in—by individuals in the livestock industry in this province. And clearly, that means that we've got to pay attention to what is science based, that we shouldn't be doing things that don't have a science base. And one of the problems is that this government hasn't done enough science that in many areas, to be sure what the appropriate and what the best measures are. And so that is something which is also sadly lacking—their ability to watch and to test.

And, lastly, I want to talk briefly about the plan for the City of Winnipeg, and I am looking forward to presentations at the committee stage. It is apparent that the government is trying to create some confusion in some of the things that is being said with regard to the City of Winnipeg treatment plant. I mean, when I talk with people in this area, in this industry, and they hear "full biological nutrient removal with the latest technology," that ordinarily would mean removing both nitrogen and phosphorus.

And yet this government has come forward and say, well, we're going to do full biological nutrient removal with the latest technology but we're actually not going to remove nitrogen.

So I think the government owes us some clarification on exactly what they're planning. There are alternative ways of achieving ammonia and a phosphorous reduction which the government—which are cheaper, which the government has clearly rejected. And I think it's important that there be a good discussion at the committee stage and we hear from people on both sides of this issue before we move forward because the government clearly is sowing some confusion in the way that they have actually presented this.

So those are my comments for the moment, and I look forward to this going to committee stage and to hearing presentations from individuals who have concerns with this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers? Okay, seeing none, when this matter is again before the House, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

House Business

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

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business. I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Thursday, June 9th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 13, The Preparing Students for Success Act (Various Acts Amended); Bill 28, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Reporting Bullying and Other Harm); Bill 26, The Université de Saint-Boniface Act; and Bill 42, The Caregiver Recognition Act.

I'd also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Thursday, June 9th, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 20, The Defibrillator Public Access Act; Bill 21, The Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Day Act; Bill 23, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Bill 32, The Essential Services Health Care and Related Amendments Act; Bill 34, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re OFC Personnel); and Bill 38, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Accountability and Transparency).

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*(16:50)

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Bill 49—The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay. So now I'll—we will continue on, and I'll call Bill 49, The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu).

What is the will of the House? Is the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Morris? *[Agreed]*

Okay. It will remain standing. And do we have any speakers? No. Okay, we'll move on.

Bill 27—The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I'm going to call Bill 27, The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act, and it's standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield? *[Agreed]*

Okay. So it will remain standing. Do we have any speakers? We do.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, as an honorary member of the Ukrainian caucus within the government caucus, I am pleased to speak today on Bill 27, The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act.

Although I wrote the first draft of this bill, I want to acknowledge the advice and input of my colleagues, namely, the Deputy Premier and MLA for Swan River, the MLA for Kildonan, the MLA for Dauphin, and the MLA for Fort Rouge.

A number of people were consulted, and they include: Nellie Drozd, President of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Manitoba Branch; Dr. Roman Yereniuk, director of the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies; and Svitlana Maluzynsky, my part-time constituency assistant, as well as Ihor Michalchyshyn.

Legislative Counsel Jake Harms was very involved in the several changing drafts of this bill, and his expertise is especially appreciated. I want to thank, in particular, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Manitoba Branch, for their enthusiastic support for Bill 27.

On May 9th this year, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress issued a news release. The president of the Manitoba UCC, Nellie Drozd, said they hope a bill will become law, quote, "in this important year which marks the 120th anniversary of a Ukrainian pioneer settlement in Canada." She also pointed out that, and I quote: "Manitoba is the cradle of the Ukrainian Canadian community and it is appropriate that the contribution of Ukrainian Canadians to our province be appropriately recognized."

This is a made-in-Manitoba bill, although some of the language is similar to a bill passed by the Ontario legislature. We have changed a number of parts. For example, we are calling our heritage day the Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day. Also, this bill has a different date for Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day, namely, the Saturday of the civic weekend at the beginning of August.

This day was deliberately chosen in consultation with the MLA for Dauphin and the Manitoba branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the— and Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin so that, annually, the Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day will be proclaimed at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival, Selo Ukraina, the beautiful festival site on the slopes of Riding

Mountain, south of Dauphin. My family and I have attended this festival numerous times and always enjoy the performances, on the main stage, of dancers, choirs and other performers, the food and cultural displays. It has been fun to participate in the parade through Dauphin on Saturday, and I look forward to doing so again this year.

Manitoba and, particularly, Winnipeg, has been a wonderful place for our family to live for the past 31 years and, particularly, for my wife, Carol, whose maiden name is Wachniak. She is very proud of her Ukrainian-Canadian heritage and has become immersed in the Ukrainian community, supporting events at Oseredok and serving on the board of the Ukrainian Museum of Canada, Manitoba Branch.

Our children, Nathan and Tanissa, benefited from attending the Ukrainian bilingual program at Ralph Brown School, from kindergarten to grade 6. They also attended Ukrainian school on Saturdays and received a grade 10 high school credit for Ukrainian.

This bill recognizes in several WHEREAS clauses the importance of the Ukrainian-Canadian community of Manitoba, and members on both sides of the House will be talking about the history and culture and contribution of Ukrainian-Canadians in Manitoba.

I'm confident this bill, The Manitoba Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act, will be passed unanimously by the Manitoba Legislature. I look forward to being present at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival on July 30th this year, when the proclamation for the Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Day Act is read for the first time.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I'm really pleased that this bill has come forward and that I have an opportunity to speak to it. I really want to underscore how important it is for this Legislature to take on these kinds of opportunities to brag about the contributions of Manitobans and, in this particular case, Manitobans of Ukrainian descent. I really do feel very honoured to serve the Legislature and represent a part of this province that has such a rich history of Ukrainian settlement and Ukrainian contribution, not forgetting, Mr. Speaker, the challenges faced by the Ukrainian community over the years, whether that be in this province of Manitoba or around the globe. For all of those kinds of reasons, I think it is very important that we who

represent all of Manitobans in this Legislature take some time to recognize Ukrainian-Canadian heritage.

I'm really very pleased that this bill has come forward for another reason. I have the privilege of representing the community of Dauphin, which hosts the Canada National Ukrainian Festival on the August long weekend year in and year out since 1966, and, Mr. Speaker, it's a great time to get together. You don't have to be Ukrainian to come to the Canada's National Ukrainian Festival. I know that people from all over the country, all over the world, as a matter of fact, come to Dauphin and have some fun, learn, interact, socialize, I think, as well as pay honour to those Ukrainian citizens who have contributed so much to our province and to our country.

If you do come to the Ukrainian Festival this year, you will see nestled in that amphitheatre on the north side of Riding Mountain, the stands, the stage, people on the stage performing, people on the stage colourfully clad in the traditional clothing of Ukrainian heritage, the music, the—not just the traditional music but modern Ukrainian music that the Ukrainian festival tries its best to represent as well. And, Mr. Speaker, that is just one part of what is really a very exciting, a very fun-filled weekend in Dauphin at the Ukrainian Festival.

You could—you will have the opportunity to visit the Selo, S-e-l-o, Ukrainian village which is right adjacent to the stage area. You can visit a typical kind of a home that was built when Ukrainian settlers came to the Dauphin area, a church, a school, a store, a blacksmith shop. There have been people at the Selo site who have done a lot of good work to preserve that kind of heritage at our—at the site of the Ukrainian Festival—a lot of people who put a lot of time and effort and co-operation with our government to make sure we did that right.

And there's a very serious side to this too, up on Memorial Way, at the top of the hill, not just another stage there for entertainment but Memorial Way where they pay tribute to the unknown Ukrainian soldier, where they pay—where they have monuments to the famine and to other events of significance in the lives of Ukrainian people who have settled in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member—the honourable minister will have 25 minutes remaining, and also it will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

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