

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 28, 2012

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 300—The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): I move, seconded by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 300, The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act; Loi constituant en corporation le Jewish Child and Family Service, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, this year, 2012, marks the 60th anniversary of Jewish Child and Family Service and 100 years of their service to the community through a network of organizations which amalgamated to be JCFS.

This bill modernizes The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act to better reflect the objectives and powers of Jewish Child and Family Service and its services and activities it provides to the community and as a leader in the community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

PETITIONS

Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—Steinbach

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by N. Monkman, B. Woods, L.R. Parisien and thousands of other Manitobans.

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

Bipole III Routing

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been directed by this provincial government to build its—to construct its

next high-voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba.

This decision will cost Manitoba taxpayers at least \$1 billion more than an east-side route, which is 500 kilometres 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, more reliable east side of Lake Winnipeg route in order to save Manitobans from a billion-dollar boondoggle.

This petition is signed by G. Young, M. Young, J. Yake and many, many more fine Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the 2012-2013 Estimates for Children and Youth Opportunities.

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 from Réal-Bérard Community School 23 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Brian Martel. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Photo Radar

Grant and Nathaniel Intersection Review

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, it's important that people have confidence in the laws that govern them. Over the past number of years, a number of things have happened that have rightly caused people to be suspicious that the photo radar system in Winnipeg is about cash and not about safety.

The most recent issue, Mr. Speaker, is an intersection at Grant and Nathaniel from which a mobile unit was taking pictures and giving out tickets. There was a challenge on that ticket, and the government decided instead of letting a decision come down and instead of putting millions of dollars of tickets at risk, they decided to cut and run and not allow a precedent to come forward

If this government refuses to do a review on these tickets, which has been called on by the media, by the opposition, by watchdog organizations, why won't they admit that they are responsible for people losing faith in the photo radar system?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): In speaking with law enforcement across the province, they will tell you there are many things that could be done to make our roads safer. Of course, the police, with the support of our government, have been taking steps to crack down on impaired driving, to crack down on distracted driving, and certainly to crack down on speeding and other violations.

And the Winnipeg Police Service has chosen to operate photo enforcement. The Province of Manitoba has enabled the City of Winnipeg Police Service to take steps as they think are appropriate to deal with road safety in the city of Winnipeg.

And we talk about reviewing; in fact, there was a review. There was a review done by the City, which commissioned the Traffic Injury Research Foundation report just last year, and that TIRF report commissioned by the City, released last year publicly, calls the Province's requirements on photo radar strict and goes on to state this was done to ensure the program focused on and emphasized improved safety as a primary goal.

We listen to our police service. They believe this is appropriate for safety, and, indeed, we support—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Collision Data Report

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Mr. Speaker, it appears, in fact, that the government is listening to their wallets.

When the issue came forward about illegal tickets being handed out by this government, the courts deemed those tickets to be illegal, and this government fought to keep the money.

Then, when a challenge came forward on a ticket regarding the Grant and Nathaniel location, this government decided not to fight, because they didn't want a precedent to come down. So they cut and run, and they decided to keep the money.

Today we have a report, Mr. Speaker, that says that, in fact, instead of accidents going down at locations where there's photo radar, there's, in fact, been an increase of 53 per cent of accidents at those very locations with photo radar.

Given the fact, Mr. Speaker, that this government has decided to hold the money in a number of different situations, given the fact we now have a report that accidents have actually gone up, not gone down: Why shouldn't people be skeptical that this is about money and not about safety?

Mr. Swan: Well, I'm glad the member did put on the record the fact that there is a second review. It's available to anyone who gets a photo radar ticket, and anyone who feels they've been issued a ticket improperly certainly has the right to challenge that ticket. And each case is considered on its merits by the court.

* (13:40)

But in terms of red light cameras overall, I think it's very important, again, to deal with the publicly released report that was done by the City of Winnipeg. That independent evaluation commissioned by the City states that due to photo radar, there's been a 46 per cent decrease in the more severe right-angle crashes at camera intersections.

It appears, indeed, there is—[interjection] Well, I hear, oh wow, from the other side. They should know, Mr. Speaker—well, obviously they don't know, so I'll tell them that certainly right-angle, or T-bone, collisions are very serious collisions involving injury and death, and it appears from the City's own evaluation that photo radar appears to be making inroads on reducing those very serious collisions, saving lives.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of reasons to be skeptical about the motives and about the outcomes of photo radar, and most of those reasons to be skeptical come from this government itself. When there were illegal tickets that were handed out, this government fought to keep the money from those illegal tickets. When there was a decision that was going to come down on a case about the Grant and Nathaniel location, they decided to cut and run as opposed to having a precedent come down and face losing the money again.

Now we have a report that says that, in fact, the collisions at the intersections where there are cameras, the collisions have actually gone up by 53 per cent, not gone down, Mr. Speaker.

This government is the reason why people are skeptical about the motives behind photo radar. Will they do anything? Will they conduct a review? Will

they look at changing the amber light times? Will they look at reviewing these particular tickets?

Will they do anything to try to restore faith in the photo radar system, or will they allow people not to believe in the laws that govern them, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Swan: I appreciate the chance to put more information on the record.

And, indeed, of course, in Winnipeg, over the past seven years, there was a modest increase in the number of collisions, roughly corresponding to population, but the member opposite should know that actually the results at intersections that have red light cameras are actually better than those intersections that don't have red light cameras. So, indeed, it would appear that, indeed, photo radar, as operated by the Winnipeg Police Service, seems to be fulfilling some worthy goals.

And what's interesting, of course, is now we appear to have a conversion by the members opposite because back in 2002 when, at the request of the City of Winnipeg, we brought in photo radar, what did the Conservative Justice critic said? Well, he said, I support this bill, and while I would support, for obvious reasons, the use of photo radar, red light cameras across the province, and not just for limited purposes as proposed in this bill, I would urge, of course, all members of this House to support the bill.

So we have a Conservative party that once upon a time—

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

Personal Care Homes Sprinkler System Standards

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): In 2001, as a result of a tragic death of a 76-year-old woman in a fire at a Manitoba personal care home, an inquest recommended that every personal care home in Manitoba should have a fire sprinkler system for the protection of its residents. Today, 11 years later, of the 99 personal care homes in Manitoba, 33 still have no sprinkler systems at all and 29 have only partial systems.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us: Why has she ignored this very, very important inquest recommendation that is—for 11 years, that is about the safety of our elderly in personal care homes?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): And, indeed, I would believe all members of this House

care deeply about the safety and security of our seniors in personal care homes.

And I can inform the member, in 1998 the building code did indeed change, requiring any new build or extensive renovations at our personal care homes to have a sprinkler system. All 22 facilities that have been constructed or renovated since that time have full sprinkler systems.

Further, Mr. Speaker, there are 125 personal care homes in Manitoba; 89 have full or partial sprinkler systems, representing 71 per cent.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that, indeed, as we're going forward and renovating, we're making amendments based on this recommendation, but equally as important is we're ensuring that there are safety plans in place to ensure that all—

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

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the numbers we have from the FIPPA's are quite alarming. And it is showing, from the FIPPA's that we received from every RHA in Manitoba, that 63 per cent of them either have no sprinkler system or a partial sprinkler system, and that is coming from all of the RHAs in Manitoba. And from 1997 to 2010, there have been more than 135 fires in Manitoba's personal care homes.

So I'd like to ask the minister: This was a recommendation from an inquest in 2001, and yet we have a significant number of personal care homes that have an very inadequate or no sprinkler system in Manitoba. Can the minister please tell us why she has dropped the ball on this significant issue?

Ms. Oswald: Again, I would reiterate to the member, 71 per cent of facilities in Manitoba have full or partial sprinkler systems, sprinkler systems, of course, being an element of last resort; the fire is already happening. We want to ensure that there are appropriate fire codes being followed. We want to ensure that all fire safety and education and evacuation procedures are in place.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would duly note, for the member opposite, that you cannot amend construction or amend capital projects on sprinklers or any other kinds of improvements when you freeze health capital infrastructure, like the members did during the '90s.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister is playing her spin games again. Since 2001 there is not supposed to be

one personal care home in Manitoba that does not have a full sprinkler system.

She misses the point, Mr. Speaker, and she's had 11 years to follow up with the inquest recommendation, and that is a safety issue. We just saw, in Ontario on Friday, a couple died in a personal care home because it did not have a sprinkler system.

So I want to ask her: Why is she putting our seniors and our vulnerable at risk because she can't follow through on a safety recommendation from 11 years ago?

Ms. Oswald: I would reiterate for the member that, indeed, in 1998 the Conservative government, not our government, put a building code in place that asked for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Health, to conclude.

Ms. Oswald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would reiterate that the building code was amended at that time in '98 to say all new builds would require full sprinkler systems. I can inform the member that since that time, since '99 at least, when the doors opened again to health capital construction in this province, 22 personal care homes have been renovated or newly constructed with full sprinkler systems. Each new renovation and new build is amending to go to a full sprinkler system.

We're continuing to work on this. We're now at 71 per cent, and I want to assure the member we take safety very seriously. We're ensuring that there are safety evacuation procedures in place for all personal care homes.

You can listen to the member opposite chirp about new construction; they never did any.

Military Affairs Special Envoy Appointment of Bonnie Korzeniowski

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): The NDP broke their promise to Manitobans not to raise taxes, a move that cost Manitobans \$184 million a year in new taxes. Instead of keeping their promises, they make government positions for the betterment of NDP friends.

The Minister of Entrepreneurship awarded Bonnie Korzeniowski, the former MLA for St. James, a contract to be Manitoba's special envoy

for military affairs at the exact same salary she had as an MLA, \$85,500 annually. Instead of working for Manitobans, the NDP work for their friends.

Why did the minister appoint the 58th non-elected NDP MLA?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, first of all, the position is for the betterment of the families in the military, who we take very much pride in supporting here in the province of Manitoba.

And I would encourage the member to look at the words from Brian Koshul, from the Fort Garry Horse centennial committee, when he said in the *Free Press* that the military affairs envoy is a pipeline into the Manitoba government. And I see no difference since she decided not to seek re-election. She's involved in many things on an ongoing basis, and to me, and others, the military affairs envoy's job is just as efficient and pertinent now as it was when she was a sitting member of the Legislature.

* (13:50)

In fact, it's more pertinent, Mr. Speaker, when the national Veterans Affairs has been cutting 75 positions across the country, closing a regional office in Brandon, so her role will become more and more important each and every day on behalf of the veterans and the military stationed here in Manitoba.

Mr. Smook: Ms. Korzeniowski has all the trappings of an MLA. Besides the MLA's salary, Ms. Korzeniowski has a budget of \$104,000 for staff and office space. The special envoy office is actually Ms. Korzeniowski's old St. James MLA constituency office. She has an MLA salary, an MLA office, and attends events MLAs usually go to.

Will the minister simply admit he appointed an NDP insider to act as an MLA and promote the NDP?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly the member opposite would agree with the role that the military envoy has to play is a very important one. As a—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Bjornson: I guess they're not interested in hearing the answer, Mr. Speaker.

The military envoy is a liaison with military units throughout Manitoba, whether it's navy, army, air force, veterans or cadets. She supports major military events within the province, including the

Military Heritage of Manitoba, the Manitoba Salutes program. She maintains liaison with the formation commands throughout the province of Manitoba. And she liaises with youth groups including sea, army, and air cadets units and provincial leagues.

So it's really fascinating that members opposite would not support the military envoy and the important work that she does on behalf of the military families here in Manitoba.

Mr. Smook: The NDP politicized the civil servants; now they are politicizing the honourable role of military relations by appointing NDP insiders with untendered contracts.

The special envoy position had 29 meetings from October 5th to the end of last physical year. Ms. Korzeniowski was paid \$1,475.24 per event for things like concerts, fundraising dinners, and bringing greetings on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Selinger).

Why did the minister pay a retired MLA to do the work of a sitting MLA? Will he admit he simply wanted to reward his friend and keep Ms. Korzeniowski on the payroll?

Mr. Bjornson: You know, Mr. Speaker, this is really curious when last week we stood together, both sides of the House, to talk about a bill that was brought forward by the member from Emerson, and they were very happy to see the military envoy here in support of that bill.

But, you know, perhaps this is the true issue. When you look at what was said by the member from Morris in the *Free Press*, that the government has frozen salaries of MLAs to save money but is paying an MLA to do a job a sitting MLA could do, this rather fascinating statement that the members opposite would suggest that their salaries are more important than serving the military, Mr. Speaker. And it's rather fascinating that the member from Morris should suggest there that a sitting MLA could do this job, but I don't see a sitting MLA on their side lining up to be leader.

Military Affairs Special Envoy Appointment of Bonnie Korzeniowski

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Well, Mr. Speaker, what's important to note here is there's not one other single sitting MLA on that side of the House qualified to do this job.

Mr. Speaker, recently we learned that the former MLA for St. James, Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, was

handed an untendered contract as the Manitoba envoy for military affairs one day after the provincial election, the day after she ceased to be a member of this Legislature. In fact, she was never taken off the government payroll, and there was not an open competition for the position.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier (Mr. Selinger) dishonour the role of the special envoy by appointing an NDP insider to do the job? He doesn't have anybody over there qualified?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Well, Mr. Speaker, again, we're very proud of our military here in Manitoba, and we're proud of the *[inaudible]* We're also very proud of the role that the envoy has been performing and will continue to form—perform.

And when the election had been called, the member had served until October 4th of that—of the election and continued to serve under the existing budgetary expenditures that were approved for that purpose as military envoy, and a contract was shined—signed shortly thereafter to continue in her role.

The military supports military envoy. Perhaps members opposite should as well.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, we also recognize the importance of the role and the work that is being done by the Manitoba envoy. That's not the point. The fact is, the position began under a sitting MLA, and the honourable role was not supposed to be a retirement plan for the NDP MLAs.

Why did the Premier (Mr. Selinger) make this deal with Ms. Korzeniowski and dishonour the role of the envoy, Mr. Speaker? Is he saying that no MLA on that side of the House is up for the job?

Mr. Bjornson: And clearly, Mr. Speaker, no MLA on that side of the House is prepared to lead the party. It's just unbelievable that they raise that point.

But, you know, among the roles I've already talked about with respect to the role of the special envoy, through the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, we offer training programs and supports for individuals who are looking at small businesses, et cetera, et cetera. And, certainly, that'll be part of the role of the special envoy, to talk to military who perhaps would like to leave the military and look at training opportunities, who would like to look at setting up businesses, who would look to like—look at other opportunities that are available,

that are supported by Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

So the role is evolving as we speak, and it'll continue to be more important as we see cuts at the federal level.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, why does this government need to pay an NDP insider to do the job of a sitting MLA? There's an additional expense here of \$200,000, when there would be no cost if it was a sitting MLA in the role. The Premier has a number of people in his Cabinet, or in his caucus, with established relationships with the Manitoba military communities in Brandon and Winnipeg.

So why won't the Premier commit to ending the term of the unelected 58th MLA and return the role of the special envoy for military affairs to a sitting MLA? What's wrong with the current member for St. James (Ms. Crothers) or the member from Brandon East? Can't they do the job?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, perhaps the member from Morris is serving notice that she's seeking the leadership of their party, but when you consider the accomplishments of the envoy in the previous year and the work that she has done and is continuing to do, Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks volumes to the relationship that she's established with the military here in Manitoba.

Creating the legislation to protect jobs for reservists while they are serving a tour of duty in Afghanistan, the work on the veterans licence plates, voting rights for troops who are serving overseas, assisting family resource centre at 17 Wing, and bringing the Yellow Ribbon of Support campaign to the Legislature—these are a few examples of what have been done. There'll be a lot of examples of what will be done and, actually, Mr. speaker, taking it out of the role of an MLA depoliticizes the process. They don't clearly understand the importance of the envoy.

Flooding (Lake Manitoba)

Financial Compensation for Income Loss

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Darrel and Dee Dee Armstrong, who live near Langruth, were artificially flooded in 2011 by high waters flowing from the Portage Diversion into Lake Manitoba. They have two sources of income: their cottage lots, and rental on pasture lands. Because of that flooding, they lost all their income from both sources in 2011, and are being impacted again in 2012.

The Armstrongs were recently notified by the NDP government that there will be no further business income loss compensation for the 2012 calendar year. The Armstrongs' only source of income for 2012 is nonexistent because of the ongoing Lake Manitoba flood.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister responsible: How can that be right or fair to people like the Armstrongs?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the member putting the human perspective on this, because we've talked in this House about what happened last year and the impacts in terms of the number of cases. But each and every one of the 30,000 cases we're looking at, the 30,000 claims that have been filed, we know they're very unique circumstances.

I do want to indicate to the member, that the member is quite aware, and we discussed this only a matter of days ago, that we are—we in this province have put forward a very significant investment. We've already paid out more than \$650 million. We're well above an estimation of \$850 million in terms of damage. It could hit close to a billion. And we are working on many of those cases, Mr. Speaker, diligently, day in, day out.

*(14:00)

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, last year the former minister of Agriculture admitted that the Lake Manitoba flooding was not a natural event and said there would multi-year help for flood victims like the Armstrongs. The Armstrongs took the former minister of Agriculture, now the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), at his word; they believed him.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: What is his definition of a multi-year help for flood victims like the Armstrongs?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I, you know, I respect the fact that the Armstrongs are an affected Manitoba family.

I do want to put on the record, though, that in addition to the global amount that we've paid out, we have six stand-alone provincial programs, many of which impact in around Lake Manitoba, many of which have been targeted at the kind of needs that are not there with the disaster financial assistance and I-program.

And I want to stress, by the way, that we didn't hesitate, as a provincial government, to move in and support Manitobans who were impacted by floods. We don't know in some of the—in the case some of those parties [*inaudible*] get any of the money back from the federal government.

But I do hope the member opposite will join with us in asking for the federal government to share those costs, Mr. Speaker, because our goal has been to try and identify as many of the unique circumstances affecting Manitobans and respond, and we are responding with \$650 million paid out thus far.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) also weighed in on the flood compensation. In May 16th, 2011, interview on CBC Radio the Premier stated, and I quote: We'll address issues of income replacement. We'll address issues of recovery of the land and the resources that people have had impaired by the flooding. End quote, and I'll table that interview.

It's clear some Lake Manitoba business people still won't have income this year due to the flooding.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier keep his promise? When will the former minister of Agriculture keep his promises? Why aren't the people that have multi-year flood impacts being looked after?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I must admit I was having some difficulty in hearing the member's question for—with a lot of the heckling from his own side. I do believe he was talking about multi-year impacts.

I do hope, Mr. Speaker, again, that the member will join with us—and I want to stress there are six stand-alone provincial programs. We're working hard. Our staff is working around the clock to provide the assistance that is there. I do hope the member will support us, and perhaps if we get the federal government on board on some of those programs we can look at some of the additional costs that those families are involved with.

Because I can tell you one thing, when it come—when it came last year to meeting that challenge we have stepped up to the plate with \$650 million worth of decisions, and we're still working with Manitoba families who are flood-impacted. And we won't stop until they're all back to normal. That's our goal and I hope the members will support us for once.

**Brandon School Division
English as an Additional Language Funding**

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, the government has recently announced, or should I say, reannounced, increased funding for EAL, an issue that's been a challenge for the Brandon School Division for years.

When Maple Leaf announced that they were locating a plant in Brandon, the community leaders knew there would be a substantial impact on the school division. Many of us wanted to ensure that the education system in Brandon would be able to handle the growth without a huge impact on the taxpayers of Brandon. Premiers Filmon and Doer both assured Brandon that the Province would make sure Maple Leaf's arrival in Brandon would not have a negative impact on the Brandon School Division's financials.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier (Mr. Selinger) aware of how much the Brandon School Division has invested in support for the EAL students with minimal support from the Province?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I'm certainly honoured to have the opportunity to speak about the investments that we have made in our public education system since we got into government in 1999.

I'm certainly pleased to tell almost every member across on the Tory side of the bench that we believe that we have invested in our public education system for 13 years in a row above and beyond our commitments in 1999 to fund public education to the rate of economic growth.

We believe that education is an important economic strategy for our province and we have worked with every school division in this province to provide funding, not just through the funding formula but also through the PSFB, Mr. Speaker, unprecedented funding.

Mr. Helwer: This NDP government has had substantial financial resources, as the minister said, for 13 years, available throughout that decade, and has consistently downloaded resources and costs to the school division. A huge budget deficit last year that we've seen here, and yet more broken promises by this government.

How can people in Brandon trust anything that this government promises? The taxpayers of Brandon have paid millions of dollars for EAL, yet

why has this government continually downloaded costs associated with EAL on the Brandon taxpayer?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important, if we want to get right down to numbers—and I'm being heckled from across the way: just answer the question—I want the member opposite to know that when they were in power, taxes went up 72 per cent in the Brandon West constituency, and they have come—they have not—they have gone up only 5.4 per cent over the course of our whole mandate because of our investment in the public education system.

I've had an opportunity to meet with Mark Sefton, the chair of the board of the Brandon School Division. I've had an opportunity to have a meeting with the Brandon School Division and the mayor in Brandon. We are ready for a third line in Brandon when that occurs—

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

Mr. Helwer: I'm not sure why the minister and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) aren't standing by their predecessors' commitment to ensure the Brandon School Division receive additional support for English as an Additional Language training that this government promised. Again, another broken promise.

Why are they leaving Brandon taxpayers on the hook for these commitments, for these promises, again and again?

Ms. Allan: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, over the course of our mandate, we have increased 'funding' to provinces in the EAL up to \$11.7 million.

In the last election, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) said that our schools didn't need more funding because enrolment was declining. Well, obviously, he never went to Steinbach, he never went to Morden, he didn't go to Winkler, and I guess he never went to Brandon, either.

So we don't need any lectures from members opposite about putting money into the public education system. We'll get the job done without their advice.

Photo Radar

Grant and Nathaniel Intersection Review

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, 20,000 people have been ticketed using photo radar

in the last eight months at the corner of Grant and Nathaniel.

Evidence presented by Ken Sontag, an expert in physics and radar, has testified that at that particular site, there is a major problem of interference with metal objects just exactly where the photo 'readings'—photo radar readings were taken. The tickets in Australia have been thrown out for similar reasons. In court 10 days ago, on May the 18th, the Crown prosecutor could not present even a single argument to refute the testimony of Mr. Sontag.

I ask: Will the government immediately call for an end to ticketing at Grant and Nathaniel, and will the government immediately act to cancel or refund tickets at that site?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): And you know, Mr. Speaker, this is an operational issue, because the City of Winnipeg Police Service operates photo radar in the city of Winnipeg and, indeed, the City of Winnipeg is responsible for operating photo radar and decides where and if photo radar is deployed.

And I'm worried the member for River Heights has put some incorrect information on the record. Indeed, there was a case that was stayed. Indeed, the Crown attorney wished to call evidence from an expert witness and was refused the opportunity to do so.

I am aware there are other cases moving from the system. And that is, of course, the ultimate review, Mr. Speaker, is that any Winnipegger, any Manitoban who is unsatisfied with their ticket has the right to challenge the ticket, and that case will be considered on its merits.

I am aware there are other cases moving through the system. Manitobans have the opportunity to put their best case forward. The Crown will defend the City of Winnipeg Police Service and put forward its best case. But I think it's very important to remember that each case is considered on its own merits.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

*(14:10)

Government Review

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, as the letters that I table indicate, major questions have arisen as to the accuracy of the government's and the City's claims with respect to the number of collisions and the safety of the use of photo radar in Winnipeg.

Instead of a decrease in the number of collisions, as the government has claimed, there's been a shocking 53 per cent increase in the number of collisions at red light intersections. Mr. Speaker, the condition of photo radar authority provided by the Province to the City of Winnipeg was that the City improve safety.

I ask the government: Will he stop obstructing grassroots groups like WiseUpWinnipeg and immediately—immediately—halt the use of photo radar on this—until the City can use this program in a way that increases safety instead of decreasing safety?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Well, Mr. Speaker, if there's one clear element in terms of traffic safety, it's that lower speeds are safer. That's why, 10 years ago, we moved in this Legislature—and I realize the member—I think he did vote against it at the time—we moved to bring in photo radar as a supplement, not a substitute, for normal traffic enforcement.

It's administered by the traffic authority, administered, in this case, by the City of Winnipeg. And I do want to correct the member by the way, because the TIRF report—and the TIRF is a report, by the way, was done by an independent organization—clearly showed that there was a significant 43 per cent reduction in side collisions, the most deadly type of collisions that this was intended to help prevent in red light areas, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say to the member opposite, we have been focused on safety from day one. That continues to be our approach, and we make no apologies for bringing in photo radar on a targeted basis, not the broad basis wanted by the members of the Conservative Party, because that's the focus—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, even the auditor's questioned the accuracy of many of the facts of this government.

Manitoba has the shortest amber light times in Canada at lights along streets where speeds are faster than 70 or 80 kilometres an hour. Virtually every other jurisdiction increases the length of time of the amber light in parallel with the increase in speed on the street or speedway covered to address the fact that it takes a little bit longer to stop safely when your vehicle is going faster.

Will the government admit today that their photo legislation has been a stunning, indeed, cataclysmic failure? Will the government immediately halt the use of photo radar until the City of Winnipeg can end the photo radar ticket scam and provide a future in which photo radar is used to increase safety instead of being used in a way that can cause accidents?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm shocked that the member opposite would take a dispute over one camera, which, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) has pointed out, that people can dispute and will dispute tickets in a court, and then takes that as leave to basically attack the TIRF organization, which has provided an independent report that has shown that there's been a reduction in side collisions, there's been a reduction in injuries, there's been a reduction in property damage, and then turn that into wanting to scrap that program.

Well, I want to put on the record, again, that we respect the right of any Manitoban to go through the court process. But slower speeds are safer speeds. That's why we brought it in.

And I'd like to know, by the way, which area he'd like us to have—take the photo radar out of first: schoolyards, playground areas, construction zones, or the red light areas, Mr. Speaker. That's what the member opposite is wanting us to do, reduce the kind of safety protection that it's available in those areas. We reject that.

Food Development Centre Service Expansion

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): The Food Development Centre is an important part of Manitoba's food industry. Can the Minister of Agriculture update the House on a recent milestone of this important facility?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Thank you, Mr. Minister, and let me tell you thank you to my member opposite.

I would like to acknowledge the fact that I had a great visit yesterday in Portage, on Friday.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kostyshyn: And, you know, I hear the opposition doesn't really want me to say too much, but I'll be patient—I'll be patient.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kostyshyn: You know it's—when it comes to having a celebration, I sense the opposition party doesn't want to take part in a good story for the province of Manitoba.

Now, we strive in Agriculture—we strive in making things better for our producers in the province of Manitoba. The Food Development Centre is probably the greatest story that's ever happened in the province of Manitoba, and I hope the opposition party can somewhat acknowledge the fact that we are working for the betterment of the province.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Lyme Disease Diagnoses and Patient Services

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): This government and this minister have pledged on numerous occasions to work on communication programs and explore the science associated with Lyme disease, while at the same time, other jurisdictions can properly diagnose and work to treat Lyme disease. Earlier treatments have shown to eliminate many of the debilitating effects of Lyme disease, and the longer someone suffers the more harmful the effects. The simple fact is that numerous patients are suffering; toe dragging can only last for so long.

I ask this minister today: Does this government have a policy for helping Lyme disease sufferers, or should they be writing letters to the Minister of Health?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today again to report for all members that public health officials in Manitoba are working very hard in building our complement of services and building our ability to make early detection, early diagnosis, and provide interventions for those that are living with Lyme disease.

Manitoba, of course, was host to an international conference just in the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, where scientists came together to discuss the many points of view about the diagnosis of Lyme disease.

Certainly, here in Manitoba, we've done additional work on public communications to provide early warnings to individuals and families in areas where—

Mr. Speaker: I was going—the honourable member for Emerson. Time had not expired.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, I've risen in this House several times on—at several different occasions, demonstrating the growing number of Lyme disease in this province. We have numerous cases, with numerous individuals, saying the same thing: This government is not doing enough for us.

And individuals are being rejected for disability because they have Lyme's and have had to appeal to this minister directly rather than having a policy that's tailored directly to this situation.

Will this minister provide a policy for Lyme disease sufferers so they don't have to write letters to her?

Ms. Oswald: As I've said to the member on a number of occasions, that individual cases shall be investigated as appropriate, individually, based on the circumstances they're in. And, indeed, we'll continue to work with our public health experts as we continue to work on prevention and early intervention and treatment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Yes, on a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: On a matter of privilege, the honourable member for Morris.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am raise—I'm rising on a matter of privilege, but it's more so to seek clarification on, and advice on, a procedural matter. Mr. Speaker, I will admit that this issue is over a year old but I only became aware of it recently, as I will explain.

I'm also going to explore whether this has any impact on my ability to do my job here in the Legislature as the Official Opposition House Leader, and whether or not, in fact, there might be an impact on future opposition House leaders, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last June, I—and it was near the end of the session—I raised a matter of privilege with the former speaker, Mr. George Hickes, and may I just say that Mr. Hickes was an excellent Speaker; I am no way intending this to be critical of him.

The subject of matter of privilege was that the government had failed to table a report in the Legislature within the legislated time frame, a law that was put in place by them, and they did not adhere to that law. So, in essence, that law was broken by the government, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, but maybe others do not know, all the Speaker's rulings that occur in this Chamber are compiled and put into a binder, and this is a useful research tool, Mr. Speaker, for opposition House leaders and maybe even for government House leaders. I find it a very useful research tool, and I actually do do read through some of the last rulings of Speakers and look at what matters of privilege, or points of orders may have been raised, and what the rulings actually were.

And then I look to these rules for guidance into the future for future points, Mr. Speaker. The—and these rulings are grouped by each legislative session, and I have many, many binders that have been passed down to me with many rulings that have come forward in the last many years.

* (14:20)

But, recently, I was looking through the Speaker's ruling binder for the matter of privilege, and I noted that this particular ruling was missing from the Speaker's ruling binder. And I remembered this matter of privilege, because I raised it myself. So I was looking for the ruling and, to my surprise, I found that it wasn't in the binder.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess one could argue, if there was no ruling then it couldn't be in the Speaker's ruling binder. However, there was a point of order raised on June 2nd in 2011, prior to this matter being raised, and the Speaker did not rule on it. It was included in the Speaker's rulings binder and stated the Speaker did not rule further on this matter. So it was included in the rulings even though there was no ruling. So the argument about not having a ruling and therefore not in the rulings binder, it doesn't seem to be appropriate.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm actually seeking clarification. If the Speaker didn't rule, how are we to know if this was maybe a matter of privilege or not? How are we, today, and any subsequent opposition House leaders, to know if, in fact, it may have been, or is, a prima facie case of privilege if there's no final determination to the question?

So I'm seeking clarification on why one matter would be included in the Speaker's rulings binder, when one ruling was made and another was not included. So, just to sum that, there was two issues: point of order and a matter of privilege. *[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, I thought I heard someone tell me to sit down, which I thought would be very inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, there was two issues raised: one was a point of order and one was a matter of privilege. Two issues were raised; neither one of these two issues received a ruling. Point of order was raised; it did not receive a ruling. The matter of privilege was raised; it did not receive a ruling. And yet, one was in the binder, while the other one was, I guess, deemed not appropriate for that collection. So that's why I'm seeking clarification.

And I realize that the Speaker's binder, the rulings here are a tool, a research tool for the Opposition House Leader to use and it's not an official document of the House. But it is a useful tool nonetheless, and as I have said, I have used this binder to look up past rulings and I expect that future opposition House leaders will also use these binders to look up rulings.

It would be very difficult to look through the millions of pages of *Hansard* to find each particular point of order or matter of privilege and then, further, to look back and find when the ruling was brought in. These binders actually compile the data for each particular point of order or matter of privilege and what the ruling was and why it was made, Mr. Speaker.

So it'd be easier and much, much more quick for future opposition House leaders and, I don't know, maybe the government House leaders use this as well, but easy to peruse through and look at what matters may have been raised and why they were, or were not, a matter of privilege or a point of order or, in fact, they may have even been ruled to actually be a point of order, Mr. Speaker. That has occurred.

So I'm just curious why this particular matter of privilege was omitted, and that's why I'm seeking clarification. And you will be able to advise me, Mr. Speaker, whether or not Speaker's obligated to make a ruling once a matter of privilege has been raised, because I do not know the procedure for that. I'm also seeking your advice on whether you, as the present Speaker, can or will be able to rule on a matter raised with a former Speaker.

And, as well, are there rules around timelines for rulings? And, again, this is something I'm seeking clarification about and I'm no way intending any of my questions to be critical of you, Mr. Speaker, or the former Speaker, as I have the utmost respect for you and the former Speaker, Mr. George Hickes.

But, as I've said, these particular rulings are a useful tool and I have found it helpful, for me, in

performing my duties as the Opposition House Leader. And when I recently went to look in the rulings from last session, I found that this had not been included. I looked in the binder and I found that this had not been included in the rulings.

So I began to ask myself, well, could this hinder my ability to perform my duties as the Opposition House Leader? And I thought, well, maybe it could because I still don't know if, in fact, this may have been a prima facie case of privilege or not because there was no ruling. So, in fact, I would not even know if this had been raised because it wasn't in there, in the book, but I just realized that it had been raised because I had raised it myself, Mr. Speaker.

And I believe that the rulings either on points of order or matters of privilege do give us information, and this information is used so we can best perform our duties. And, of course, one of the duties of the Official Opposition House Leader is to raise points of order and matters of privilege. Having said that, that is something that any member of the House is allowed to do as well, but we rely on the feedback from those rulings which strengthens our ability then to do our duties.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I'm respectfully asking today is for a clarification on whether the matter of privilege raised by myself on June 15th, 2011, might possibly constitute a prima facie case of privilege, and secondly, I'm seeking clarification as to why this matter could not now be included in the compilation of Speaker's rulings. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would like to remind the House that contributions at this time by honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether or not the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether or not—whether a prima facie case has been established.

Seeing no other members that wish to comment, I'm—this is—I always take matters of privilege as very serious matters so I'm going to take this matter under advisement. This is apparently a matter that has perhaps occurred prior to my time in—before becoming your Speaker so I'm going to investigate this matter and then bring back information or—and, if necessary, a ruling for the House.

Now we'll proceed to members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

4-H Canada 100th Anniversary

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): It was my pleasure this morning to participate in the kickoff to the 100th anniversary, in 2013, of the 4-H movement in Canada. This involved the unveiling of a new partnership involving 4-H Canada, Enbridge Pipelines Incorporated, and MacDon Industries Limited with the Food Banks Canada.

This agreement will provide thousands of people with access to food when they need it, helping alleviate some of the stress that arises when trying to make ends meet. It's nice to see so many young people actively engaged in philanthropy and community service. These are certainly the hallmarks of the 4-H movement.

4-H, one of the longest running youth organizations in Canada, has allowed youth from the ages of 8 to 21 to expand their horizons since 1913. Whether it is developing a website, showing prize-winning livestock, or learning carpentry, 4-H members become skilled in many activities.

Their journey is guided by the organization's four founding H's, which establishes that all members pledge their head, heart, hands and health to the betterment of their community—of their club, their community and their country.

As a 4-H club member, young people are presented with an array of opportunities for personal growth including public speaking, hands-on experience, skill development, world travel, scholarships and bursaries for post-secondary education, and, most importantly, friendships that last a lifetime.

There is no doubt that the organizational principles which served as the bedrock of 4-H are no less relevant today than they were 100 years ago. It is also somewhat humbling to me that such a vibrant, internationally relevant youth organization got its start in the small community of Roland, Manitoba, and, of course, Roland is in the heart of my constituency.

I would like to acknowledge the important contributions of Enbridge Pipelines and MacDon for the centennial celebrations as well as the ongoing support of John Deere and Pioneer seeds. These companies demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the 4-H program here in Manitoba and across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, being a former 4-H member and a 4-H leader, today is a very special day. I wish 4-H Canada and all its members another 100 years of success and growth. May they enjoy their centennial celebrations, and on behalf of all Manitobans, I wish to extend sincere congratulations to the more than 200 4-H clubs currently operating in our province for their good work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:30)

Kildonan-East Collegiate Culinary and Pastry Arts Program

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): One of the roles of Manitoba's high schools is to give students the life skills needed to succeed in the future. The diversity of educational opportunities available to students today ensures that they are in the best position to continue their educational training and successfully access the job market and contribute to the growing Manitoba economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important that students develop practical skills that they can use in their personal lives as well. The Kildonan-East Collegiate Culinary Arts and Pastry Arts programs are particularly exciting examples of this new type of education available to today's students. These programs not only help prepare students for careers in the culinary field, but also give them skills to succeed in other areas of their life journey.

Students at the school host a monthly gourmet lunch in which the public can sample the creations of the students and help build these skills. The students handle all elements of the lunch, from designing the menu and ingredients, to preparation and presentation of the food and serving and interacting with the public directly. Students also undertake some catering in the area, supplying healthy-choice options to several middle years schools for their canteens and lunch counters. With over a hundred students from grade 9 to grade 12 working in the kitchen every day, these caterings provide students with real work experience in the industry.

Mr. Speaker, many of these students have 'gond' on to be distinguished for their culinary excellence including representing our province in national skills competitions. Run by Chef Raymond Czayka, the Culinary Arts and Pastry Arts program work very hard to ensure student success. Many of the former culinary graduates have completed their apprenticeship, earning a Red Seal in the trade of

cooking and are gainfully employed in some of the best restaurants, hotels and private clubs in Winnipeg and abroad.

I urge all members to join me in congratulating chef Ray Czayka and all students past, present–past and present that have the Kildonan–East Culinary Arts and Pastry Arts programs such a success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Peter Ward

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to remember a well-respected artist and conservationist, Mr. Peter Ward.

Peter was widely known for his beautiful scenic paintings, often depicting landscapes of wetlands and waterfowl from his home in Delta Beach–*[interjection]* Thanks a lot. His inspiration came from his lifetime of appreciation for natural wildlife and water birds. Peter was also known as an ardent guardian of the natural world through Delta Waterfowl Research Station. Peter excelled in research despite having no formal academic training and helped to perform ground-breaking research on waterfowl. It was in this role that Peter invited thousands of students to participate in biological and zoological research to encourage further appreciation and protection of the natural environment.

Peter's diverse work as an artist, ornithologist and waterfowl conservationist was recognized in 1970 when he was bestowed with the Centennial Medal from the Manitoba Historical Society.

Peter's art has been a major part of Lake Manitoba community as he painted there every day for several hours and continued to do so until shortly before his passing. Recognizing his unique talent, collectors from around the world including from the United States, Australia and Great Britain were attracted to Peter's realistic depictions of marshland and natural landscapes and waterfowl.

Peter was very grateful to have had the opportunity to study fine arts in New York and Minneapolis early in his career and had wished to help other young artists in the same position. In his memory, a bursary has been developed through the Portage district's art centre to do just that. Throughout his life, Peter had a generous nature and strived to work towards conservation and art and meaningful contributions that last beyond the life of any individual. It is fitting that even after his passing

that Peter would help to ensure that other local artists could have the same opportunities that he had.

Mr. Ward lived a long and full life, leaving a lasting impression on the world of art, wildlife and waterfowl; Delta will certainly not be the same without him. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recount the remarkable life and contributions of Mr. Peter Ward.

Medd House Museum

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): When you travel to Winnipegosis, be sure to stop by and explore the Medd House Museum. Located in the original Medd family home, the music–'musishem'–museum celebrates and displays the impact of legacy of Dr. A.E. Medd, Winnipegosis and surrounding communities. It was established by a historical society of Winnipegosis under its mandate to collect, preserve and study the human and natural histories of Winnipegosis. In 2010, the original house with its many artifacts and Dr. A.E. Medd's office was generally donated to the Medd family–to the historical society–and offers a unique window into the medical and social history of Winnipegosis.

Dr. A.E. Medd came to Winnipegosis in 1903 to practise medicine. He was fresh out of medical school but jumped into work, serving as a doctor, a coroner, and not only for Winnipegosis, but also Fork River, Winnipegosis, Camperville, Duck Bay, and the farming communities of the Mossey River municipalities. This was in addition to serving as a medical officer for the surrounding First Nations communities. He married Mary Agnes McArthur in 1914 and raised five children in the family home on Second Street.

Actually, until an actual officer was attached to the house in 1927, Dr. Medd treated patients in the kitchen, dining room, and parlour. People often came for treatment during the dinner hour when they knew he was at home. His generosity was second to none, as he would often accept payment in potatoes or milk, or would even personally drive patients to Dauphin and pick them up again after receiving treatment for their ailment. Most amazingly, Mr. Speaker, throughout his 37-year career, he brought over 1,300 babies into the world in the country.

The Medd House Museum offers a glimpse into the life and practice of Dr. Medd, displaying artifacts from his practice, highlighting importance–passions and events of his life. The house has been lovely

restored and as closely as possible to its original state. Dr. Medd's life exemplifies the commitment and the character of a rural doctor, and the Medd House Museum demonstrates the importance of rural medicine in the development for our province.

I invite everyone to come out and visit the Medd House Museum the next time they are in the Winnipegosis area. I would like to ask to leave—have the members of the board of the historical society included in the Medd House to be involved in the statement of *Hansard*.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage everyone to attend the museum if they are in the localized area. Thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to include the names, as referenced by the honourable member? *[Agreed]*

President: Pauline Riley; Vice-President: Faye Adam; Curator: Jo Bunka; Secretary: Ruth Wright; Treasurer: Lorna Giroux. Members at Large: Loretta Dyck, Ernest Clarkson, Barb Dorman, Lillian Procyshyn, Sheila Hafenbrak, Loretta Dyck.

Fort Garry Historical Society

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, the Fort Garry Historical Society and Heritage St. Norbert demonstrate the value that historical societies play in keeping history alive. St. Norbert and Fort Garry have contributed much to the development of this province and it is no surprise that it takes the work of two historical societies to ensure that the history is maintained and celebrated. I've had the pleasure of attending many meetings with both organizations and I can speak for the dedication and tenacity of all their staff and members in preserving a part of our history.

The Fort Garry Historical Society was founded in 1971 with a mission to preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history of the old RM of Fort Garry. In its first 15 years, the society saved and restored three historic St. Norbert homes that led to the establishment of St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park in 1985. Throughout its over 40-year history, the historic Fort Garry Historical Society has championed the preservation of St. Norbert and Fort Garry's historical and—history, sorry—and maintained the history of—in the form of living museums and interpretive sites. At the last Fort Garry Historical Society meeting, the discussion was put up—to put up a gateway sign welcoming everyone to Fort Garry and I am encouraged by the community activism and

continuing co-operation with City Councillor Jenny Gerbasi to do so.

Heritage St. Norbert emerged in 1979 after growing concern how the rapidly changing landscape of St. Norbert would affect its historical buildings. They have been active in preserving St. Norbert's history for over 30 years, including the famous Trappist ruins monastery. Their commitment to St. Norbert's history ranges from ensuring new streets names align with the area's history, to proper signage and plaques being installed at the historical locations throughout the community.

In addition to preserving historic buildings, they have also contributed to the ongoing history of St. Norbert with their help in establishing the St. Norbert Farmers' Market and their support for drainage inside the dike.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for communities throughout Manitoba to remember their history and ensure that it's preserved. Part of the charm of St. Norbert and Fort Garry is the close connection to the—and the history that you feel whenever you are there. The Fort Garry Historical Society and Heritage St. Norbert have been instrumental in maintaining and promoting the history of the area and should be thanked for their efforts.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances.

Seeing no grievances, orders of the day.

* (14:40)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Yes. Mr. Speaker, would you call second reading on Bill 6, 14, and 30.

SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call bills 6, 14, and 30, and we'll start with Bill 6.

Bill 6—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal Responsibility and Community Involvement)

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I move, seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 6, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal Responsibility and Community Involvement); Loi modifiant la Loi

sur les offices régionaux de la santé (accroissement de la responsabilité financière et de la participation communautaire), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, Bill 6 follows through with our plans announced as part of Budget 2012 to reduce the number of regional health authorities in Manitoba from 11 to five, and to improve the financial responsibility of RHAs and how they engage local communities and families. As we move to fewer RHAs, we want to also ensure that they do a better job of listening to local communities. We want to ensure patients, families and local communities have a stronger say in their health-care services.

Recognizing the need to effectively promote and support community involvement in the planning and delivery of health services by RHAs, the bill will require RHAs to consult with the residents of their health regions in carrying out key functions to inform the planning and delivery of health services in the region. These include community health assessments, health promotion and development of regional objectives and priorities for the provision of health services. The amendments proposed in Bill 6 will also require regions to establish local health involvement groups to explore and provide advice to the RHA on issues that impact the delivery of local health services. Manitobans will be consulted on the key requirements for these groups later this year.

There are many fine examples of municipalities and First Nations working closely with RHAs to bring more services closer to home and partner on recruiting more providers to their local communities. We believe local communities can and want to play a role in how health services are delivered, and we want to ensure RHAs are engaging in that process.

Bill 6 will also improve the fiscal responsibility by implementing tighter controls on executive compensation in RHAs, hospitals and other health corporations. The bill will enable more consistent guidelines of key terms and conditions of employment for senior management in the health sector, including remuneration and severance. Experience in other jurisdictions has shown us the importance of effective oversight in this area. The bill will enable policies to be established at the provincial level in relation to the terms and conditions of employment of RHA senior management. Contracts will be required to be submitted to the chief financial officer of Manitoba

Health for review and confirmation of compliance with the policies. Any provision in an employment contract that does not comply with these policies will be void and unenforceable.

RHAs will be empowered to establish regional policies respecting the compensation for senior management of hospitals, personal care homes and other publicly funded health-care organizations designated by regulation. Regional policies are to be approved by the minister. Contracts for senior management of hospitals, personal care homes and designated health-care organizations would be required to be submitted to the senior financial officer of the RHA for review and confirmation of compliance with the policies.

The bill will also empower RHAs to give directions to hospitals and personal care homes in relation to the process for hiring their senior officers. In addition, RHAs will also be required to post—on their websites the expenses paid to or on behalf of the senior manager of a hospital or personal care home, in addition to posting the expenses of the RHA CEO.

The amendments will also enable the establishment of rules respecting the use of surplus operating funds and funds derived from ancillary operations by RHAs, hospitals and personal care homes, to ensure funds are used as intended, again, based largely on what we have seen occur in other jurisdictions.

We believe Bill 6 will support our efforts to streamline administration, redirect resources to support front-line care, improve financial responsibility and avoid the financial issues we've seen in other jurisdictions, and give patients and families and local communities an even stronger voice in the delivery of health care.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 6, a bill which deal with amending The Regional Health Authorities Act.

As I will make clear in my remarks, we in the Liberal Party will be voting against this act. We believe that this is not what is needed to improve the quality of health care, to reduce errors, to improve the health of individuals, and this is not what is needed for Manitoba right now.

Let us ask why this government is introducing this legislation at this particular time. This bill

reduces the number of regional health authorities from 11 to five. This will create the illusion of a government which is taking action, that wills 'cate'—create the illusion of a government which is reducing bureaucracy, and it creates the illusion of a government which is saving dollars. But, in each case, this is, from all the evidence, Mr. Speaker, an illusion rather than a reality.

Let us look at what happened when there was a joining, an amalgamation, of South Westman Regional Health Authority and the Marquette Regional Health Authority to create the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority.

We have looked very carefully at the tracking of expenditures in these two RHAs, and there was no evidence that there was some phenomenal savings or even real savings in the operation of the combined health authority versus the individual health authorities. We should ask, not only in this case but in cases, for example, the combination of NOR-MAN and Burntwood regional health authorities, why we need to question whether, in fact, this is going to save money.

First of all, as you enlarge the regional health authorities, you can expect that there will be larger travel costs. You have people travelling longer distances, whether they are people who are senior managers, whether you have people who are inspectors for personal care homes for the region. In every case, you're going to have people travelling longer distances.

Indeed, one of the problems is that, when you have a larger region, people may end up in personal care homes which are farther away from where they have been living. People in Neepawa, instead of being in a personal care home in Neepawa, have already, with the combined Assiniboine Regional Health Authority, have found that people have ended up in Rivers, in—I think in Brandon, I think in Carberry, I think in Russell, in various other places, instead of being closer to home. So it is not just a matter of travel for the people who are working in the regional health authority; it is the people who are receiving services, and whether it be personal care homes or other services.

Let us look, for example, at the situation of the combination of the Parkland and the Assiniboine regional health authorities. And under this combination, what you now can find is people from Swan River may have to go to Killarney or Melita for services, may have to go into personal care

homes farther and farther away, people in Melita having to go to Swan River.

We don't know exactly how this is going to be organized, but when you have this increased travel, the increased distance of services away from the people who are needing services, then we can expect that there is going to be increased, not only travel, but increased organizational challenges, increased complexity, and, likely, increased problems.

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Let us look at the combination of the Burntwood and NOR-MAN regions. Certainly, now that you have these combined regions, you're going to have people having to travel significantly farther for major meetings. You had under Burntwood, you know, one major centre in Thompson. You will now have in addition to Thompson, in addition to the many often remote communities—distant communities—Norway House to Lac Brochet, you will have major hospitals and major centres in Flin Flon and in The Pas. And you're going to have an increased number of meetings, which require increased travelling for participant after participant. And in this case, travel time on the road from Thompson to The Pas or Flin Flon is, say, four hours; travel time by air is a little shorter, but it's also more expensive. And there is already enough road and air travel for people in this region.

And there's no evidence that this is going to increase the ability to provide services in a cost-efficient way. In fact, it is likely that any cost savings will be balanced out by the extra costs—maybe even more than balanced out by the extra costs—which relate to not only increased travel, but in the way that services have to be provided, the greater complexity and difficulties in co-ordinating, and timing of services, and so on and so forth.

Already, when one looks at the issue not only of fiscal responsibility, but the issue of community involvement, we have already had, as the minister and all members should know, situations where people—for example, in Neepawa or in Treherne, which are not close to the centre of their respective regional health authorities—feeling more disconnected from decisions instead of closer to decisions; having less autonomy locally instead of more autonomy locally. And the fact is that, even though the minister, in this bill, is going to change from existing advisory councils to local health involvement groups, I mean, the responsibility of local health involvement groups is to advise RHAs

about health issues in the region. Isn't that what the advisory councils were supposed to be doing? And there really is no evidence, and no credible reason, to believe that there is going to be better community—or local community—involvement.

Why is this model, which the minister is advancing, is using, is trying to make some changes in—why is this not the right model? And why should we not, right now, be engaging in this effort of going from 11 RHAs to five RHAs?

Well, one of the reasons why we should not go embark in this series of amalgamations is that, as we well know, both from the amalgamation in the health region of the South Westman and Marquette to form Assiniboia, and as we know from the amalgamation of school districts, that there is a very substantial effort involved in the amalgamation process. And what this will do is, in fact, take a lot of time away from people to engage in the amalgamation process instead of being engaged in making the changes that really are needed to improve health 'quare' quality, to improve health, and to improve—decrease the number of medical errors and medical problems, to decrease the number of complaints and problems in personal care homes as well as in hospitals.

And certainly, one of the reasons why we should not be rushing to engage in this, as the minister wants people in Manitoba to do, is that it will take a very large effort which takes away from the effort to do some of the things which really are so critical at this juncture.

The minister should recognize that one of the fundamental problems, as we have been talking for many, many years, is the way the regional health authorities are funded with what are called global budgets. The minister provides a global budget to the top of each of the regional health authorities and then the regional health authority engages in effort in making decisions about how to spend that money.

It is, interestingly enough, the old Ronald Reagan trickle-down model, that you put the money in the top and you hope that this money will come out at the bottom in giving good services. And it's a little bit extraordinary that the NDP in this province are using a Ronald Reagan model in terms of delivering RHA services on a trickle-down basis instead of providing a framework that would, in fact, have provided for much greater democracy, individual participation in which one has a patient-focused funding, a funding based on services actually being delivered. Because under these

conditions the emphasis is not on building bureaucracies or building empires, the emphasis is on actually delivering services to people, improving the quality of those services and keeping people healthy and in reducing errors.

And it is, you know, it is a strange, you know, fact of life, I suppose, that you have right-wing and left-wing individuals in this province engaged in central control. But, as the Speaker will well know, for as long as we have known, as long as there have been democracy, there are right-wing and left-wing dictatorships, but there's no liberal dictatorships. There's only liberal democracy. And one of the big differences is that we need to recognize that the approach that we need here is not a central control approach as in a dictatorship. It is a approach which gives the power to the people who need services, and empowers and supports the people who need services in actually getting those services.

Let us look at the result of what has happened under the NDP and let us look at what has happened in the approach that has been taken which is a central controlled, centrally globally funded approach to RHAs. Under this system, the wait times, for example, for hip and knee surgery, which were, you know, 11 to 15 weeks back in the year 2000, are now in the range of about 20 weeks for knee and hip surgery in Winnipeg. The wait time has gone up instead of going down. The NDP call this progress because it's going up, but we disagree. We believe that it is better with shorter wait times with people being able to get the care that they need, when they need it.

When it comes to personal care homes, as the minister is well aware, there have been more and more complaints. There's not been enough investigations. There's not been enough improvement and there are major concerns.

And this is all happening at a time when you have central control, and under central control systems one of the big problems is that those who are responsible centrally have a tendency to try to make themselves look good. And so they tend to try to cover up problems in personal care homes. They tend to reduce the openness or the ability to understand where the problems are, to get those addressed and, instead, in having the careful and thorough inspections that are needed and the changes made to correct the problems, we have been seeing increasing number of problems in personal care homes throughout Manitoba.

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And we have had more and more reviews; we have had more and more problems; and it is time to address these problems instead of imagining that if you suddenly combine two regional health authorities, that all these problems will go away and somehow there will be much better care at a personal care home, or there will be much shorter wait times because you've got a larger area that you're dealing with, instead of a shorter—smaller area that you're dealing with.

There's nothing fundamental here that will lead to the kind of basic change that we need. We can, you know, have a look, for example, at regional health authorities where there have already been reviews because there have been problems, in the NOR-MAN region and in the Burntwood region. Why would you imagine, that just because you have the same model of an RHA system modelled in the same way that it's been operating under this NDP government for many years—why would you imagine that, all of a sudden, the people who are responsible are going to be doing a much better job than they were in the smaller regional health authorities? Indeed, certainly, for a time, you're going to have more complex system; you're going to have a system where the people in administration, in the bureaucracy, who are making decision, are often farther from the people; and you may have a system in which you have more problems instead of less. So we do not agree with the minister that what you need to do is to combine regional health authorities.

One of the issues which I have been talking, for many years, about, as the minister well knows, is the need to address the diabetes epidemic. This diabetes epidemic has been going on since 1996. There is no sign yet that the numbers are going to—are turning around and going down instead of up. That's after 12 years of this government and several years of the government before, and still there's not been an effective approach taken.

Well, it—the—Speaker—Mr. Speaker, you know, the problem in this instance, why would you believe that creating five instead of 11, you know, RHAs is going to solve this problem? Why would you think that you're going to get better prevention of diabetes in five—when you've got five regional health authorities than when you've got 11? As I've said, it—even though there may be some community input, it's not clear that that's going to be fundamentally any different than what we've had before; that the results

are going to be fundamentally any different from what we've had before.

We have argued, and the minister is well aware of this, that what is needed is that in certain areas where you've got a—an epidemic going on, that you need certain things to be done on a provincial scale and certain things to be done at a regional health authority scale. And to try to imagine that you're going to create regional health authorities who are much bigger and you create a scale which is halfway through—halfway from what you had before to a provincial scale, is suddenly going to be the solution to this, is not correct. There are certain things, in terms of the local management, which need to be done at a scale closer to the local—and it's not just a matter of advising. You need to have real ability to get things done.

And there are certain things which need to be done on a provincial scale. And going halfway is a halfway answer to each one, and it's no answer to either one in terms of properly doing this and undertaking that which needs to be done provincially and that which needs to be done locally—locally.

When it comes to diabetes, as we've argued for many years, that one of the things that has to happen with a—an epidemic like this is that you have to have a central provincial function which works closely with all the regional health authorities to make sure that you're getting the changes made that will actually be effective and change action at a local community level.

One of the strange things about this government was that, even though they have given words, said that they're interested in diabetes and reducing it, that up until last year after I raised this several times, the medical officer, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Manitoba, on the provincial public health website—that the government had not even mentioned diabetes as a critical area of priority in public health. It was startling that an NDP government presumably, in delegating this to the regional health authorities said, well, at a provincial level we don't need to consider this a priority because we've just handed it over to the regional health authorities.

But there are certain aspects in terms of making sure that you've got a clear best practices that the regional health authorities can be using, that you're able to translate the excellent research that has been done not only in Manitoba but elsewhere which shows that there are approaches that can be taken that will very much decrease the likelihood of

somebody who is at risk of getting diabetes, for them to get diabetes. If you undertake certain approaches, protocols—and we know this from, you know, work that has been done in smaller groups, in some fairly large groups—but we need to be able to take this effort to a community basis so that we're actually reducing the number of people with diabetes, improving health, decreasing the number of amputations, decreasing the number of heart operations, decreasing the number—amount of kidney dialysis that's needed, decreasing the number of kidney transplants.

And, when we can start to have an impact to decrease in these areas, what we will find is not only do we have a healthier population, but, in fact, we have a health-care system which can buy spending more wisely on prevention, actually spend less on some very expensive areas. And this is pretty important in how we move forward in improving our health-care system.

And the tragedy of focusing on moving from 11 to five regional health authorities is that a lot of this is going to get lost and partly it's going to get lost because, you know, people are going to think that the RHAs are doing it all and that you forget about certain things that need to be taken at a provincial level just as other things need to be looked after at a local level.

And so there is, in what the minister has presented to date, there is not convincing evidence that there would be improved fiscal responsibility. There is not convincing evidence that there's going to be meaningful, effective, improved community involvement. There is no convincing evidence that there is going to be an improvement in the quality of care or an improvement in the health care of people.

And what the minister is doing is presenting the illusion that she's actually doing something and she will use up a lot of time and effort and, likely, we will not have the substantial increase in improved health care and improved health, which is what we really need. And that is what is so unfortunate in this direction that it will not provide what we need at the very base which is the changes in the system which are going to improve the system long term, provide improved health care and provide improved quality of care.

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One of the things that the minister has talked a lot about is her legislative regulation, of what should

be the costs of the corporate activities in regional health authorities. And while, to some extent, this legislation or regulation may be, you know, could have effect in a school district circumstances and in school boards, when you get into health care, you are into a very much more complex situation, as the minister from time to time has indicated.

But what happens is that it's very easy for things which are really administrative functions, corporate functions, to be included in the purview, in the activities of people who are at various levels in the provision of health care within the system, so that they don't appear in the corporate administrative budget. And so as long as this happens, trying to micromanage the system in this fashion is not going to be an effective way of controlling corporate costs over the long run.

You know, instead of, you know, trying to micromanage in this way, when you've got a complex system, you need to understand and work towards the overall goals. And that overall goals of improving quality of the health care actually being delivered, and the overall goal of being able to improve the health care of individuals and you need to be careful and provide the incentives as you can do and the quality controls under a patient-focused funding approach or a service—funding based on services actually delivered.

You can deliver these kinds of incentives and controls which will move things forward to improve the quality of care, to reduce the wait times, to improve health care of people. But under a global budget as we have seen over the last many years, under this government and the government before, the success in making the meaningful changes is often not there, in spite of good intentions.

And I think we have to be very careful about what seems to be illusions of good intentions or even, perhaps, real good intentions which are gone astray and are not leading us to the goal which we need to have. And that is putting into a system the kind of framework where we will see the continued quality improvement that we've not seen under this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on this bill?

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Bill 14.

**Bill 14—The Protection for Persons in Care
Amendment Act**

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 14, The Protection for Persons in Care Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Loi sur la protection des personnes recevant des soins, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, last year we passed The Adult Abuse Registry Act to establish a new adult abuse registry as well as tough new offences and penalties to better protect adults with intellectual disabilities in our province. The adult abuse registry will be the first of its kind in Canada.

The bill under discussion today will amend The Protection for Persons in Care Act, expanding the adult abuse registry to cover hospitals and personal care homes, ensuring that future potential employees in those facilities have more information to better—employers, excuse me, Mr. Speaker—future potential employers in those facilities have more information to better protect patients and residents. The adult abuse registry, once created, will include the names of those who abuse or neglect vulnerable adults and will provide employers with an additional tool that they can use to check the background of perspective employees or volunteers. This will not be an optional tool, Mr. Speaker. Employers in health-care facilities will be required to conduct a search of the adult abuse registry before employing new workers or volunteers.

This legislation builds on protections already in place to ensure the highest quality front-line workforce in our health-care system. The bill will provide further protection and an additional tool to prevent individuals whose abuse or neglect of vulnerable people with whom they are working does not, indeed, occur in future. Bill 14 will cover cases of suspected abuse or neglect involving: any person who is a resident or an in-patient in a health facility, or is receiving respite care in such a facility; any person who is receiving services in a geriatric day hospital that is managed by a hospital designated by regulation under The Health Services Insurance Act; and any person who is receiving services in an emergency department or urgent care centre of a health facility. Cases of suspected abuse or neglect of any person protected by these changes will be

reported to the adult abuse registry committee. Upon receiving a report, the committee will determine whether the person's name should be placed on the registry, in accordance with The Adult Abuse Registry Act.

The bill will also require that the current employer be notified of incidents of abuse or neglect committed by their employee when that employee's duties involve providing care or services to patients or other specified adults, or when they are permitted unsupervised access to patients.

In addition, a new definition of neglect will be added to the act to clarify that neglect is included within the scope of the act.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the bill will amend the act to explicitly enable the minister to issue binding directions to a health facility operator for their protection of patients.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, in looking at this legislation—the goal of which is to reduce abuse, reduce complaints, reduce problems, and to increase the quality of care in personal care homes—there are—there's important aspects which need to be considered. And the important aspects, which I would suggest need to be looked at with some care here, are: really, in the definition of what is abuse; how the abuse can be used; what sort of rules and policies are in place; and how we go about caring for people in personal care homes.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Because, fundamentally, what we want is a situation where the people who are in personal care homes are being well looked after—are being cared for by the health-care professionals, whether it be nurses, nurse's aides, doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, others—that there really is a caring in the people who are looking after residents in personal care homes. And that there is the capacity not only to care, but to help people achieve the best that there can be—to help people achieve the ability to work with family members and others, in a sense, as partners in care, because, you know, family members and extended friends can be a very important resource and help, under the right circumstances, in personal care homes.

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Let's look, as an example, at the use of antipsychotic drugs in personal care homes. We

know that in Manitoba, from the reports and the results of research which is available, that something over 30 per cent of people in personal care homes are being put on antipsychotic drugs and the large majority of these are on what are called second-generation antipsychotic drugs. And these antipsychotic drugs have a black-box warning which says these drugs should not be used in people with dementia, people who are seniors and yet, at the moment they are being widely used. It has been suggested, and this is why I bring it up, that the use of these antipsychotic drugs can be considered an abuse. If one considers it an abuse, who would be labelled an abuser? The doctor who prescribes it; the nurse who gives it; the person who doesn't report that there are side effects or problems with antipsychotic drugs and bring this to the fore and change the situation, get the drugs removed or their doses reduced or the situation changed so that the problem for which somebody is prescribed an antipsychotic drug is actually addressed instead of somebody being putting on an antipsychotic drug.

Now, it is likely that one could keep going with this situation of 30 per cent of people in personal care homes on these antipsychotic drugs, and we bring in this legislation, and at some point it is quite likely that somebody will come forward with a specific allegation of an abuse of a relative as a result of being prescribed an antipsychotic drug.

I have, personally, had family members come to me and talk about the practice that happened and talk about this and how a woman who was put on antipsychotic drugs deteriorated and died. And it's not unreasonable to suggest that she or another family member in the future will bring forward a complaint which is a complaint of specific abuse. And, yes, we need to be able to deal with it, but we need to make sure that, if this legislation is implemented, we have the right perspectives which will get the improvements that we need without having a situation where people are always, you know, looking over their shoulder and trying to stay out of trouble instead of trying to help people.

All too often we have seen situations in the past where people will try and cover up problems instead of bringing them forward and addressing them frankly and making sure that the situation is improved. That is, of course, why some years ago I brought in and the government supported The Apology Act to allow people to speak more openly, to apologize, to understand what the problem was and to correct it.

And, clearly, under circumstances where we are now labelling and will label a variety of actions taking place in personal care homes as actions of abuse, there are going to be situations where we need to make sure that we have thought through this ahead of time, that we are engaging in this in a very responsible way, that we understand, not only the difference between intentional or accidental—accidental abuse can do just as much damage as intentional abuse if somebody dies. We need to know what and understand the situation, be able to work with the people in the personal care home and make the changes which will improve the quality of care, rather than having a situation where you're going to be always more concerned about what could be charges of abuse than actually concerned about how you improve the care for people, how you care for people.

It is going to have—be important that we understand the importance of developing approaches, of having rules and procedures, but more than that, of making sure that there are clear goals. We have moved gradually from a situation where we use less physical restraint now than we used to do, and I think appropriately so. But some personal care homes have moved to using drugs or chemical restraints instead, and some of this is to prevent falls but there are other options in terms of preventing falls, and some of the use of anti-psychotic drugs has been to treat people who are wandering when there are other approaches to address issues of people who are wandering.

So we need to make sure that all the way through the system, that the government has set clear objectives in terms of caring for people—not just how many people are going to be there in the personal care home, but the sort of quality of care that we would hope that our parents would have as they age, or that we have as we age if we are in a personal care homes.

There will be abuse, which can sometimes happen because—as a result of people following rules and policies; there will be abuse from not following rules and policies. We need to be sure that as we proceed here, that we have a clear goal in mind; that we have an understanding of what it is when people are really trying to do their best to help and care for others who are aged; how problems can be brought forward.

I was amazed to have an individual come to me who had worked at a personal care home, and to see how dedicated he was, how concerned he was to

improve things for people, and yet find at the same time how frustrated he was by the people who were senior to him who were not supporting him in the effort to be able to improve conditions in personal care homes for people.

We need to make sure that the other elements are there for protecting and improving a situation of people who are in care. It has to be not just about apprehending the abuser; it has to be about how we change people's approaches; how we improve the quality of care; how we make sure that we have the kind of personalized understanding of each person who is in a personal care home; how we make sure that we are moving using recent knowledge or recent advances, to incorporate those recent advances or recent knowledge into the care that is provided, instead of just continuing the status quo, as it were.

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There are areas, clearly, where we can improve, in looking after people with Alzheimer's disease. I think that it was about 2002 that there was a plan developed and put forward for looking after and improving the lives of those with Alzheimer's disease, and yet, as of last year, 2011, all too much of that had never really been implemented. And the result was that, as people of the Alzheimer's society made clear, that we were still sitting there nine years after this report with large pieces of this report not even implemented. If you can't implement a report in nine years, are you going to be able to lay the foundation here, so that we can put this in place and do it well and do it in a way that is going to improve the quality of care and how we look after our seniors who are so precious to us and who should be so precious to us because they have contributed so much over so many years, not only individually to families, but to our society.

So this, the goal here, is an admirable one. I suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that implementing it well may be more difficult. And that's where we have to be focused in making sure that the goal is clear, that we are bringing forward people who are abusers but we are addressing this in a way that can achieve a change and improvement, rather than addressing this in a way in which we will get cover-up, in which we will get fear, in which we will get anxiety because of the way that this is implemented. And it needs to be done, as I've said, with care, with good intentions, with recognizing that we have individual people, that abuse is not always just something which is violent or is sexual but

something which can be as simple as prescribing a drug which is a black-box drug, which shouldn't be used. And we need to take into account this full spectrum so that, in fact, we are improving the quality of care.

We need to understand as we look at this full spectrum of need, of opportunity, of what needs to be accomplished and to make sure that it is done in a way that respects the health-care professionals, health-care providers, and 'prespects' and, more than all, the people who are residents of personal care homes because of who they are and what they have done and where they are at a given point in time.

And I suggest that one of the things—oh, having been in personal care homes, in quite a number, that, just as the minister is now preaching healthy living, which is good, getting good nutrition, getting good exercise, how carefully has it been looked at, in terms of what personal care home residents need, in terms of nutrition and exercise. Are residents getting a quality of nutrition? Are they getting a balance which is appropriate in terms of vitamin intake? Are they getting adequate exercise—not always easy in a personal care home? And what is adequate and what is appropriate under a variety of circumstance?

And, although this act, to some extent, differentiates between neglect and abuse, we need to be looking at what is optimum for people and what is reasonable and what is common sense for people who are seniors who've contributed a lot, what we can do to support them at a time in their lives where, you know, their ability to remember details may not be as much, when their ability to contribute is not as much, but to respect who they are and care for them, and make sure that the environment in a personal care home is as good as it can be, not just because we are eliminating any abuse, but because what we are doing is looking at what is the very best that can be achieved, what is the best that is possible,

Where, you know, in this are the sort of quality standards that we might expect for personal care homes, not quality standards in terms of how many people are there, but quality standards in terms of the kind of care that people actually receive, in terms of the kind of nutrition or other supports that people actually receive, the use or not use of drugs, the kind of, you know, physiotherapy that is given under circumstances where somebody may have had an operation, the kind of support for somebody who is older and at risk of falling? There are lots of information and very many studies that have been

done in very many places and these are readily available in the literature. But the application of these to give optimum care in Manitoba is really what we're about. And we need to be able to look at that issue of what is optimum care and how we achieve it. That's got to be our goal: looking after people in the best way we can, making sure our seniors are cared for responsibly and well and emotionally, physically, spiritually and mentally. Thank you.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I move, seconded by the member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I now call second reading of Bill 30.

**Bill 30—The Regulated Health Professions
Amendment and Personal Health
Information Amendment Act**

Ms. Oswald: I move, seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 30, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées et la Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Acting Speaker, these changes—Mr. Deputy Speaker, pardon me—these changes will improve protection of patients' health-care records by requiring health professionals and their regulatory bodies to ensure that patient health records and lab specimens are not abandoned or at risk of being abandoned if a health professional ceases to practice in Manitoba. Although we believe this situation to occur in very rare circumstances, it is important to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to deal with health-care records and laboratory specimens that are abandoned or at risk of being abandoned.

These changes will accomplish that and will apply to regulated health professions as well as health professions that are currently regulated under a profession-specific act. The bill will require regulated health professionals to make arrangements and put plans in place to ensure that their patient's health-care records and lab specimens are not abandoned or at risk of being abandoned. It also puts

in place a procedure for appointing a custodian to take possession of, secure and manage abandoned health records, including by court order and, in addition, it lays out the duties of the custodian and the health profession colleges and associations with respect to those records and specimens.

The bill also allows a fine of up to \$50,000 to be imposed on a health professional who abandons records or specimens, consistent with the maximum fine under The Personal Health Information Act.

* (15:40)

It also provides that a custodian appointed under The Regulated Health Professions Act, to deal with abandoned health care records, act as a trustee of an individual's personal health information under The Personal Health Information Act. Health profession colleges and associations will be required to comply with The Personal Health Information Act when dealing with abandoned health care records, including when securing the records and providing patients with access to their personal health information.

These changes will ensure that a patient's privacy and access rights, as enshrined in Manitoba legislation, are not eliminated or negatively impacted should a college become a custodian of the patient's health-care records.

The bill will also broaden the information available on the background of health professionals by enabling information about a foreign criminal conviction that is reasonably related to a health professional's competence or to the safe practice of a regulated health profession, to be included in practitioner profiles available under the—available to the public under The Regulated Health Professions Act.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that—based on a number of experiences here in Manitoba, that this act is needed. It is important that there be approaches where people have—it's not just somebody sort of running away, moving out of province. Somebody could be sick, and all of a sudden there needs to be care taken with medical records that that person who is a health professional has. And make sure that while that person is sick, that things are looked after, that records are looked after in a good, safe way, and in a way that it be said that that record is not just, you know, kept from

being abandoned and being found in the street, but that the record of somebody, you know, who is being looked after needs to be available, so that if you are sick and you are being looked after by somebody who is a physician or a physiotherapist or whatever health professional—could be a nurse practitioner, and all of a sudden that that person is sick or is unavailable for some reason, then those records still are available to whoever is now looking after you.

If you happen to end up in hospital, or if you happen to end up—[interjection]—I was; we were talking, in a personal care home—that it is increasingly important that we look at not just preserving and ensuring that we have personal health-care records which are kept safe and secure and not abandoned in the street, that we also make sure that those records are in fact available when and where they are critically needed for the individual whose health—well, he's being looked after by the health professional, whose health is at risk or his health was of concern.

I think that the act—as I would see it, the act is a response to a situation where some records were abandoned. It incorporates within the act some elements which are good and useful, but it forgets a whole series of things which probably should be paid attention to. You know, anyone who is a health professional or a health-care provider, you know, is at risk of being sick themselves. And so, this at risk really means that the moment that somebody becomes and is a health-care provider, at whatever level, they need to make sure that not only are their records well kept, but that there is provision in case they themselves are in, you know, a car accident; in case they themselves end up with a medical condition which means that they are not able to carry on their practice; that under these conditions, that the measures have been taken right from the start to ensure that the records will be on the one hand, safe and secure, and on the other hand, that they will be available under condition where another health-care provider needs to get access—with the consent, obviously, of the person who is not well and needs to be looked after, because they're being looked after by a health-care provider who, for whatever reason, is not able to continue practising.

I think that this legislation also has, perhaps, not adequately been looked at in terms of what we're doing and really should be fully converted over to, which is digital health-care records. We've been very slow in this province compared to a lot of other jurisdictions in moving to digital health-care records.

That's not to say that there are not some practitioners who've been doing this for a long time, or some clinics who've been doing this for a long time, but on the whole we still lag in the use of medical records, and we still lag in approaches in terms of, you know, how those medical records are made available at the time they need to be available to people who are practising.

Last year, I was, for example, in Minnedosa, and when I was in Minnedosa, I ran up against a situation where the hospital had one medical record and a physician who was practising in the community had another medical record. And it was cumbersome for the physician to get immediate access to the medical record to find out what the past medical history was of somebody who was being looked after in the hospital, for example, or who had been to the emergency room in the hospital and got some treatment there or some drugs there.

And so, what we need to have is a much better system of being able to have those medical records available to health-care providers at the right time, at the right place to give optimum care for people; and so that we don't get tests duplicated. This woman, who was a physician, told me about where she had been in British Columbia, and that in British Columbia there were medical records and there was very quick access to information about the drugs which people were on, whereas in Manitoba we were behind in the kind of access that she had accepted as normal in British Columbia for some time.

And, because we are behind, the quality of care, the quality of decisions, the optimum type of medical care, the quick medical care that we want was not available in Manitoba as it should be because of the way that the ability to be able—with the right consent and the right conditions and the right sort of information—to share medical records for the optimum benefit of a patient or of the person who is being looked after by the health-care provider.

And I think this legislation could have done more in terms of looking at how it could facilitate, you know, not just the care of records if somebody, you know, dies, or if a health-care provider—something happens to a health-care—to make sure that the medical records are well looked after. It's not just a matter of having those records, you know, kept in a safe place; it is a matter of making sure that where they are, they are looked after in a way that when those medical records are needed that information is available to health-care providers,

and, indeed, to the patient or the family, where needed, when it is—when it needs to be.

* (15:50)

We have, of course, moved in Manitoba, thankfully, and as a result of some initiatives that were Liberal initiatives to get quick access to medical records, and that access is within 24 hours in a hospital or a personal care home, and under the right conditions, with the right consents to family members, as well, so that the overall quality of care can be improved.

And we certainly need to make sure that when we're talking about medical records and the medical record being safe and secure, it is also a medical record that can be accessed when it is needed, where it is needed, whether by other health-care providers or by family or by the patient or the person themselves. And I think we could've—the minister could've looked a little more, in terms of the changes that could be needed to make sure that we do this a lot better in Manitoba, both—from both perspectives, from how it's secure and how it's available.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I move, seconded by the member from midlands, that debate now be adjourned.

An Honourable Member: Midlands?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Agassiz, seconded by the honourable member from Midland, that debate now be adjourned. Is it agreed? *[Agreed]*

I now call bill—second reading of Bill 9. *[interjection]* Oh. The—okay, I call second reading of Bill 9.

Bill 9—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Community Use of Schools)

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I move, seconded by the minister of family services and housing, that Bill 9, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Community Use of Schools); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (utilisation communautaire des écoles), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the minister of family services and housing, that Bill 9, The Public Schools Amendment Act, be now read a

second time and referred to a committee of this House.

An Honourable Member: Family Services and Labour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Correction. It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), that Bill 9, The Public Schools Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Ms. Allan: And I can't believe that I didn't catch that myself, actually.

I'm pleased, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak to Bill 9, the community use of schools. We believe that this legislation will make school facilities more accessible to community organizations. School facilities are paid for by all Manitobans and our government believes that when pupils are not using school facilities, they should be available for community use.

Under this bill, The Public Schools Act is amended to require school boards to establish community-use policies for school facilities when the facilities are not being used by students. A community-use policy must set out the terms and conditions that apply when members of the community use those school facilities. Community-use policies will include a transparent process of determining who has priority to use the school facilities and how to apply for their use. Each school division and school district must maintain a copy of its policy and application form, and the name and contact information of its community use coordinator on a website that is open to the public.

The proposed amendment limits the fees charged for public use of a school to amounts necessary to recover the cost incurred, and not as a source of revenue. In the case of joint-use agreements between schools and municipalities, the sharing of facilities and equipment will further reduce user fees while optimising facility use.

Bill 9 is part of an ongoing effort of our government that we have undertaken to make school facilities more accessible to a community. The community use of schools act will maximize the use of school facilities by school and community users and support educational, recreational, social and cultural programming during school hours and outside the regular school day.

This proposed legislation will improve recreational opportunities for children, youth and families by giving them better access to our schools and quality recreation facilities. Providing access to recreational facilities in schools will increase the number of children and youth being active. In addition to physical activities, schools offer the community spaces for art, music, theatre, social and leisure activities, organizational meetings, continuing education and social activities. These policies will help increase the shared use of community and school facilities by minimizing user fees while allowing for flexibility based on local needs.

Manitoba government departments have been working with school divisions and local municipalities to develop collaborative and comprehensive facility-use practices supported by evidence and common guidelines. In March 2011th, Manitoba Education asked school divisions to review, develop and implement policies that establish procedures and joint-use agreements for the use of public school facilities to maximize the use of school and community facilities.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister for introducing this legislation which was one of the recommendations which came out very strongly in the 2005 report of the Healthy Living Task Force. It's to be regretted that it's taken seven years to get this bill from that report to today and—but it's certainly important that we optimize the community use of schools, that we provide clear approaches to the community use of schools and that we do everything that we can to make sure that people in the community are enabled to use the schools. And I would add that in some cases in River Heights we see a real need for co-ordination between community centres and schools. And I think other recreational and after-school activity opportunities and that schools can be and could play a much more dynamic and important role in ensuring that there are the community and recreational approaches which are badly needed.

I'm pleased that the minister said in her remarks that she wanted to maximize the use of schools for the community use of schools. I think that it would've been helpful—and let me suggest to the minister, if in describing the community-use policy, the goal of optimizing, maximizing the community use of schools was actually included in the

legislation. I think that it's helpful to school boards to have it clearly spelled out just what the goal of the minister is. You could have schools which have a community-use policy which makes it almost impossible to use schools. And, in fact, I can tell you that many community groups have come to me and they have said, well, I mean there is a policy here, but it's actually very difficult for us to use the school because of the way that this policy is implemented or used. And it would be advisable, in fact, I suggest to the minister that she bring in an amendment which really sets out the goals here which I presume would be optimizing or maximizing the community use of schools. But it should, you know, recommend that schools make a real effort to do everything they can to have community use of schools and to benefit the communities.

* (16:00)

I noticed that a number of school divisions—for example, I have here the policy from Seine River. And the policy for Seine River—which is written out and was approved, interestingly enough, in 1993, revised in 1999, so it's been around for a while—talks about the students' school facilities that are available to students for school activities after school hours and no cleaning fee or deposit is required except for functions where an admission fee is charged to those attending: Any function or activity organized primarily by and for the students of the school will be deemed a school activity, provided it's approved by the provincial—principal and supervised by members of the teaching staff or designate approved by the principal. Students shall be responsible for removing articles brought for their particular function or activity. Use of schools by the general public: School facilities are generally available to resident volunteer groups of the school division on a non-regular basis provided that—and there's a whole series of terms and conditions, including such functions don't interfere with school activities, et cetera. And a third group—regular periodic use by non-profit child-centred organizations: Permit for use of school facilities on a regular periodical basis is granted only under the following express conditions—and these are laid out. And then, there is all other circumstances will be considered based on their own merit by the board of trustees.

I think the minister could have gone a little bit further in providing examples—maybe, the minister will to school boards—of good policies, and make sure that we are, in fact, going in a direction, which I presume that she desires from her words of

'maximizing' the opportunities for community use of schools rather than limiting them.

And with that, we're certainly ready to support this legislation. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I move, seconded by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I now call second reading of Bill 21.

**Bill 21—The Public Schools Amendment Act
(Code of Conduct for School Trustees)**

Ms. Allan: I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), that Bill 21, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Code of Conduct for School Trustees); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (code de conduite à l'intention des commissaires d'écoles), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Allan: I'm pleased to speak today—second reading of Bill 21, The Public Schools Amendment Act, which is the code of conduct for school trustees.

Bill 21 clarifies expectations concerning the conduct and behaviour of school trustees, while giving school boards greater capacity to ensure the accountability of their members. In short, this important piece of legislation will enhance trustee accountability and improve school board governance. Bill 21 calls for school boards to adopt codes of conduct that require trustees to act with integrity, inspect others who may have differing opinions, and keep in confidence any personal or confidential information obtained in their capacity as trustees. These are minimum requirements and school boards may choose to incorporate other elements into the code, which they deem to be important.

If a school board determines that a trustee has breached its code of conduct, the board may vote to censure the trustee, bar the trustee from attending meetings of the board, or suspend the trustee's rights, duties, and privileges as a member of the school board for up to three months.

To ensure fairness and transparency, Bill 21 also sets out a process whereby a sanctioned trustee may appeal a board's disciplinary action to an independent adjudicator who could vary or set aside the sanction.

As decisions to sanction a trustee must be in compliance with the code, the possibility of third-party review will act as a safeguard against punitive or arbitrary actions of a board against one of its members.

It is important to note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that similar legislation on codes of conduct for trustees already exists in Nova Scotia and Ontario. It is important to note that Bill 21 has the full support the Manitoba School Boards Association, the MSBA. President Rivard says that Bill 21 will help to ensure excellence in school board governance across our province. I appreciate the feedback provided by the Manitoba School Boards Association to strengthen the key components of this legislation.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Bill 21, will—Mr. Deputy Speaker—will improve school board governance in our public school system and promote ethical leadership and accountability on the part of Manitoba school boards. I would encourage all members to support the passage of Bill 21. Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few, brief comments on this legislation.

I certainly support the presence of a code of conduct for school trustees. I note with interest that the school board can sanction those who breach the code of conduct and that the—this such sanctions may be censuring the trustee, barring the trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the school board or a committee of the school board, or suspending the trustee from the school board, including suspending all the trustee's rights, 'druliges' and privileges as a member of the school board for up to three months.

It is interesting that the NDP are bringing in this legislation for a code of conduct for elected school trustees, when, at the same time, when it comes to a code of conduct for MLAs, we have an example of two MLAs, Cabinet ministers, who broke the law, broke what was the normal expected behaviour at the time or just before an election. I believe one of them was actually the minister who's introducing this bill and the other was the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald).

And so we expect that the government will introduce some measures that might include this sanctions for people who defy the code of conduct to the extent that they are breaking the law and don't appear to have been sanctioned in any way that we've

become available. Maybe they have done it in some hidden fashion. But I don't believe that there was any censure on the MLA for St. Vital or the MLA for Seine River. Are you aware—is anybody aware of any censure? No. I don't think there was, there wasn't any censure of these two MLAs, in spite of the fact that they broke the—[interjection]—they got a get-out-of-jail-free card for breaking the law.

So there could have been a censure, you know, in a, well, in the College of Physicians and Surgeons sometimes that censure is just a letter of censure. It's not, you know, something which is—but at least it has gone out and it said, look, there is a recognition that what was done was not right and that there needs to be a change in behaviour.

And the person who was involved, you know, knows that there has been a censure and that they are put on alert that they need to do a whole lot better in making sure that they are not breaking the code of conduct in the future.

*(16:10)

The second 'sancture' has to do with barring the trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the school board or a committee of the school board. I don't believe that either of the ministers were barred for attending, even for a minute or an hour or a day, the Chamber in their responsibilities. No, we couldn't have the presence or absence of a minister noted, you know, in *Hansard*. That would be wrong. But censure could be done in some fashion that the specific terms of the censure might not necessarily been recorded in *Hansard*, but they could still be effective. I mean, I'm—maybe this government, which is very tricky in the way it brings forward bills, can probably devise a way of doing this.

The third option, which is mentioned here, is suspending the trustee from the school board, including suspending all the trustee's rights, duties and privileges—a member of the school board—for up to three months. Now that's an interesting one.

Now what's not here, you know, is that there's a graded series of options which are available, but it's—you know, these are for breaching a code of conduct. They are not for breaking a law, and when you have something as severe as breaking a law, then, you know—and particularly when that law is specifically with respect to the activities of ministers in relationship to their duties as legislatures and their—as elected people, and, you know, that's where it becomes a problem, and we need to ask, you know,

why it is that in the case of two ministers who broke a code of conduct, who broke a law, why were there no sanctions?

And we would anticipate that the government will be bringing in legislation to provide for such sanctions. You know, they could potentially even make them retroactive, which might be interesting for the ministers. They've made taxes and other things retroactive. Now, retroactivity is not generally a good idea in law, but, you know, given the circumstances and given that there was a law that was broken, maybe it should be something that could be considered, at least been given some consideration.

I think that, you know, once we're talking about a—situations where we're—are here, of elected officials, codes of conduct and, you know, breaches of the code of conduct, that we need to be sure that they apply not just to one level of elected official, but that they have, you know, broader 'actiplication'—application and that, you know, ministers who are caught breaking the code of conduct, that some sanction should be considered as well. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Cullen: I move, second by the member from Morden-Winkler, that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I now call second reading of Bill 13.

Bill 13—The Renewable Energy Jobs Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 13, The Renewable Energy Jobs Act; Loi sur les emplois dans le domaine de l'énergie renouvelable, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance, that Bill 13, The Renewable Energy Jobs Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of the House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to maximize the economic benefit of \$18-billion investment in 'hydroelect' development and other renewable energy sectors, Manitoba is establishing a \$30-million renewable energy jobs fund and an energy opportunities office.

This bill establishes the renewal energy jobs funding program which will provide loans to eligible manufacturers that supply equipment, components, or construction materials to the renewable energy sector. It'll provide support to companies that manufacturer parts for hydro dams, electrical transmission, and other aspects of the renewable energy sector, in order to build on our manufacturing strengths and attract new investment.

The fund provides a financial support mechanism to assist small and large manufacturers of products used by renewable energy sector. It will offer repayable loans to existing companies that wish to expand its operations, as well as new companies.

The loan program complements existing support for manufacturers in Manitoba such as tax credits, grants, and training incentives. The energy opportunities office will carry out a range of activities to help Manitoba companies, and expand and attract new international methods, by working with Manitoba Hydro on their local content and industrial offset policy, promoting Hydro tender opportunities to companies, encourage and development of local partnerships, and investment opportunities to international companies that are in a position to supply Manitoba Hydro. And, provide support to geothermal, wind, advance 'biofuse,' biomass, solar or smart grid technology manufacturers.

This is of utmost importance, and the 2012 budget emphasize the need to find responsible ways to reduce administrative spending. That is why that both the energy opportunities office and the renewable energy jobs fund, will be undertaken within existing financial resources; no new monies will be asked—will be applied to any aspects of this bill.

It involves a \$30-million repayable loan fund that will be created of existing loan act authority used for business support programmings, such as, and similar to, the Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program, who help Manitoba enter new era of development of hydroelectricity and other renewable resources. And, technology is expected to be a major driver of our economy over the next 10 to 15 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fund can be accessed by any eligible manufacturer which is defined as any business located in Manitoba, then manufacturers equipment, components or construction material, as used in the production, generation, transmission or distribution of renewable energy. These manufactured goods can range from small-scale applications such as residential geothermal, to large utility-scale generation and transmission projects. Some examples of hydro-of eligible manufactured goods include: geothermal heat pumps, hydro turbines, transformers, converters, wind turbines, piping for geothermal loop systems, towers, power lines, and much more.

It is worthwhile to explain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the fund targets the manufacture of products for use by the renewable energy sector, and does not pertain to the actual production of renewable energy. For example, the programs enabled by this bill cannot be used to support the generation of electrical power or the production of fuels.

The energy 'opporties' office, the Manitoba Development Corporation, will assess loan application and provide recommendation to the ministry. Each loan will be managed by the MDC, approved by Treasury Board and establish with an order-in-council.

Furthermore, the office will assess the effectness—effectiveness and uptake of the 'roan' program and will provide recommendations for modifications. In effect, the program will be administered the same way as the existing MIOP program is, and will list the experience and expertise of the Manitoba Development Corporation.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill will establish a mechanism that's open to all eligible manufacturers to help them take full advantage of the economic opportunities arising from the development of hydroelectricity and the renewable energy projects. It will attract investment and create jobs in the province. It will also encourage development and innovation in the renewable energy sector.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to say these few words to recommend this particular bill to the Legislature.

Mr. Gerrard: Just the opportunity to say a few words here about this legislation.

I noted that the minister, in bringing this forward—normally, there would have been some

fairly extensive consultation around this, with people in industry and people in business and others, to make sure that this was put forward in a way that would be optimum for development of, in this case, the renewable energy industry and providing for renewable energy jobs.

The minister, in his remarks, you know, failed to give us an indication of whether he'd done any consulting, whether he talked to people about this, whether he listened, whether he'd considered that this was the optimum approach to take.

* (16:20)

So it would have been useful if the minister had, you know, expanded on the results and compared this approach versus other approaches to the development of the renewable energy sector.

I think, you know, it's a disappointing, and maybe the minister will have time at committee stage or in other location, but it really should have been in the Legislature at second reading where he talked about, you know, how he'd gone out and talked with a variety of people in this industry sector, how he'd looked at what was going on in other jurisdictions, and why he'd come to the conclusion that this was the best option available. I mean, there are other approaches that certainly could have been taken.

And, you know, we have no target here in terms of what would be provided in terms of how many jobs might be created, no targets here in terms of what—where this would be going.

And, indeed, the minister speaks, interestingly enough, about Manitoba Hydro, but the interesting thing about this legislation is that although it talks about and is about renewable energy jobs, and although the minister has talked about Manitoba Hydro in his remarks, you know, as I look through this act and it's not—there's not even a mention here of Manitoba Hydro. What role is Manitoba Hydro expected to play here?

Is—you know, could Manitoba Hydro be a recipient of such loans? One would, first of all, think that Manitoba Hydro, if it needs to borrow money—and it does borrow very considerable amounts of money—wouldn't have any problem getting a loan at a pretty darn good interest rate, thanks in part to the situation that it is a Crown corporation.

So one presumes that the minister is not intending that Manitoba Hydro actually be a recipient of the loans.

Okay, then one would ask, well, what about, you know, what is the duty of Manitoba Hydro? What is the nature of the Manitoba Hydro partnership? Clearly, for many of these areas, the involvement of Manitoba Hydro may be rather critical. We know that, you know, at this point there have been two wind farms, for example, in Manitoba. There have been more developed in other jurisdictions, but certainly in terms of where we're going, there is nothing specified in here in terms of what Manitoba must or mustn't do, and I think that that might have been a useful approach to specify certain things with regard to Manitoba Hydro.

The third comment that I would make about this legislation, it delegates to the Manitoba Development Corporation, all right, the authority to enter into a loan agreement or to administer it under The Development Corporation Act. And in reviewing The Development Corporation Act, I—it would—the question comes up as to why you actually need this legislation. I mean, could the government not have just put this fund under The Development Corporation Act without necessarily having the legislation?

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And, you know, it probably, from what I can see, and maybe the minister can explain at some future point why it is that you actually need this legislation except, of course, as a PR gesture, to make it look like the government is working on renewable energy jobs and to provide an opportunity for some debate and discussion in the Legislature. Well, I certainly welcome the debate and the discussion, but, you know, I think that if you can do something without actually having legislation, then, you know, you can proceed and you can get it done before you have the legislation and without going through as much of a process.

So this is, you know, is this a needed legislation or is this just, you know, a public relations activity, the minister trying to increase his profile and trying to say that he's getting involved in renewable energy jobs?

We know in the past that there's been a number of pieces of legislation which have been brought forward by this government which, when it turned into the actual delivery of the legislation, that—oh, we've had bills, criminal property forfeiture which, you know, sat on the table for awhile before they were actually implemented in a way that was effective. And, although one would expect and hope

that that would not be the case with this, that one has to have a little bit of concern about the implementation of this, and there are several reasons for that.

In terms of delegating this to the Manitoba Development Corporation, one presumes, then, you know, not only will the corporation make the loans and advance the programs, but the question here would be, you know, there's nothing in this legislation about the conditions of these loans. One would hope that the minister has some concept, has a mechanism for deciding merit of, you know, proposal A versus proposal B. What is that decision? I think and I believe is that it should have been more carefully laid out here.

We want things based on, you know, is this based on the number of jobs? Is it based on the potentially economic potential of an activity in a certain area of the long-lasting sustaining potential of economic activity that is supported here? Is it based, we hope not, on, you know, who the minister knows and who the minister doesn't know because, you know, that would not be the way to do this, have this based on, you know, insider knowledge. And because that's, you know, this should be based on real merit. It should be an open and transparent process. It should have clear goals and assessment criteria in terms of application.

And the missing ingredients here appear to be the lack of a clear commitment to merit-based decision making with clear goals about what the objective of this is. Is it, you know, a make-work project creating jobs? Is it a long-run economic development approach in which one will hope to establish new businesses, new industries in areas? Are we looking at higher risk or lower risk, or how are we working with people in the business and the industry or in some cases because we're looking at technology?

One could anticipate that there may be technological developments that might come out of universities or community colleges that students, master students, have made some breakthrough discoveries. Is that who this is designed for, because the minister has not really laid out a clear plan in terms of what he expects and what he plans for in terms of, you know, who this will apply to. What's the broad range?

And, you know, there are debates in the United States, as we already know, about what is renewable energy and was—is not. Some people consider

Manitoba hydro renewable energy and some don't, and it depends on where—which state you've got and what legislation they've got. And, clearly, it would've been smart in this kind of a program to lay it out in a little bit more detail in terms of what the opportunity here is and how broad and what is, for the purposes of this act, renewable energy—could have been laid out in greater specific detail. And, lastly, it is interesting that different governments, different jurisdictions have taken different approaches to promoting renewable energy. And the two—well, there are probably three fundamental approaches.

* (16:30)

One of is a loans approach; a second approach could be a grants approach. And a grants approach, like—the small-business investment in research in the United States, I believe, is primarily a grants approach, and sometimes for, you know, for small countries—companies or investments in early stage in research, that a grants approach may actually be better than a loans approach, as is here. And—but the minister has indicated that he's working on a loans approach but without specifying the merits or the options, the benefits and the problems with each, and without specifying how the decisions will be made. Again, we hope on merit as opposed to in other ways.

The third option, in terms of supporting renewable energy and the development of renewable energy jobs, is to have what's called a feed-in tariff. And, in fact, those who have looked globally at different jurisdictions that have taken loans approach versus a feed-in tariff approach, which essentially sets a price for which individuals can sell renewable energy that they put into a grid, and in setting that price and requiring—right—that Manitoba Hydro connect up to individuals who are prepared to put the—their energy into the grid and making it easy.

In fact, you know, Ontario has decided to move on a feed-in tariff basis, and their approach has been very, very successful. Now, mind you—that there are some issues with the Ontario approach. They chose a very high feed-in tariff for solar energy, which, of course, generated a lot of activity, but it also generated a lot of very, very high-cost electricity, and so we don't want to be generating lots and lots of very high-cost activity. But many jurisdictions have found that the far better way to stimulate the production of renewable energy is, actually, to have, you know, a feed-in tariff so that people know from the start what—the return they will be getting and they

can plan, and that they are in a position then to build the renewable energy production facility or resource and to put that energy into the grid.

Now, we, of course, are concerned about what the—you know, not getting too high value on a feed-in tariff, but it's interesting to note that you could compare the cost of a feed-in tariff which could be effective for getting wind energy generation and with the cost of getting new hydroelectric power generation. We could take, for example, the situation of Wuskwatim, which was recent—the most recent dam, and I have asked, you know, people at Manitoba Hydro on more than one occasion to give us a price, right? That they would, you know, say that they are producing the tariffs. And others have given me a price which they suggest that the cost of production of electricity—for Wuskwatim may be in the range of 10 to 11 cents a kilowatt hour. Now, I am not able to confirm that, but suppose that we, for argument's sake, take that as a value of the production cost for Wuskwatim, and, you know, my understanding is that, you know, that's a very viable cost for people to produce wind energy also.

And people have argued, well, if you could have wind energy generation for the same cost as Wuskwatim, that, you know, producing wind energy here at Killarney. I believe that there was a group of people who were looking very hard at wind energy in Killarney as the member for—now Spruce Woods—it was Turtle Mountain, is nodding his head, and that if there had been in place, you know, a feed-in tariff which is actually a very fair way of doing this, and it is, I mean, interestingly enough, that your production costs for new energy may not—may be slightly higher than the cost that you are currently able to sell or people are buying that energy for. And sometimes that is done on an overall grid because, I mean, that is what the cost of putting new energy is. If we want new energy into the system, we're doing this with Wuskwatim, then, you know, we should be treating different types of energy similar. We should be allowing people to put energy onto the grid for, let's say, the same price as Wuskwatim, and if people can produce wind energy for that same price, then, you know, let them produce it and put it onto the grid because, you know, we are going to need, over time, some new energy.

We have to be particularly cautious at the moment because the current price of natural gas is still low, partly because of the Shell gas, but if you are looking at a long term situation and we're counting, you know, what the cost of natural gas may

be in the future and what we're considering also, you know, the effect of carbon production and the greenhouse gas production and other factors, that—and we want to encourage, as an overall component, some renewable energy, then certainly one of the things that we should be looking at, Mr. Speaker, is a feed-in tariff which would be responsible, not the 80 cents a kilowatt hour that the Ontario government started out. I think that they have reduced this for—that's for solar, not for wind. They've significantly reduced it and they're getting things, you know, better into line there, but there could be a responsible alternative.

And the minister, in talking about this, has not mentioned the other alternatives and why he is choosing one alternative over the other two, and why he is choosing not to use a feed-in tariff at a similar price for what his government is producing power at Wuskwatim.

And so I think that, although, you know, supporting the creation of renewable energy jobs should be a no-brainer, we want the money to be spent wisely and well. We want it to be cost-effective. He's given us no cost-effective comparison over doing it this way versus doing it with a grants approach or doing it with a feed-in tariff approach. I suspect that, you know, if you looked at it carefully you might—a new Wuskwatim-type of number, that you might be able to have a feed-in tariff that would work and you wouldn't have to be spending millions of millions of dollars. It would be an interesting outcome.

Certainly, you know, we need to be looking at what are good practices elsewhere. We need to be looking at options, and we need not to just blatantly accept or blankly accept what the minister is saying without, you know, asking for more details and asking for more careful comparisons, assurance that the money is going to be well spent, that we're going to have merits-based decision making as opposed to ministerial decisions based on who he's friends with and what have you.

* (16:40)

So we think that there could've been a lot better in this act, that it could've—the minister could've presented it a lot more clearly and effectively in terms of his justification taking this approach as opposed to other approaches. But we, at the same time, need to remember that the—you know, we are going to be heading in the direction of more renewable energy, and this is a good direction to be

going, but we want to do it responsibly and appropriately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), that bill debate be now adjourned. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Andrew Swan (Acting Government House Leader): On House business, can you please call bills 24, 7, 22 and 36?

Mr. Speaker: So, I'll now call bill number—

The bills—the next order of bills will be Bill 7—24, 7, 22 and 36, and we'll start with Bill 24.

Bill 24—The Energy Savings Act

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 24, The Energy Savings Act; Loi sur les économies d'énergie, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this bill has three main elements to it: first, to provide for the continuation of the Affordable Energy Fund; second, to establish the Manitoba Hydro—it establishes that Manitoba Hydro consult with the government to develop a province-wide energy efficiency plan with targets; third, enables Manitoba Hydro to develop an on-meter efficiency proven program.

Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Energy Fund was first established under The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. The fund is to be continued and improved under The Energy Savings Act. Manitoba Hydro will make a financial contribution to the fund and will be responsible to manage the fund.

Also, the purpose of the Affordable Energy Fund has been refined to improve program accessibility regarding: (1) electricity and heating fuels; (2) the uptake of renewable energy technology; (3) reducing Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions related to energy consumption; (4) research and development of renewable energy sources or innovative energy technologies; and (5) to support the community-based organizations that train and employ people facing barriers to employment to participate in energy efficiency retrofits.

In addition, the fund can now support water conservation measures that are done in conjunction with other energy efficiency retrofits under new on-meter efficiency program. The act would ensure that efficiency and conservation programs and services can be accessed by all Manitobans, including those in rural and northern communities, as well as those with low-income funds.

In order to encourage and realize efficiency and conservation, the board of Manitoba Hydro is required to prepare, in consultation with the minister, an annual energy efficiency plan that will include efficiency targets for electricity and natural gas used in Manitoba. The plan will also include a strategy for achieving these targets with identified programs, services, projects, estimates of the costs and sources of funding used to achieve the plan.

Furthermore, Manitoba Hydro will provide annual reporting on the results of the efficiency plan.

The energy saving act enables Manitoba Hydro to establish an on-meter energy efficiency program. Unlike a loan, on-meter financing is connected to the building. The responsibility for repayment can be transferred to a new customer when there is a change in ownership or tenancy. Efficiency measures that provide an economic payback within the useful lifespan of equipment will be eligible under the on-meter program. Financing these capital improvements and expenses becomes more affordable because repayments are made with energy savings realized from energy efficiency.

In addition to energy efficiency, water conservation measures may also be included in the efficiency program when they're done alongside power and home heating fuel efficiency measures.

The program, as outlined in this act, provides broad guidance that enables Manitoba Hydro to design and manage an on-meter program. There is significant latitude within this act for Hydro to achieve the objectives of the on-meter program. In order to protect the interests of all parties, the act provides direction on contract details, financing terms and amounts, adjustments to monthly charges and the repayment schedule.

Mr. Speaker, The Energy Savings Act will help Manitobans make investments in energy efficiency and renewable forms of energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, keeping Manitoba's energy cost amongst the lowest in North America, and protecting

the Manitoba against the price volatility of fossil fuels like natural gas.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro continues to offer award-winning energy efficiency programs and holds a reputation as a leader in energy efficiency. This bill will enable Manitoba Hydro to expand their program.

And this bill and the previous one were election commitments made by this government during the election campaign and, I think, were one of the reasons why Manitobans spoke so loudly in the election campaign. Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister has rushed to get his words on the table, and I appreciate his interest in saving energy and supporting activities which will save energy. Certainly, it is one of the things that we should be very conscious of in Manitoba: the ability to make changes which, in fact, will save energy utilization and make things in Manitoba so that, you know, we are operating as efficiently as we can in that, in fact, we are using not only every dollar wisely but every bit of energy wisely.

Now, the—I have several comments on this fund which is described here, and the use of this fund, and how this might be used in terms of the purposes of the fund. This—from the description of the fund itself, presumably, but not, you know, not necessarily—presumably, this is a program which would be considered a grant-based program and not a loans-based program when it's supporting activities to produce savings. But it doesn't seem to be explicitly laid out. What we know is that this fund can support activities that'll improve energy efficiency and conservation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As I say, this seems to be about providing grants of some sort, but it doesn't necessarily limit this to—and it could be including loans. But it would appear that there should be not only a fair application form, but one of the things which is fundamental in this is that there be merit-based decision making, that is, decision making which is based on the merit of particular proposals, not on who you know; and that it is important that we have decisions which are open and transparent and based on merit if we're going to achieve excellent, rather than have decisions which can be based on who you know.

This fund can be used to support social enterprise and community organizations, to assist people or neighbourhoods to participate in energy conservation, energy efficiency. Now it is interesting

that we should, you know, be supporting, you know, social enterprises and community organizations, but we need to make sure that we have the criteria right, that they are merit-based criteria, that they are not, you know, the typical NDP loosey-goosey kind of criteria that can be interpreted in a whole variety of ways, and that they can choose to interpret if they know they have, you know, a—an organization which supports them, to give it some funds, and one which doesn't support them not give it some funds, that this needs to be based on merit, not on other factors, and so that we actually are able to achieve excellence in this particular area.

* (16:50)

Certainly, one of the considerations which I suspect may have been important in terms of the involvement of communities in these sorts of efforts has been the efforts on quite a number of people, and it's been broadly discussed, not just here but elsewhere, on the community-based power development, because, I mean, let's face it. If you have community—we were talking about Killarney but it could be Minnedosa. It could be Souris. It could be any of many, many communities. It could be Morden. It could be a First Nations community. It could be a community in Stonewall. It could be a community in the MLA for Lakeside's area, around Shoal Lake. You know, there should be opportunities for any community, and it could be a community in Winnipeg. It could be a community up north. You know, whether it's even Lac Brochet, Shamattawa, Thompson, Flin Flon, Wabowden, Cross Lake. I mean, I could go on and on. There are many, many communities which, you know, have—are important here, and you know, I think that there are a variety of options.

You know, I have a list here of communities or regions or RMs which are not growing as well. You know, these, I think, are, you know, areas which have lost population, Albert, Alexander, Alonsa, Archie, Argyle, Armstrong, Arthur, Bifrost, Birtle, Blanchard, Bowsman, Cameron, Cartier, Chemawawin, Churchill, Clanwilliam, Crystal City, Daly, Dauphin, Deloraine. I can go on and on. There's a lot of communities here: Fort Alexander, Flin Flon, Fisher River, Gambler, Gilbert Plains, Gimli. These are communities which, in the last census, have lost population. You know, it should be that these are communities where you need particular attention, right, and, you know, this doesn't list communities within, you know, Winnipeg, which is probably an omission because I know there are some

there that may have lost although the overall population of Winnipeg has grown, but you know, Minto, Montcalm, Morton, Mossy River, Mountain North, Mountain South, North Cyprus, Odanah, Oxford House, Park South, Pembina, Pinawa, Piney, Portage la Prairie RM, Sucker Lake. You know, on and on.

You know, they're communities which are not doing as well as they could be doing. They're losing populations, and one wonders here, when we're looking at the support for communities, whether—you know, how well a community is doing is a consideration or whether it is—the consideration is, you know, how much money—or how much energy you can save, whether the consideration is what kind of community support this does. What this does for economic or other activity, what this does in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, or the potential to do so.

You know, I should remind members and the Speaker that back in '93-94, we set up a community access program to get Internet access and you know, it provided five simple criteria. You know the benefits in terms of education, in terms of business, in terms of health care, in terms of delivery of government services as examples, and the delivery of health care. That you can have some, you know, clear and concise goals here that can be spelled out, and when you don't spell out the goals as clearly as you might, then what happens is that the program can kind of deteriorate because it's as if the government really doesn't know where they're going, that they don't have a clear idea of their goals to start with and—but, that being said, when we were talking a moment ago about things like community power development—and I met with a lot of groups on this, and the points that they made in terms of community power development is that you give the opportunities to the communities instead of what this government did when they built—provided an opportunity to build a wind farm at St. Joseph, it was to an off-shore company, or an out-of-province company.

And, under those circumstances, you know, a lot of the benefits—not all, there were some good benefits for the community too—but a lot of the benefits in terms of profits, in terms of guaranteed loans went to a company which was not a Manitoba company. It was a company based out of province. And what was argued, then, was that the combination of a feed-in tariff and the appropriate legislation to support community involvement in power development could have been very effective

in mobilizing community activities for development of power and energy. There could be savings at the same time.

And I would suggest that, you know, the minister and the government could have taken an approach which is a little bit different than they did here in setting up, you know, an isolated savings program, that it could have been integrated with power development, for example, that it could have been organized in a way that you had something tangible, right, in terms of the goals for the community. What's the benefits for the community?

It is one thing just to switch from, to a point where you're saving, but—and that, obviously, is a benefit to those who are paying for the energy. But it seems to me that this could have been presented in a way that was considerably better in terms of the overall integration of the benefits of saving, which is this bill, and the benefits of economic development in the other bill, instead of having them two completely separate bills,

And so once again we have the issue here of, you know, is this government really trying to do things in a way that optimizes the end result. Or is this government very much involved in, you know, PR, right, at creating the illusion that they're doing something wonderful?

Now I'm going to, just in the remaining time before 5 o'clock, address one particular area. We're having a major problem at the moment in the flood-affected areas around Lake Manitoba, that the government promises that people will get help, but they have to go out and do the refurbishments or rebuilding of their homes before the government will reimburse them. And they present a plan to the government, often three tenders, and even after being presented with three tenders and you can see which one is the best and why that one's been chosen, the government won't guarantee that you're going to get reimbursed. You have to hope that the government will reimburse you. And sometimes the government is making decisions to reimburse part but not other parts after the fact. And it becomes very difficult for somebody to plan ahead.

And so, when we're dealing with this part of this particular act, which is the on-meter energy efficiency program, the corporation agrees to pay some or all of the costs of improving the efficiency of a person's building and, of course, then recovers the amount. But there needs to be a clear ability to have an agreement upfront of exactly what the

government will do and have a government which actually carries forward and delivers on its commitments and promises, rather than having a situation that we're now faced with in the flood, where the government says, well, maybe we'll reimburse, but you have to spend all the money, and then we'll see what we're going to do.

I mean, that's not been a very satisfactory way of proceeding, and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that if a government proceeds with this, that they will have an

assurance that when the government makes a commitment, it will actually deliver—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for River Heights will have 15 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 28, 2012

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Members' Statements	
Introduction of Bills		4-H Canada 100th Anniversary Pedersen	1797
Bill 300—The Jewish Child and Family Service Incorporation Act Blady	1785	Kildonan-East Collegiate Culinary and Pastry Arts Program Wiebe	1797
Petitions		Peter Ward Wishart	1798
Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—Steinbach Goertzen	1785	Medd House Museum Kostyshyn	1798
Bipole III Routing Pedersen	1785	Fort Garry Historical Society Gaudreau	1799
Tabling of Reports			
Children and Youth Opportunities— Supplementary Information for Legislative Review—Departmental Expenditure Estimates, 2012-2013 Chief	1786		
Oral Questions			
Photo Radar Goertzen; Swan	1786		
Gerrard; Swan	1792		
Gerrard; Ashton	1793		
Personal Care Homes Driedger; Oswald	1787		
Military Affairs Special Envoy Smook; Bjornson	1788		
Taillieu; Bjornson	1789		
Flooding (Lake Manitoba) Briese; Ashton	1790		
Brandon School Division Helwer; Allan	1792		
Food Development Centre Pettersen; Kostyshyn	1794		
Lyme Disease Graydon; Oswald	1794		
Matter of Privilege			
Taillieu	1795		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Second Readings	
		Bill 6—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Improved Fiscal Responsibility and Community Involvement) Oswald	1799
		Gerrard	1800
		Bill 14—The Protection for Persons in Care Amendment Act Oswald	1805
		Gerrard	1805
		Bill 30—The Regulated Health Professions Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act Oswald	1808
		Gerrard	1808
		Bill 9—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Community Use of Schools) Allan	1810
		Gerrard	1811
		Bill 21—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Code of Conduct for School Trustees) Allan	1812
		Gerrard	1812

Bill 13–The Renewable Energy Jobs Act

Chomiak	1813
Gerrard	1814

Bill 24–The Energy Savings Act

Chomiak	1818
Gerrard	1819

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

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