

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	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
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	Ind.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
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SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 2, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 74—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 74, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Howard: This bill simply takes a concern from the Police Association, allows disclosure of salaries for police officers to be done by number rather than by name to ensure the safety of those officers.

I want to thank the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) for his co-operation in ensuring this bill could come before the House.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, petitions?

Tabor Home—Construction Delays

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Morden's population has grown nearly 20 per cent in five years.

(2) Twenty-three per cent of Morden's population is over the age of 65.

(3) The community worked for years to get the provincial government's commitment to build a new personal-care home, and as a result, construction of the new Tabor Home was finally promised in 2010.

(4) The Minister of Health initially indicated that construction of the new Tabor Home would commence in 2013.

(5) The Minister of Health subsequently broke her promise and delayed construction until spring 2014.

(6) The Minister of Health broke that promise as well, delaying construction again until fall 2014.

(7) In March of 2014, the Minister of Health broke her promise yet again, once more delaying construction of Tabor Home until 2015.

(8) Too many seniors continue to live out their final days and months in facilities far from home and family because of a shortage of personal-care-home beds in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to stop breaking their promises, stop the delays and keep their commitment to proceed with the construction of Tabor Home in 2014.

And this petition is signed by J. McKay, T. Spearman, N. Webber and many other fine Manitobans.

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

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to this Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases aren't necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is submitted on behalf of M. Funk, K. Hawryshok, D. Forbes and many other fine Manitobans.

Farmland School Tax Rebate—Cap Removal

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to eliminate the education property tax on farmland.

(2) Through Bill 47, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2013, the provincial government has insisted—or has instead decided to retain the education tax on farmland, cap the tax credit at \$5,000 and eliminate the credit for out-of-province landowners.

(3) Education tax on farmland is a heavy burden on Manitoba families, limiting farmers' capacities to expand the size of their operations while making them less competitive with neighbouring jurisdictions.

(4) The \$5,000 cap on the rebate imposed by the provincial government does little to ease the burden of high property taxes for Manitoba's farm families.

(5) Bill 47 has yet to be approved by the Legislature, and the capping of education tax credits on farmland constitutes yet another broken promise by this provincial government to Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the \$5,000 cap on education tax rebates on farmland out of fairness and respect for Manitoba farmers.

This petition is signed by M. Sachive, A. Kondratiuk, E. Werner and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further introduction of petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today from Kildonan-East Collegiate, we have 50 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Jennifer Wishar—or Weisshaar, pardon me, and Mr. John Thompson. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Bill 63 Concerns Request to Withdraw

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Bill 63, the politicization of academic institutions bill, has been roundly attacked by many Manitobans who are very concerned about the government's decision.

* (13:40)

It's been called arrogant and a perilous proposition. It would usurp this—the long-standing authority of our universities and colleges to control their own operations, and it makes all other statutes, including the schools' governing acts, subservient to the government's power.

Given the almost unanimous opposition to the bill and the strong concerns expressed by many well-known and well-respected Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger) if he will withdraw the bill.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

Our government, as you know, has been committed to providing a quality and accessible and affordable education in our post-secondary system since we were first elected, and I can tell you,

Mr. Speaker, that that won't be changing any time soon. The goal of Bill 63 was simply to streamline the educational decision making here in the province of Manitoba and to make sure that we continue to provide a quality, accessible and affordable education for our students.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had a public hearing process, one of the unique processes here in Manitoba. We're listening to what people have to say. We'll continue to work with them. We've reached out to talk to folks and make the changes necessary.

Consultation Process

Mr. Pallister: Well, it's been called an intimidating power grab by some. It's been said by Jim Turk, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, quote, this you would expect to find in a totalitarian state.

So the minister delivering his streamlining message in a soft voice as his communicators have coached him doesn't change the fact that this is trying to take control away, unprecedented control away from academic institutions right to the point of giving the minister's office control over which courses and programs, what buildings will open, close, operate, in fact, a direct challenge to the independence of the institutions of this province. And it imposes a chill over the academic freedom of the faculty as well.

Now, this government does not have a record that demonstrates its willingness or ability to listen. No consultation. The new minister just says, trust me.

Given the government's horrible record on consultation, would the minister agree that this is simply another example of putting politics above responsible and respectful listening?

Mr. Allum: Since we were first elected, our government's calling card on education has been about quality. It's been about accessibility and about affordability. That's why we have among the lowest tuition rates in Canada for colleges and universities, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we continue to provide the highest—among the highest level of funding to colleges and universities as well.

Mr. Speaker, our objective is to make the post-secondary education system work better in Manitoba. We want to be sure that every student gets a quality education and that it's affordable for them.

We'll continue to work with our partners in the post-secondary education system to make sure that we have a streamlined decision-making system that keeps education in Manitoba affordable for every student here in Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: Well, what the great many Manitobans who've expressed concerns already are saying is that it's inappropriate and offensive for a government to micromanage the programs and the purpose and the aspirations of schools across this province.

This government claims it cares, but it's not the only entity that cares. There are a great many Manitobans who have played a significant role in shaping the ability of our post-secondary institutions to offer the best in training to our young people and to our adult students as well.

What is clear, Mr. Speaker, is that this government continues in its agenda to put unchecked government control over public interest to serve its political agenda, just as it did when it forced Hydro to move a bipole line, at a billion dollars of wasted cost, over to the west side of the province; just as it's done with municipal, local governments; just as it did with the PST. It continues to place partisan interests ahead of listening and consultation.

I'd like the minister to put on record any serious consultation that he can give credit to his bill emanating from. Is the minister at all concerned about what Manitobans have to say, or is he going to drive ahead with his agenda in spite of the opposition to it?

Mr. Allum: As I said earlier in answer to previous questions, we're committed to streamlining the decision making in our post-secondary institutions in order to keep our education affordable for students, to keep ensuring that we have a quality education for our students, reduce red tape and some of the paperwork that goes into the decision-making student-system.

In effect, Mr. Speaker, what we're really trying to do is to liberate the innovation within our post-secondary sector in order to ensure that our students continue to get the highest quality education that they can in order that they can be positioned to go out and get a good job, stay here and live in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a quality, accessible, affordable education for our students, and we're going to continue to work with

all the partners in our educational system in order to meet that end.

Post-Secondary Education Government Funding Record

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): This is the same minister that has cut disability services to post-secondary institutions.

Mr. Speaker, this new Minister of Education and his government have a history of breaking promises. The minister went door to door in the 2011 election promising no new taxes, two years later broke these promises with increased fees and a 14 per cent increase to the PST to a total of a half a billion dollars. This government promised post-secondary institutions a 5 per cent increase in funding, broke that promise and instead gave them 2 and a half per cent and told that they had lots of money.

Why is this new minister forcing university students to clean up his mess?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I thank the member for the question.

Last week, and in Manitoba, we have a unique system of public hearings where people from the public, from the community, stakeholders, come in and they make presentations to the government about legislation that we've tabled. We put legislation out in Bill 63. Members of the public, members of the community, as stakeholders, have come in.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've listened to what they've said. We'll be tabling changes to the legislation in order to ensure that institutional autonomy for our universities is strengthened, to ensure that we can continue to define mandates for our universities in order to serve the well-being of our students.

But, Mr. Speaker, that bill also contains important provisions about protecting affordability for students. We'll continue to make sure that tuition is kept affordable here in Manitoba, just as we did as we were first elected and just as we will continue to do for as long as we continue to serve as a government.

Bill 63 Concerns Institutional Autonomy

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, Jim Turk, executive director of the Canadian association of teachers, had this to say about Bill 63, and I quote: It's appalling that any

government in Canada, especially an NDP one, would do what this government is doing. This you would expect to find in a totalitarian state. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has written legislation that would give him power to dictate what courses, programs and buildings post-secondary institutions will open, close or operate.

How can this minister be trusted?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Well, Mr. Speaker, of course, one of the main important things of Bill 63 is to put out a system for credit transfers and credit articulations here. We want to make sure that there are no wrong doors for students so that they can continue their education. If they start down one pathway, the credits that they've earned will be used in another scenario for them to go down another pathway.

Mr. Speaker, our objective from the get-go is to make sure that we have the strongest post-secondary institutions here in Manitoba, strong universities, strong colleges, so the students get the kind of quality education that they need in order to go on and get a good job.

As I've said, we've listened to what the stakeholders have said, what members of the student community have said. We're responding and we'll be tabling proposals in that regard to strengthen legislation in order to ensure that continue—Manitoba continues to be a quality leader of education here in Canada.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, they build a strength, and if they've—they ripped it up and started over.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans and post-secondary institutions do not trust this minister or any other ministers from the university of NDP. They raised the PST by 14 per cent, even though they went door to door promising not to. The Minister of Education promised to increase funding by 5 per cent to universities, broke that promise and gave 2 and a half, fired 20-plus teachers this year alone. He broke his own law and has upset almost every post-secondary institution.

* (13:50)

How can Manitobans trust him with their most important assets, Mr. Speaker, their children?

Mr. Allum: I appreciate the member getting on his high horse and lecturing us, but on this side of the House we know that we have worked in partnership with our post-secondary sector since we were first elected.

As I said earlier, we have among the lowest tuition in Canada, among the highest funding in Canada. Contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with when the Leader of the Opposition was at the Cabinet table, and members of the post-secondary sector remember this. When he was at the opposition table, tuition increased by 132 per cent, enrolment declined by 8 per cent.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is when representations were made to committee last week, they said that they trusted members on this side of the House. They said their biggest concern was the Leader of the Opposition and his side of the House.

Ambulance Services Patient Off-Load Wait Times

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine went by ambulance with his brother who was suffering from chest pains to the Victoria hospital where he proceeded to wait for eight hours until he was seen by a doctor. Now, thankfully and luckily, he was okay.

The paramedics who drove them to the hospital were forced to wait the entire eight hours. While at the hospital, two other ambulances arrived with patients and they were forced to wait even longer.

Mr. Speaker, how can this Minister of Health claim she is making progress when paramedics are being forced to wait eight hours to off-load their patients in our hospitals in Winnipeg?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): The circumstances as described by this member do not seem what we would like to see in our ERs, and I would ask afterwards if she could share some of that information with me. I think the family would like to know what happened, and I certainly would like to know. It seems like a long wait for someone suffering from a heart condition.

Mr. Speaker, people want to know that if they're sick or their loved ones get sick that there's a paramedic available, whether that's by ambulance or whether that's by fire truck, and I can tell you that in Winnipeg we have some of the fastest response times in the country for paramedics. So whether a paramedic comes by ambulance or whether a

paramedic comes by firefighter—or fire truck, people in Winnipeg can know that somebody trained will be there with some of the fastest response times in this country.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, paramedics seem to be aware. The hospitals are aware. Everyone else in Manitoba seems to be aware of what's going on in our hospitals, and patients are aware. Everyone seems to be aware except this Minister of Health of what's going on.

Mr. Speaker, in November 2012 the minister of Health said, and I quote, we're working on driving down the off-load delays, end lo—end quote. Now, one and a half years later, eight-hour off-load times.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health just admit that her policies aren't working and she is continuing to put Manitoba's lives at risk?

Ms. Selby: I would again ask the member, if she could share the information of this particular person, we could look into the situation.

Mr. Speaker, there are times when the emergency room is very busy, and there are times when a more urgent case may come in and someone may need to wait while they attend to the more urgent case.

But we do post all the emergency wait times, and I can tell you right now, as of 1 o'clock, Concordia Hospital's average wait was one hour, 30 minutes; Grace Hospital's, at 1 o'clock today, average wait was one hour, 30 minutes; Health Sciences' average wait at 1 o'clock today was 30 minutes; Health Sciences Children's Hospital average wait today at 1 o'clock was one hour; Seven Oaks General Hospital, the average wait was 15 minutes; at St. Boniface hospital the average wait at 1 o'clock this afternoon was one hour and 15 minutes; and at Victoria General Hospital the average 'wait' as of 1 o'clock today is one hour and 45 minutes.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, this is nothing new. The member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) brought up a very similar case last week. It's only the minister that doesn't seem to want to admit what's really happening in our hospitals, and it's putting patients' lives at risk.

These paramedics were forced to wait with my constituent and his brother at the hospital for eight hours. Two other ambulances were forced to wait even longer. I shudder to think, Mr. Speaker, how

many lives these six paramedics could have saved had they been free to do the jobs that they were trained to do.

Will she just admit that her complete mismanagement of ambulance off-loads is putting lives of Manitobans at risk right here in our province?

Ms. Selby: It seems that the only priority of the opposition is to scare people unnecessarily. The morning that the Leader of the Opposition announced that paramedics were spending longer in the ERs to off-load patients than they had the year before, he said people were waiting longer for ambulances. Well, that's just not true. Instead of caring—scaring people, they should recognize that we have the fastest response times across the country to have it.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's really too bad. This is something we've come to expect from the Leader of the Opposition. We know he made up a story about people cutting in line to get medical tests for surgery. He said he made it up, and even though many media operations have asked him to apologize, we're still waiting for that apology.

CFS Case Concern Update (Matias de Antonio)

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, little Matias de Antonio passed away on March 27th. The fatal inquiries act mandates that the coroner must, within 60 days, report to the medical examiner. It's well past 60 days.

So, Mr. Speaker, an autopsy has been completed and the minister committed to sharing the results to—with the Herriera family. Why is it, then, that they still do not have any real information on the death of the child?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): We continue to work with the family and to share all of the information that we have at our fingertips. We are doing the work that we need to do to make sure that we can understand the tragedy and the loss of this child. I met with the family last week. We discussed the information that we had. There is regular contact by people within the department.

There's a process that has to happen. We are still awaiting test results to come forward. We need to make sure that when we're sharing information with the family that it is the most accurate, and it is important that we follow the process as they've been outlined by our protocols.

We continue to stand with the family and look for the answers.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, the coroner tells me he's awaiting no tests, so I don't know where the minister is getting that.

The death of a child is always a tragic event, more so when the child is under the care of CFS and not with his family.

When will the Herriera family be offered some explanation as to why Matias was taken from them in the first place?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I know that the family of Matias, they look for those answers, and we are working with them to provide the answers of the tragedy of the loss of their son, their grandson and their nephew. We need to work together with all of the medical professionals to get the answers that they need to have.

We're going to stand beside them. We're going to make sure that we have open communication. We make—we're going to make sure that we support the process as it's been outlined and make sure that when we do share information with them that it is the most accurate information that can be shared.

Thank you.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, but it's the minister's own staff that are responsible for the removal of the child. I would expect that she has access to the information as to why that child was removed.

The Herriera family is struggling with its grief after the death of little Matias. The minister and department committed to providing the family with as much information as is possible. It seems as though that's not being done.

In fact, the autopsy is done. Why has the family not received more information about the cause of their tragic loss?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, as I sit with the family and they share with me a very private, private moment that they have, the grief and the loss that they are experiencing, we are making sure that as we move forward that we are providing them with the necessary supports as well as the important information that they seek.

We all want to understand what happened. We need to understand what happened, and that's why we're following the process and the protocol that has

been put in place to ensure that as we find these answers that it is shared with the family in a timely and sensitive way.

Thank you.

* (14:00)

Lake Manitoba Water Level Concerns

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, it's obvious this NDP government does not learn from past mistakes. Lake Manitoba is at 813 feet—3 feet and rising due to the government's mismanagement of Shellmouth and the Portage Diversion. This is very well above the desirable range and very, very close to flood level. When will this government learn from past mistakes?

A weather bomb as was experienced in 2011 would devastate farmers, ranchers, property owners and First Nations around the lake.

Mr. Speaker, why is this NDP government putting so many people at risk due to their mismanagement of water levels?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): First of all, Mr. Speaker, in April-May there was more than 200 per cent of normal precipitation, particularly in and around the Assiniboine watershed. What that means is we're dealing with significantly higher flows than are normal, significantly higher flows than were originally forecast.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of ways of managing the system, and we have been, I point out, operating the Fairford outlet at full operation for four years. I want to indicate that we're also balancing the situation on the Assiniboine and also with the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin situation. Perhaps the member may wish to talk to some of his colleagues because he may want to understand the decisions that were made also have to reflect the needs in the Assiniboine valley and here in Winnipeg as well.

But I do want to indicate, as of last week we gave notice to the federal government that if we reach flood stage on Lake St. Martin we wish to operate the emergency outlet, and that is prudent management.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, the government had many warnings but would not listen and has not learned from past mistakes in water management, years and years of poor management.

Lake Manitoba levels are at 813.3 feet and rising and this NDP government sits idly by and watches. Flood level is 814 feet.

When will this government act to protect Manitobans around Lake Manitoba?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the outlet at Fairford has been in full operation for four years, but had it not been for that proactive operation, the levels on Lake Manitoba would be 1.8 feet higher today. That's the state of nature.

Point No. 2, Mr. Speaker, we have been proactive on the emergency channel. We built in a matter of months something that might have taken years. We've positioned equipment there this spring.

We have been in contact with the federal government. In fact, prior to the flood, Mr. Speaker, they indicated that we would have to provide notice when there is a imminent flood situation, and what we did last week, as I indicated, we indicated that we'd be contacting the federal government; we have. If it hits flood level on Lake St. Martin and we get the approvals from the federal government, we'll operate the emergency outlet again.

That, again, is prudent flood management, not rhetoric like we're getting from members opposite.

Mr. Helwer: Well, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the minister admitted that there is a flood in his answer.

The minister is long on excuses and blame but short on actions. Farmers, ranchers, property owners and First Nations communities around Lake Manitoba are at risk by this government's poor water management.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister learn and take action rather than trying to blame everyone else and other weather events?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, weather is the reality you deal with when you deal with floods. If you have 200 per cent plus of precipitation in April-May—I may want to arrange a briefing for the member—but that does mean you have more water to deal with, and I'll just remind the member opposite again that we have been operating the Fairford outlet.

But I also want to put on the record that there were plenty of opportunities historically to establish an outlet from Lake St. Martin. It was this government in the middle of the 2011 flood that did it. We now have it available for use.

We are at situation where we're getting close to flood level—and, again, maybe the member may want to pay attention to this—we're not at flood level. But even though we're not at flood level on Lake St. Martin or Lake Manitoba, we've already given notice to the federal government and I'm confident that we will receive the approval if we need to use it again.

We're prepared, Mr. Speaker, and I—don't even mention this again, but they voted against the budget that's put in place those kind of protections. So we don't need any lectures from them—

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

Autopac Rate Increases PUB Application

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): We voted against the budget that brought in an illegal tax increase, and that'll go to court this week.

Mr. Speaker, any day now the NDP will make an application to Manitoba public—or to the PUB asking for Manitobans to pay more for their Autopac insurance. The minister responsible said he's got no choice, his hands are tied, MPI is broke, and yet he said that when he raised hydro rates three times last year, when he raised hydro rates in May. He said that when they raised the PST, after promising not to do that.

But we've learned over the last few weeks that there's at least a little bit of wiggle room left in MPI, because they have enough money for luxury auto vehicles for their executives. They have enough money for \$180-an-hour contracts and a \$500,000 retirement payout. There was enough money for \$10,000 for training for executives and trips around the world.

If there is enough money for those things, Mr. Speaker, why isn't there enough money to protect Manitobans from an increase in their Autopac rates?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Again, any time you want to talk about Autopac rates, I'm happy to take questions.

It's great today we've got students from Kildonan-East Collegiate. I'm sure a lot of them are being interested in getting their driver's licences, taking driver's ed through MPI. And, of course, in Manitoba, with a public insurer, the cost of their driver's ed will be \$50. It might be \$600, \$800, over \$1,000 in other provinces in Canada.

And when they get their licence—which I hope they do at the appropriate time—how much is their family's insurance going to cost? Well, in Manitoba, for a Dodge Caravan, the kind of car that my family drives, \$1,300. How much would it be in Calgary? Out in Alberta, the land of milk and honey for the Tories, \$3,000 for families to ensure a vehicle; in Toronto, over \$8,000.

MPI puts its money by helping young people have the chance to drive, the chance to move in our—

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

Manitoba Public Insurance Cityplace Renovation Budget

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Well, and, Mr. Speaker, of course, the minister cut the testing places that these young people are actually going to want to have their driver's. Now, maybe he had to cut the testing places because in 2009 MPI bought a mall called cityplace.

Last year, the NDP, they found the funds to undertake a renovation at cityplace. They budgeted \$3 million, and Manitobans would have to pay for that renovation. The renovations are still not complete. They are ongoing. Yet our freedom of information request that was received last week indicates that to date \$2,918,000 has already been paid by Manitoba vehicle insurers to renovate that mall. It indicates that the original budget of \$3 million will now be exceeded.

Can the minister tell us by how much the budget for cityplace is being exceeded? And if they can afford for those—and afford those cost overruns, why can't they afford to give Manitobans not another increase but a break?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Again, I'm hoping by now the member for Steinbach has listened and is aware that over the past decade MPI rates for Manitobans have decreased by 14.9 per cent. There is not another province in Canada that has enjoyed those decreases.

There is not another province in Canada that enjoys the low rates and good value that Manitobans do, and who's told us that? Well, certainly, Deloitte has told us that.

And, certainly, who else has told us that? Well, the public auto insurance company in Saskatchewan, which went to their equivalent to the Public

Utilities Board, recently applied for a 5.2 overall rate increase. They did their own comparison, Mr. Speaker, and that showed that Manitoba has the lowest average auto insurance premiums in Canada.

The investment in cityplace was suggested by the Public Utilities Board. Is the member now criticizing the board?

Mr. Goertzen: The cityplace budget renovation was for \$3 million, Mr. Speaker. Already that \$3 million has been spent. We're simply asking the minister how much over budget that renovation is going to be.

In fact, he wants to tell people that they're short of money at MPI and that people are going to have to pay more. The NDP want the Manitobans to pay more for their Autopac insurance.

When we did another freedom of information, we found out that even at cityplace, they've spent \$260,000 just on consultants for the renovation, more than a quarter of a million dollars just for consultants.

If they have enough money for a quarter of a million dollars for consultants, if there's enough money to pay for cost overruns on a mall renovation, why do they have to go back to Manitobans and ask them to pay more for their Autopac insurance?

Mr. Swan: Again, if the member didn't hear my previous answer, the Public Utilities Board suggested that MPI should diversify its portfolio by purchasing real estate, and MPI decided that a good place to start was with the headquarters premises which they rented. MPI decided that, instead of paying rent to a landlord, they could take over cityplace, not pay rent anymore and lease out the premises.

And I know members opposite don't hang around downtown Winnipeg very much. If they did, they would see the development. They would see the growth. They would see the foot traffic downtown and the tremendous developments since this government has come to power. Cityplace is part of that. The development of the Convention Centre not far away is part of that. The development of MPI's other holdings downtown is part of that.

*(14:10)

Mr. Speaker, that's how we keep rates low in Manitoba, by MPI continuing to invest and work with Manitobans, not to sell it off as members opposite would and have all that money flowing out of the province to Toronto or New-

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

Provincial Property Registry Teranet Licensing Agreement

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, last year, this NDP government made an untendered sale of our provincial property registry for \$75 million to Teranet.

In contrast, the Saskatchewan government sold only 69 per cent of its property registry for \$147 million. This gives the Saskatchewan property registry an estimated value of \$215 million.

The Saskatchewan property registry is likely to be of similar value to that of Manitoba's. So why did this NDP government sell our provincial property registry for so much less?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to get up because I also want to welcome back the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), who I know was off in the Ukraine supervising, observing the democratic elections there. I want to welcome him back. We're glad he's back safe and sound.

I would say to the member opposite these are fundamentally different things that he's talking about, the situation in Saskatchewan versus Manitoba. The situation in Manitoba is a licensing agreement with Teranet that over the 30-year life of the agreement will be worth hundreds of millions of dollars. It means that there will be investment up front in a new IT system that taxpayers won't be on the hook for that will be assumed by Teranet. It means price guarantees on a go-forward basis. It means a one-time payment of \$75 million but also a payment every year of royalties so that Manitobans can continue to get the benefit of the property registry.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, excuses, excuses.

If Saskatchewan's property registry, now called Information Services Corporation, was worth more because Saskatchewan had built it up and positioned it to become worth more, then the question is, why did Manitoba not follow Saskatchewan's lead and build an enterprise which was worth more, be selling off a major part of the company in an open and transparent way as they did in Saskatchewan? This would have been the responsible and accountable way to ensure a strong, made-in-Manitoba company

provided forward-thinking products and services for Manitobans.

Why didn't the NDP government do this?

Ms. Howard: All the documents surrounding the Teranet deal are online, available for the member to take a look at, but these are fundamentally different deals. There are different things that are in question. In Saskatchewan, what he's talking about is a much larger enterprise.

We believe in Manitoba that this was a good deal for Manitobans. It meant that there was private investment. It meant that those jobs stayed and those people still get their pensions and benefits. It meant no loss of jobs and then a guaranteed price, and it also meant that offices would stay open. From every perspective, that's a good deal for Manitobans.

But we also enlisted the help of Deloitte to take a look at the deal, and their conclusion was that the purchase price, as well as the royalty-sharing agreement that is in place, was within the expected range and was a reasonable deal for Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, while Manitoba sold its property registry—on the sly, I should say—to a company outside of Manitoba, Saskatchewan was open to all about building a made-in-Saskatchewan business out of its property registry. Indeed, about 35 per cent of the registry is now owned specifically by residents of Saskatchewan. Indeed, Information Services Corporation, as the company is now known, has recently been named one of the top employers in Saskatchewan.

Why did the NDP quietly sell off Manitoba's property registry to an Ontario company for a low price instead of building a made-in-Manitoba business which would have become a leader in innovation and employment?

Ms. Howard: As I said, all the information is available online. The member only has to google it and go and find it. This has been done transparently and it's been done openly.

This arrangement with Teranet Manitoba gives us ongoing money. Every year we will receive money from that deal. That is different from other deals that have been done. That means that not only do those jobs stay in Manitoba, this will be a business in Manitoba. Those jobs will be in Manitoba. Those people who have those jobs will continue to have access to their pensions, something that people who were at MTS had to go to court to

fight for. That is guaranteed. They will also have offices that will remain open so that they can go and get those jobs.

By every measure, this is a good deal for Manitobans, and that's been borne out by an independent look at it by the people at Deloitte.

American Clean Power Plan Manitoba Hydro Power Sales

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, just last week we debated a motion by the Conservatives to kill thousands of jobs by stopping hydro development in Manitoba.

Well, today the Obama administration announced the Clean Power Plan, including a proposal that American energy sector must cut carbon emissions by 30 per cent of 2005 levels by 2030.

Given Manitoba has signed \$9 billion worth of power sales to the United States since 2010, could the Minister responsible for Hydro please update the House on what this development will mean for hydro power sales to the United States?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, indeed, Mr. Speaker, this is very good news for Manitobans. It's very good news for Manitoba Hydro. And it's an absolutely—it's a golden opportunity that we must—that we must—take advantage of.

This side of the House has developed a plan to make sure we take advantage of this opportunity on behalf of Manitobans. We could keep our rates low. We could keep Manitobans working in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we can count on the market. We can count on our partners in this—in the United States of America to be at the table with us to buy our clean power.

The only way we could mess this up, Mr. Speaker, is by adopting the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, who says we shouldn't be selling into the market, we shouldn't be exporting, we should slam on the brakes with northern generation stations and transmission lines.

Mr. Speaker, that's definitely a view from the past, and it's a view from the Dark Ages.

Zebra Mussel Infestation Mitigation Strategy

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, by all reports, the closure of the four harbours in Lake

Winnipeg to deal with the zebra mussel infestation suggests there is room for cautious optimism.

Unfortunately, these efforts are undermined by the lack of a long-term mitigation strategy.

Can the minister identify any areas outside of the four harbours in which the presence of zebra mussels have been confirmed?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have been participating and co-operating with the treatment. I want to also, though, at this time, remind all Manitobans that there's only one guarantee, and that is if nothing was done.

We know it's an uphill battle. We know that this is about a fighting chance, and so that's what the effort is concentrated on now, is to make sure that the harbours where we do have some information about the prevalence of zebra mussels are treated according to the best science that is available.

In the meantime, as I advised the House, I think, two weeks ago, we are working on a longer term strategy, both in terms of awareness and surveillance.

Decontamination Units

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, the minister uses terms like battles, and any winning battle has to have a good strategy. That has to include decontamination through high-pressure, extremely hot water. Only two units are currently available for the four harbours. Even the minister's colleague for Fort Garry-Riverview can deduce that they're short two units.

Why is this minister threatening the potential long-term success of closing the harbours by refusing to acquire two additional decontamination units so that when the curtains go up at the four harbours, a unit is available and stationed at each individual harbour?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if this is a time for rhetoric like this.

This is a difficult situation. The implications can be long-term. There's a long tail, Mr. Speaker, if this is not done according to the best science, and the best science is what calls the shots on this.

We'll ensure that the surveillance is increased. And, indeed, we are working on options now to ensure that we move beyond two decontamination units, which, by the way, were the first-last spring

when they came into service they were the first of their kind in Canada.

But we will build on Manitoba's reputation to deal with zebra mussels. But, as well, we have been enhancing staffing, Mr. Speaker, and we're also looking at increasing awareness because we have to engage, as full partners, all boaters in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

* (14:20)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It is time for members' statements.

New Prime Minister of India: Narendra Modi

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): This year the world's largest democracy had an amazing election that resulted in a new leader who stands for India's national character and culture. I want to congratulate newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who won by a massive landslide. Close to 550 million citizens of India voted, rising above caste lines and religious groups to give this strong mandate to Prime Minister Modi.

Narendra Modi, an intellectual and visionary leader of India, was born in a middle-class family in Gujarat, India. As prime minister, he plans to move more of those in poverty in the middle class by investing infrastructure and ensuring that all the people would have an access to food, electricity, roads, clean water and education.

When Modi was a-served as the chief minister in Gujarat, he led them into new economic heights with his commitment to develop economy with innovative business reforms. Mr. Speaker, myself and Manitoba's Premier (Mr. Selinger) had the privilege of meeting him on our trade mission in 2013.

This 2014 election was peaceful and smooth. Following the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, the newly elected prime minister affirmed honesty and his conviction to serving people. This new democratic revolution was obvious with a record voter turnover of 66.5 per cent of India's 1.3 billion people-and 890 voters.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has enjoyed fruitful partnership with India over these years, and we share the same values of freedom, democracy, human rights and rule of law. We hope to continue developing better and stronger trade relations with

that nation in many different ways and different industries.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all the members of this House to join me in congratulating Mr. Narendra Modi once again on his leadership in building new India. Bravo, Mr. Narendra Modi.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Pharmacists 2014

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): We are so fortunate in Manitoba to have so many dedicated pharmacists. Pharmacists play an important role as vital components of medical teams in supporting the health and well-being of our communities and are experts at determining and meeting the medication needs of patients.

In Manitoba, like elsewhere in Canada, our communities have benefited immensely from the broadening range of health services pharmacists are able to provide as their scope of practice continues to expand. Pharmacists in our province have become increasingly active partners in health care, providing med checks, prescribing medications, renewing, refilling and extending prescriptions, administering vaccines and educating the public. These enhanced practices are important steps in recognizing the value we place in pharmacists here in Manitoba.

Manitobans can access pharmacists in situations where a physician, nurse, nurse practitioner or physician assistant is not available, but our PC caucus has heard from many pharmacists in the last number of months who are very concerned that they are not receiving the recognition and support from this NDP government to advance their scope of practice and continue in offering enhanced services.

Pharmacists who have contacted us have indicated that Manitobans are entitled to receive the same level of insured health services, regardless of which health professional provides that service. These pharmacists are very concerned that without enhanced government support, Manitobans may be put in the position of having to pay for services provided by pharmacists.

I ask my colleagues today in the Legislature to join me in thanking our pharmacists for their ongoing commitment and leadership in providing health care in our communities and for our families every day. I encourage all members to more comprehensively recognize and support pharmacists

as they adopt a greater role in supporting the health and well-being of Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Restoration of Sherbrook Pool

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, many of us were shocked and saddened when the Sherbrook Pool was suddenly closed due to safety issues in November of 2012. In operation since 1931, Sherbrook Pool has served as a crucial recreational facility for those of us who live in the heart of Winnipeg, as well as those who travel from across the city for the pool's easy accessibility and warmer waters.

Great news arrived last month, however, when community and government leaders came together to announce a \$4-million plan to reopen the Sherbrook Pool. I want to especially thank my colleague the honourable Minister for Children and Youth Opportunities for the crucial role that he played in this accomplishment.

Reopening the Sherbrook Pool is especially important for people living with arthritis, multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia or who are rehabilitating from orthopedic surgery. The pool also offered different religious groups and lower-income families an appropriate and affordable place to swim and exercise.

Getting the plan in place to reopen the pool has been no easy task. Since 1992, though, the Friends of Sherbrook Pool community group has been a powerful advocate for the pool, and they sprang into action once again as soon as the pool closure was announced. Their commitment to Sherbrook Pool signals just how important it is to thousands of people across the city. Many other supportive organizations joined their efforts, including former Olympic athletes, and working together these groups also found temporary alternatives for some of the Sherbrook Pool's regular users.

All of the advocacy has paid off. City hall is now working to reopen the pool. Their contribution of over \$1 million combined with the \$1 million from the Kinsmen Club and \$1.2 million provided by the provincial government means the pool is on track to reopen in January of 2016.

Mr. Speaker, the pool has been such a fixture in the lives of so many that it's no surprise it has strong, community-driven voices fighting for its survival.

Thank you to all the advocates who successfully fought for the Sherbrook Pool. Our community has again showed its strength in working together for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

Pelly's Lake Watershed Management Project

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, this past Friday I attended the Pelly's Lake Watershed Management Project sod-turning ceremony just east of Holland, Manitoba. The Pelly's Lake Watershed Management Project, which has been led by the La Salle Redboine Conservation District, consists of the construction and operation of two water retention structures which are designed to retain spring runoff, heavy rains during the summer and then release the water in a controlled manner. The total storage capacity of the project will be approximately 1,200 acre feet. The released water will be a late season recharge on the Boyne River for downstream reservoirs including Stephenfield Lake.

We congratulate the six individual landowners involved in this project. They will retain ownership of their land, but see the value of the project and will thereby allow the use of their land for this water retention project. Also, congratulations to the La Salle Redboine Conservation District board of directors and Justin Reid, district manager, for their persistence and their perseverance in making this project finally come to fruition.

The cost of the project is \$500,000 and the La Salle Redboine Conservation District has taken on many partners to fulfill this project, including the RM of Victoria, Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, International Institute for Sustainable Development, technical assistance only from Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship. Financial support for this project is provided by the Government of Canada through the federal Department of the Environment and the Lake Winnipeg Foundation.

It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon on Friday as we stood on the knoll overlooking the Pelly's Lake valley. We encourage all members to visit this site next spring to observe a true, locally driven water management project. It is our hope that this is the first of many such projects throughout Manitoba. Thank you.

Manitoba Access Awareness Week

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, from June 1st to 7th, Manitobans will be raising awareness about the barriers people with disabilities face through Manitoba Access Awareness Week.

Each year during Manitoba Access Awareness Week, public events are held to draw attention to this important issue and promote the removal of barriers. Among the activities taking place this year are free disability awareness training classes, a lunch-and-learn with the Independent Living Resource Centre and a kickoff event featuring Paralympian Dennis Thiessen.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we foster a deep conversation about how we can improve access for people with disabilities. By removing obstacles, we can make a big impact on people's lives.

This spring I witnessed first-hand how lives are changed when I met the mother of a young woman at one of our high schools. She's long been working with school officials to ensure that her daughter, who uses a wheelchair, is able to enjoy all the same activities as her peers. In that particular school, there's an outdoor classroom where students learn and often spend lunch hour. Unfortunately, the courtyard was built long ago without wheelchair access. By working with the school, they were able to have a ramp installed so this young woman can now join her classmates. She is continuing to work with the school to find creative ways for her daughter to have increased participation in other activities like dance class and phys. ed.

Mr. Speaker, this young woman has spent much of her life facing isolation and exclusion, but as each barrier is removed, all of that is transformed into opportunity and growth. By rethinking the way we construct buildings and creatively designing programs that allow everyone to participate, we change lives and open up new possibilities.

This week, I hope that we can all learn something about the challenges facing Manitobans with disabilities and through this, foster a culture of belonging and inclusion for all.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader):

On House business, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Private Bills will meet on Wednesday, June 4, 2014, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act; Bill 208, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Support our Troops Licence Plates); Bill 209, The Lymphedema Awareness Day Act; and Bill 214, The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Private Bills will meet on Wednesday, June the 4th, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act; Bill 208, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Support our Troops Licence Plates); Bill 209, The Lymphedema Awareness Day Act; and Bill 214, The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act.

Mr. Swan: On further House business, could you then proceed to deal with the condolence motion for Reg Alcock?

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Reginald Bygott Alcock

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I move, seconded by the member from River Heights, that this House convey to the family of the late Reginald Alcock, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

Ms. Oswald: It is my honour today—not without deep sadness, however—that I rise to acknowledge a great Manitoban, a man who served his province and his country with passion and integrity, and a man who could always be counted on to be a servant for Manitobans, and that is Mr. Reg Alcock. On October 14th, 2011, Mr. Alcock passed away at the age of 63. Far too soon, Mr. Speaker. I extend, once again, my profound sympathy to his family and to his many, many friends.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Alcock was the holder of a master's in public administration from Harvard University, and he began his career as a senior administrator at both the Children's Home of Winnipeg and the Seven Oaks Centre for Youth. He also served as a director of Manitoba's Child and Family Services. And these are not small points, indeed, in that Mr. Alcock was an incredible intellect and certainly had the credentials to show for that, and his passion, of course, was to dedicate that academic excellence in partnership with what came to be known as his very big heart. A heart, as it turned out, that failed him in the end, but a very big heart, and his wish to dedicate himself to young people who may, in fact, have not had all of life's advantages before them and, in fact, may have been riddled with disadvantages.

He wanted to use his intellect and his ability to get things done to help those in our community that faced the greatest challenges in order to assist them in defeating those challenges and to becoming the best that they could possibly be. And I think that it's worthy to note, Mr. Speaker, that somebody with that incredible talent also made the personal choice, when many other paths would have been open before him, to—from the very, very beginning—choose to serve others, perhaps those who needed his help the most, and that is something that I know his family is very proud of and, indeed, something about which all Manitobans should be proud.

Mr. Alcock was first elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly in Manitoba for Osborne on April 26, 1988, when the Manitoba Liberal Party formed the official opposition under the leadership of Ms. Carstairs. He very quickly made his mark as an advocate of parliamentary reform.

Mr. Alcock also had a great passion for technology and the efficiencies that it creates. He was ahead of his time, Mr. Speaker. In 1994, Mr. Alcock was the first MP to electronically co-ordinate his parliamentary office, from his riding, instead of relying of permanent staff in Ottawa. And, in 1999, he became the first Canadian MP to launch an official website. Seems old news to us now, but back then, by all means, he was a leader among parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker, there are many stories that one can tell about Mr. Alcock that speak to his deep character, but there's one in particular that comes to mind, that really illustrates this point, I think, incredibly well. In the summer of 1997, when the

Chrétien government called a federal election, Mr. Alcock and, indeed, other Manitoba Liberals, requested a delay until the flooding was under control. But, indeed, when the Prime Minister, in fact, called the election anyway, Mr. Alcock transformed his—what would have been his campaign office into a volunteer relief centre. And he was personally involved in fighting the flood, doing everything from providing refreshments to those that were fighting the flood, and co-ordination of volunteers, to the heavy lifting, literally, of sandbagging. Not one sandbag, Mr. Speaker, but several. And, he did not engage, in fact, in actively campaigning during that first period of the election. He was, nonetheless, re-elected by a very significant margin. And while that story says a lot about who he was as a person, in terms of being connected to his community and what they were caring about most, and being a representative of south Winnipeg, it would have been of imminent concern. I would have to say it also says something about the electorate itself, in that they made their decision not based on someone who had run an ardent and passionate campaign, but someone that had gone out to help those people that he directly represented.

In 2004, he, Mr. Alcock, announced a new appointment process for Crown corporation executives that ensured CEOs were hired through merit-based appointment processes. This, of course, was relevant to the time; there were some challenges and some issues going on across Canada at that time. And, having clear and transparent processes, and an articulation of how to implement those processes, became very, very important and, certainly, Mr. Alcock was called upon, based on the wealth of his experience, his academic chops and his ability to focus and get things done, to ensure that these kinds of amendments took place.

In '05, Mr. Speaker, he introduced policy of management control for government agencies, eventually establishing a chief audit executive for each government department and agency. And he worked very hard to ensure that government was even more accountable and ensured that public dollars were being well spent.

Through 2005, Mr. Alcock brought forward what seems to me to be an astonishing 158 separate reforms for the public service, and promised that 80 more were to follow.

As an MP, Mr. Alcock was instrumental in securing federal funding for major projects in

Manitoba, for example, the Kenaston underpass. For somebody that lives in the south end of the city, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this investment was hugely important to enable this end of the city to flow as it should.

He was also a very important driver in ensuring that there were funds available for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, for the U of M Smartpark and for the floodway expansion. All of these are legacy items, indeed, Mr. Speaker. And, I recall seeing in the Winnipeg Free Press, Ms. Gail Asper saying, I will never forget walking into his office and seeing that he had a collection of charters of rights on the wall from around the world. And, as we spoke, she said, of the museum for human rights, he said he had been a student of charters and totally understood why we needed this museum.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, I got to know Mr. Alcock very shortly after being elected to my post as MLA for Seine River in 2003. And although there are times—many times, as you have borne witness to on so many days—where partisan politics can get in the way of supporting one another when you aren't necessarily within the boundaries of the same political party, it was never my experience that Mr. Alcock conducted himself in that way.

He was a gentleman in the true sense of the word, and he wanted to help. And he was one phone call away, was my experience, if there was something complicated in parliamentary procedure or in processes at the federal level, whether it was with Treasury Board or otherwise, and he was always very willing to give sage advice about how to move forward.

We appeared at a number of events together, Mr. Speaker, and had occasion to have our picture taken. And I—Mr. Alcock was really the single parliamentarian that I know that made me feel petite. This is no small task, but I did always enjoy those moments because he was a giant among men literally and figuratively.

When he left office, of course, he continued his commitment to serve Canada and to serve Manitoba and was doing lots of work in terms of public policy and board governance. And he met, I'm pretty sure, with everyone in Manitoba, I'm—give or take a few thousand, but he met with nearly everybody in Manitoba to share his views and also to hear views

about the best possible construct for boards and their governance.

We met several times, Mr. Speaker, because he felt health care and its boards were, as he would put it, an interesting case. He reviewed the legislation concerning regional health authorities and had lots of sage advice to give. And we discussed his ideas and have worked over time to implement some of his ideas concerning transparency and accountability. And I think that all Manitobans are better off as a result of the work that he was committed to—not in elected office, but because he cared so deeply about his province.

When we would meet, we oftentimes met for lunch. That was the best time for him, and he was excellent lunch company. He was very gallant and gentlemanly, and before we got down to the business of discussing weighty matters of board governance and transparency and accountability, he would speak about his family, after, of course, inquiring after mine—a gentleman all the way to the end.

And he spoke lovingly and proudly of his wife, Karen, and her achievements. She and I—she might not even know this—were at university at the same time. And she was somebody that was to be admired, even back in those days—not that long ago, Mr. Speaker—and he was so proud of her and her achievements. He also, of course, spoke lovingly and glowingly and unashamedly proudly of his children, Sarah, Matthew and Christina, and he spoke also of his sisters, Joan and Beverley.

And we spoke about those kinds of things that have absolutely zero to do with politics or zero to do with life in the Legislature, just about the human things that Manitobans and south Winnipeggers care about and deal with. And he was, I would say, in the end, Mr. Speaker, a friend.

During the last election, all of us, you know, as we do, fought very hard to be successful. And while, you know, perhaps not necessarily a popular position within one's own party, he reached out to me at what was one of the more challenging periods of my life—in electoral life, that is—and offered the most caring and the most encouraging words at perhaps the most difficult time. I remember that conversation, Mr. Speaker, word for word, and I will cherish it for years and years ahead.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I say to Mr. Alcock's family that which they know already: We lost a great Manitoban. We lost a great Manitoban far too soon.

But his legacy will live on in the physical manifestations of those projects, but perhaps, most importantly, in his wife, in his children, in his sisters and all that he dedicated himself to as a great, great Manitoban.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the condolence motion for Reg Alcock. He was a dear friend and I still miss him every day.

Reg was a dynamic force, a powerhouse and he achieved a great deal, and yet he cared very deeply for people and for their well-being.

Going back to the 1970s, Reg was very involved in the Manitoba Liberal Party. In the mid-'70s he often traveled with Charles Huband and helped Charles find candidates throughout the province and in the organization leading up to the 1977 provincial election. Reg told me later and—based in part on his experience in the 1970s, and I should add this was after I'd become the provincial Liberal leader—that he'd come to the conclusion watching Charlie Huband and others that the position of Manitoba Liberal leader was probably one of the most difficult of any job in the province. Maybe good he didn't tell me that before I became leader.

Reg was very concerned about children and about young people. He was involved with the Seven Oaks Centre for Youth and in a variety of ways with young people. From 1983 to 1985 he became the director of Winnipeg's Child and Family Services. He cared for kids and he led the effort to rewrite the province's legislation to protect children. Manitoba, as a result, became the first province in Canada to introduce formal protocols to deal with instances of the sexual abuse of children. He also led the way in trying to modernize the information system used by Child and Family Services.

In 1988 he entered provincial politics. He was elected the MLA for Osborne and he served in the official opposition with Sharon Carstairs and many other Liberals. He was House leader and Finance critic, very good at understanding procedure in the House and how things operate and very helpful, particularly at that time of a minority government.

It was a frenetic time and particularly and interesting time to be a House leader, and, of course, there were many memorable moments, including the consideration of the Meech Lake Accord and, of

course, the time that Reg's chair in the Legislature gave way under him, and that is still remembered.

In 1993 Reg moved to federal politics, successfully winning the nomination in Winnipeg South in a close contest with Linda Asper. I was also running in that election in Portage-Interlake. It was my first time running and my team was new. And Reg and his wife, Karen, were particularly helpful during this time, and Reg and I were both elected.

For four years we served together. It was an exciting time. Reg helped me in the initial stages of developing a strategy for the information highway after I'd been fortunate enough to be able to get a mention of the plan to implement a information highway strategy in Canada. And shortly after the Throne Speech, we had the information highway advisory council. We were off and running, and Reg attended some of the meetings.

Reg himself was very keen to use technology, and he soon had a video link between his office in Ottawa and his office in Winnipeg South. And he used this regularly to help constituents while he was in Ottawa and to be able to get really effective co-ordination between all his staff. Other members of Parliament watched closely what Reg with was doing and began to copy his efforts, and Reg also moved quickly to develop and use a web page.

*(14:50)

He was an incredibly hard worker. He would often be up early, sometimes as early as 4 or 5 in the morning, at the gym, getting some exercise and getting ready for the day. He was indefatigable in his efforts on behalf of people in his riding, helping people in a very broad range of issues, from immigration to you name it. He was there for people.

In 1995, he was appointed to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and throughout the four years we were in Ottawa, we met regularly in our Manitoba caucus, our western caucus, and our national caucus, sharing ideas and working together to promote the interests of Manitoba. Reg had an interest in economic development. In 1996-97, when I was responsible for Western Economic Diversification, we worked on some projects together, including we found some money for the University of Manitoba Smartpark but, in fact, it was not until Reg himself was able to get additional funding later on that the Smartpark was actually able to begin formal development.

In 1997, the spring election came when Manitoba was facing dealing with the flood of the century. We wanted the election delayed, but it was not to be. Reg converted his campaign office into a flood-fighting office, joined together with people in the community, including MLAs like Marcel Laurendeau, and rallied people to help with 'fighting' the flood, had an answering service; and, whenever there was people in need, whether it was sandbagging or with other issues, Reg was there, helping to co-ordinate things. And, of course, though this was during the election, because of his efforts in fighting the flood, I think, in part as well as his service to people in Winnipeg South, people rallied to support him and he was re-elected.

In 1998 Reg brought forward a private member's bill to overturn Louis Riel's conviction for high treason and to recognize him as a father of Confederation. Throughout his career, he was a strong supporter of the Metis people and he worked very hard on their behalf.

In 1998, when I ran for the leadership of the Manitoba Liberal Party, and during my efforts as leader, Reg was an ongoing source of support and of advice. One of the issues in which we worked together was the Kenaston underpass. Funding had been delayed for a long time, but, when Reg became the minister responsible for the Treasury Board, one of the first things he did was to make sure it happened, and he did that very effectively.

Today, a portion of Kenaston has been named the Honourable Reg Alcock Way, a fitting tribute to the successful effort that Reg played such an important part in.

Another issue where we worked together was the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Though significant initial funding had been allocated when Jean Chrétien was Prime Minister, the second and really critical piece of federal funding reflected the big effort that Reg Alcock made when he was minister of the Treasury Board, and I believe it is significantly due to this effort that the Canadian Museum for Human Rights effort continued to grow and to build. This year, Reg would be very pleased to know that the museum will open in September, and he would be one of its strongest boosters.

For all the time Reg was a member of Parliament, he had a copy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms hanging in his office. Indeed, in time, it was not just one copy, but copies from the

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and copies from other countries.

Reg fought time and again for the rights and freedoms of individuals in his constituency and for those across Manitoba and, indeed, throughout Canada. He played a very important role as well in the establishment of the public health effort at the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health. He worked with many in Winnipeg and with other members of Parliament to ensure that the centre and its major focus on public health were in Winnipeg and that Winnipeg became Canada's centre for public health and played a major role in addressing epidemics like that of SARS and the H1N1 flu epidemic and, of course, helping not only in Canada but helping with infectious disease issues around the world.

Indeed, it is interesting that the building which is housed by the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health, that that building was at the forefront in developing the type of structure that would allow people to work safely with very dangerous viruses like Ebola virus, and, as a result of the design that went into the building in Winnipeg, the architects who were involved became involved in helping to design and build structures like that around the world.

From December 2003 to early 2006, Reg was the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and for Manitoba, as well as the president of the Treasury Board. Reg was in his element on the Treasury Board. As he told me at the time and told many others, it was his dream job. Accountability was really, really important to Reg, as was governance, and here he was, right at the centre of governance in Ottawa.

He moved quickly to bring in a new approach to appointing Crown corporation executives and a new approach to management control for government agencies. He established a chief audit executive for each government department and agency, and, in totalling the just over two years he was president of the Treasury Board, he brought forward more than 150 separate reforms to the public service. He also, as president of the Treasury Board, played a significant role in making sure the funding was there for the expansion of the floodway. Reg had battled many floods over his time in Ottawa. He saw the damage that they did to people, particularly in the south end of Winnipeg, and this was something which was dear to his heart.

In the election that was called November 29th, 2005, and held on January 23rd, Reg played an important role in recruiting and supporting Liberal candidates throughout our province. His efforts were important in the election of Tina Keeper in Churchill, but I think he helped others so much that he was not as active in his own constituency and sadly he lost in the 2006 election.

After the election, Reg had more time with his family and his children, with his incredible wife, Karen, with his three kids, Sarah, Matthew and Christina, more time at the lake, but he didn't just retire. He stayed active and involved in many other areas. He was teaching at the University of Manitoba. He was appointed to the faculty as an executive in residence at the I.H. Asper School of Business. He was also appointed as a research affiliate with the research network at the Kennedy school of governance in Harvard University. This had followed a long-standing association that Reg had had with Harvard. During the time that I knew him, he'd visited Harvard from time to time and returned from Harvard periodically with new ideas. In fact, in all the other things that he did, he completed a master's in public administration from Harvard, and after 2006, he continued making important contributions to governance issues in many, many areas, including the WRHA.

In 2007, Reg was very helpful on the provincial campaign of Dr. Craig Hildahl, a close friend running in Fort Garry. Throughout his career, Reg enjoyed working with young people. With his technologically savvy approaches and engaging manner, he drew people to him, and there were many whose interests in politics were fostered because of their association with Reg. Indeed, often it was Reg who had found a promising person and made the initial suggestion that they consider getting involved politically.

*(15:00)

For about the last decade of his life, Reg wrestled with diabetes. And it's because of Reg and others who've developed diabetes that I fought so hard for a better approach to address the diabetes epidemic in Manitoba. Hopefully, in remembrance of Reg Alcock, there will come a renewed effort in this regard.

I think it's important to pay a particular compliment to Karen Taraska-Alcock who worked very closely with Reg, who, when Reg was in Ottawa, did a lot of the effort in raising the kids. But

Reg was always there for them. He had video links among other things, but he was also there a lot of time in person. But Karen had her own company, her own employment, and she managed to look after things in a marvellous way that kept the family together, that has resulted in three wonderful kids being raised and doing well.

For me, I have lost an amazing friend, a man who's contributed so much to our province, and indeed many others have lost an important and significant friend as well.

Naomi and I extend our condolences to Karen, to Sarah, to Matthew and Christina, and to their extended family and to all the friends—and there are many of them—of Reg Alcock. Thank you.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): It's my honour to get up and say a few words today about the life and the legacy of Reg Alcock.

I want to thank the previous two speakers, the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) and for—who moved the motion, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who seconded. I want to thank them for their personal reflections on Reg Alcock's life as people who knew him personally and worked with him. I didn't have the honour of knowing him personally or working with him, but certainly knew of his work and knew of his stature and his importance to Manitoba politics, but also to Canadian politics.

I speak, of course, today as the MLA for Fort Rouge, and we shared some parts of the constituency. The constituency of Osborne has undergone many transformations through various boundary changes. Fort Rouge, being in the middle of the city, always gets a kind of compressed and changed after everybody else's boundaries are redrawn. But I know—I'm sure that he, as I did, enjoy representing this area of the city that is diverse, that is vibrant, that is made up of people passionately involved in their community. And from everything I've heard today and everything that I know about the man, he was also someone who was passionately committed to and involved in his community.

I also want to say a word—as I've listened to the previous two speakers talk about his experience both as a chair of Treasury Board, federally, but also as a House leader, provincially—few of us, when we get elected, get—which I think is really an honour but also a unique experience of serving in positions where it is less about how we interact with the public

and more about how we interact with our own colleagues.

And certainly the position of House leader or whip and the position of chair of Treasury Board really comes down to working with one's colleagues, working sometimes with the opposition and helping define what the priorities are, and sometimes that means difficult conversations with people who are on your team. It means constant juggling of priorities, knowing that there are many, many, many good things and good ideas that you want to be able to fund and find the time to do, but that you need to, if you're going to be effective, prioritize and make sure that you are proceeding in an orderly way. And sometimes that takes firmness, but it always takes fairness. And hearing the member for River Heights talk about Reg's passion for that role, I think that's inspiring because it's not everybody that brings that kind of passion to the role of Treasury Board, to making sure that government is more effective, that—to government is doing the things that it does as effectively and efficiently as possible.

I also want to speak for a moment about his career post-politics. And I had the experience of having a woman who worked with my deputy who was pursuing her MBA at the Asper school, and while I was chatting with her one day about how it was going and how were her classes, and she was talking to me about, oh, you know, I have this prof, and he's really interesting because he, you know, talks about the theory, but he also talks about reality, and I really find him engaging. And so, when I asked her, you know, who this was, she told me it was Reginald Alcock, which I didn't immediately put two and two together because I'd never heard him referred to as Reginald before in my life. But it became clear to me that he was going on to inspire young people, to inspire students in that MBA program to see the value in public service and also see it as a way to transform their communities and to make life a little bit more fair and a little bit better for the people that their neighbors and their family and their friends. And so he was taking his real-life lived experience, often in the trenches of politics, adding that to his academic pursuits and qualifications and using that to inform and inspire whole new generations of people who hopefully will go on to use their talents also in the service of the public.

I've heard today, of course, about the work that he did helping colleagues and others in those election battles, sometimes perhaps to his own detriment. I remember that reflection after his loss, his own

reflection that perhaps he spent more time helping some other people get elected and—than in his backyard. But I don't think he regretted spending that time helping other people get elected.

Everything I've heard about him was that he was generous in spirit, that he was generous with his talent and his wisdom. And any of us who have ran in an election appreciate tremendously those people who come from other places to help us out, to give of their time to help us win those elections. And even when we lose, I think even then more we value the people who took time out of fighting their own elections to come and help us out, sometimes just to be an ear, to give us advice, to encourage us.

Finally, of course, I want to extend my own condolences to his family, his children, his wife, all the people who his life touched. I think on that day that we all heard of his very tragic and very sudden passing, I think probably most of us had that moment reflecting about how short and uncertain sometimes life is. And I think all of us who also have loved ones had a moment's thought about how horrible it would be to be in that situation where you see someone in the morning and you don't know that that's the last time perhaps that you'll see them. And so every death, of course, creates grief, but I think sometimes those that come suddenly are even the more tragic because we really have no time to prepare to say good bye.

And my wishes for his family is that they're comforted by the fact the he left a tremendous legacy of public service, that this province is a better place because he lived, that this country is a better place because he lived. And I hope that they know that all of us here appreciated his life and his contributions and that there is a whole community around them that holds them in their hearts and their prayers as they deal with life without the father, the husband, the friend, the confidant.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll sit and I am eager to hear other people's reflections on Mr. Alcock's life and legacy.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I, too, would like to add a few words of condolence to the family of Reg Alcock, to his wife, Karen, and his three children, Sarah, Matthew and Christina, and to say to them how—and we probably will hear more words today, but we've heard many words on the record already today that have indicated who Reg Alcock was and how people have had their lives touched in

them in some ways by his presence here on this earth.

And, you know, we look at a man of—63 years old and say that's far too young to leave, to die, that's far too young. And for those of us that have been around as long or maybe a little bit longer than Reg Alcock, we recognize and realize that 63 years is not old in today's standards and that the one thing we can say is that he did live a jam-packed full life, life to the fullest in his years that he was here on this earth and has had an impact on many, many from different backgrounds and different parts of the country, parts of our city and parts of our province. He has truly left an impact and left a legacy.

*(15:10)

Mr. Speaker, he began his political career and political organization in the '70s, as we heard the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) indicate in his comments, and was always very, very active in the Liberal Party from his days in the early '70s until the age of 63. And he did have, obviously, an impact on the lives of young people that he encouraged to get involved and in candidates that were recruited and selected to run under the Liberal banner. He was truly committed and dedicated to the Liberal Party and to Liberal values that he espoused and that he was prepared to work hard to make sure that others understood who he was and what the Liberal Party was all about.

Mr. Speaker, he was first elected in 1988. And I had the honour to serve with him in—here in the Legislature from 1988 until he left in 1993. He sat just in the front rows on the opposition side of the House here. And I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party did allude to the day when we heard this major crash in the Legislature and looked over and there was Reg Alcock on the floor and the chair that he was sitting in had broken, and it was a bit—there was a bit levity around the place and was probably the brunt of a lot of jokes in the years to come. But I remember that day distinctly, and it was something that we will all remember, very lovingly, about Reg Alcock, by the way. And he took it in stride, as did we all.

Mr. Speaker, as he served in the Legislature, he was, as has been said, he was the party's House leader. He was the critic for Finance, critic for child welfare, crisis centres, Family Services and Housing and a wide variety of different talents that you have to have in order to be able to do your job effectively in all of those different areas.

And I—when I look to his background and his work experience before he came to the Legislature, it was more on the social services side of the community where he worked with youth and with children and with troubled children. And that is very honourable in many, many ways.

He sat on the board of the Child and Family Services in the city of Winnipeg. And so we know that he had a real interest and a special interest in helping to provide a hand up to some of those children that needed the kind of support that he was able to provide in the organizations that he worked in.

He went on to, you know, to take a role in being House leader. And I know that the member from Fort Rouge indicated that it is—it's a role of—a role where you have to bring people together, your colleagues, and serve and support your party in the—in your role as the House leader.

But when he went on to federal politics in 2003, when he was elected there, he was appointed to the Cabinet as president of the Treasury Board, secretary of state responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and took on the role of regional minister for Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's rare that you find someone that was as well-rounded as Reg Alcock who understood the social side of life and government and also understood the financial side. And I think we all look at ourselves and we recognize and realize what our strengths and our weaknesses are.

And, if I was to look at myself, I would say that my strengths would be on the social side of government. And it's the people side and those issues that I have some strength and some understanding. But I would say that I would not necessarily make the best Minister of Finance or the best Finance critic because that's not one of my strengths. And I recognize that in myself. And I try to take full advantage of the strengths and the skills that I do have to do my job to the very best of my ability.

But you look at someone like Reg Alcock who had that strength and that understanding on the social side and on the financial side, and that's a rare quality, and it's a great balance to have. And it's something that I think we all need to strive for, but we also do recognize that we're not always all—we don't always all have all of those attributes. So, Mr. Speaker, he was a great, strong voice for Manitoba around the Cabinet table at the federal level, and I

know that we received some good support from the federal government as a result of his time in that role.

Mr. Speaker, life doesn't end after politics, and I know there are many that have been here for a short time and for a long time, and Reg is one prime example, where he continued to give to the community after he left politics. And, you know, sometimes people walk away after defeat and just sort of go into isolation and aren't a part of the larger community anymore. But Reg Alcock was not like that. He was one of those who took on additional tasks and continued to work on behalf of the community.

And, Mr. Speaker, after 2006, when he was defeated, he was appointed as an executive-in-residence at the I.H. Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba and later served as the associate dean from 2008 to 2009. He was also a major proponent and an advocate for the human rights museum. I think he was very instrumental in moving that initiative forward. And, as a result, we're seeing what we see today. And I'm sure that he would have loved to have been here to see the official opening that will take place this September, to see his dream and the hard work that he did come to fruition. And we wish he could be here to celebrate, and I'm sure he will be here in spirit to celebrate that this September.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at Reg's professional life, we look at him starting off working with children and supporting children to going on to many, many other things, things he can be—could be very proud of and things that we should all remember him for.

But as he ended his life on this Earth, he went back to teaching children, teaching our youth. So he started off on that path, and he ended his life on the very same path. And he went through all kinds of different experiences and provided all kinds of things that we should be proud of here in Manitoba and he should be proud of and that his family, his wife Karen and his three children, should be very proud of his accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, and I know he will be greatly missed, but they will always be able to remember and cherish. I always say, it's the good memories that we cherish, and once we get over the grieving process, as we lose anyone that we really care about, it's those positive memories that we cherish and that we need to hold on to, to keep us moving forward. And I know that they will cherish and remember Reg

Alcock for the great man and the great contributions that he made to our province and to our country.

So my condolences to Reg's family and to his extended family and to all the friends and acquaintances that he had, for a life well lived and for contributions that will never be forgotten.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to put a few words on the record. I had the opportunity to work closely with Reg Alcock, and it goes back, of course, to a rather different point in time in this Legislature, 1988 to 1990. First of all, we had a minority government, which is actually fairly rare in Manitoba, and it certainly was an interesting dynamic. Certainly, the party's standings had changed.

* (15:20)

It was an interesting time, as well, for those of us that survived the election because we were also working with a lot of rookies, particularly on the Liberal benches, and one of the first people I got to know, actually, in the new caucus was Reg Alcock. Little did I know at the time that fairly soon afterwards, I'd be working a lot more directly. And you have to understand, too, it was a different time in a lot of other ways as well too. I, of course, had been a government backbencher. I was honoured when we were first elected to be appointed the Labour critic and critic for Workers Compensation, and then I got a call, actually, from our leader, and he wanted me to add two more things which, you know, might sound like an interesting combination. One of them was actually Health critic. I want to put on the record I did have a bit of an advantage because we had just shortly been in government, so it was at a time where I was critic and I actually knew more about the Health Department than actually the minister did, but I was also asked to be House leader, and little did I know at the time that this was going into a period of time that will—probably one of the most defining points in this Legislature and in the province because I became House leader along with Jim McCrae, now a citizenship judge, MLA for Brandon West, and with Reg Alcock.

Now, of course, there were the daily discussions and considerations. I got to know Reg on a daily basis because everything was rather unpredictable. With a minority government, anything could and would happen. It happened on a labour bill one time,

I know Reg was somewhat surprised when the Conservatives of the day voted against a Liberal amendment that had passed and actually killed their own bill, came back a year later. That's the kind of thing that does happen in a minority government situation, but then we hit one of the most historic times in this Legislature, and that was the Meech Lake debate. And let's understand the dynamic that we were dealing with to understand the degree to which Reg was—Reg and I and all our caucus were placed in a very interesting dynamic along with the Government House Leader.

It's interesting to note that, despite the debate about Meech Lake, what had happened is there was the—for the round of reconsideration, in the end we had an all-party agreement to make best efforts to have it pass through the Legislature. Well, guess who that fell to? It fell to the House leaders, and what came out of that dynamic, and I referenced it in terms of the discussion we had just a short time ago when we paid tribute to Elijah Harper, was the degree to which there was significant opposition to Meech Lake and particularly from First Nations and from Aboriginal leaders and from First Nations people and Aboriginal people across Canada.

And as that developed, one thing became clear, and that was that there might be some disagreement on best efforts. And I noted when we paid tribute to Elijah Harper that it was Elijah Harper that pointed out a significant deficiency in our procedures. And to give you a measure of the debate at the time and the kind of person that Reg was, we came in, Elijah Harper spoke, there were comments made by other House leaders. When I spoke, the one consensus that we had in our caucus and that I put forward is we were not going to do anything other than have appropriate procedures, and I put on the record that Elijah Harper had made some legitimate points about faults in the procedures.

Now, to say that things changed from that point on in is an understatement. The Speaker took some considerable time, was under a considerable amount of pressure. Denis Rocan made, I think, what was the right decision. It was a decision that essentially killed Meech Lake because Meech Lake ran out of time. And as I was walking out the door, Reg came up to me and used some rather colourful language to talk about my point of order and our caucus' point of order, because obviously there was a somewhat difference—somewhat different opinion of what making best efforts was. But within 24 hours I had the opportunity to run into Reg in the hallway, and

I thought this might actually be a continuation of that rather colourful discussion, and he actually came up to me and looked me in the eye and he said, I think I know why you did that. And that was it. After that, it was like nothing had happened. We continued to work together on a daily basis.

And that was really the kind of person that Reg was. Reg could work, I think, with anyone. He would be pretty adversarial when he—pretty partisan, very strong believer in the Liberal Party, but he could also know when to park that and work very co-operatively with people.

Well, needless to say, I did get to know Reg over the years in many other ways. I think there's something that's unwritten around here, and it's the many social events we attend as members of the Legislature. And one thing about Reg is Reg was a regular attendee at events both as MLA and as MP, and I got to know him particularly at a lot of Greek events. As people may imagine, I attended and have attended more than a few over the years, and there's something about the connection you have, you know, with sort of a week where—I mean, there were weeks where I didn't get home. Hari and I would come in from Thompson, we'd go to the Greek event and, actually, sort of the family dinner table became, you know, the head table at the Greek event. It would be myself and more often than not be Reg, because Reg has very good connections, very good support in the Greek community—his wife, Karen, and we would get to each—get to know each other on a personal basis.

And that kind of personal contact continued when Reg became a member of Parliament. I made the point of keeping in touch with him. I made the point of working with him on many issues, and I want to say that one of the key elements he carried with him is when he went to Ottawa he had an open door from anyone from Manitoba, actually, more than an open door. He had an open communications portal, because one thing about Reg is—I remember a number of times we would have meetings, and talk about being ahead of his time. You know, you'd end up waiting five or 10 minutes because Reg's staff will come out and say, well, he's teleconferencing with constituents back home in Winnipeg right now and it's running a bit late. It's one that—I always respected that.

And Reg was a tremendous person to work with, achieved a lot in his various roles, certainly, here in opposition in the Legislature, but also in government

federally. But I think it's important to note, as well, that he had a lot of respect from constituents and, quite frankly, did a lot for Manitoba. I want to echo some of the things that the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has put on the record. I know member for River Heights worked very closely, a close personal friend of Reg Alcock from his time in Ottawa and continuing back here.

And I often say that, you know, the legacies that you see, often, you know, the more direct ones are the ones we remember and, certainly, I would put on the record that the Museum for Human Rights was certainly something that will be part of Reg's legacy. But what I remember is—from him as well is the number of smaller projects that we worked on, the number of infrastructure projects that he took a direct personal interest in that probably only Reg knew about; maybe some of us who worked on it knew about as well, and sometimes those are the most satisfying ones, the ones that nobody knows but you, and I'm—I know that Reg had many of those.

So what I wanted to do today was say how he was a tremendous person to work with, as I did get to know him personally, a tremendous human being. And I do want to note, I had the opportunity to meet with him a number of times after he was out of politics. He really was cutting edge in terms of not just the technology, he had a tremendous view of public administration and I think he could've contributed so much, you know, in many other ways, but I certainly—I think he contributed in many ways to public administration.

And I also think, as well—and, again, I think this is the ultimate legacy of any politician. I've always felt that you start being MLA for your constituency. One thing about Reg Alcock, he was a strong MLA for his constituents, a strong member of Parliament and he'll be remembered by the many people that he helped, the many community groups he helped, the better city of Winnipeg and the better province of Manitoba he helped build.

And if I could, to Karen and to his family, we all felt the loss. We all felt the loss when Reg passed. It was a shock to many of us, and I can tell you he will—he may not be with us now, but his memory will last on for many years and his legacy of building a better province, quite frankly, a better country will be a long, lasting legacy and you should be very proud of it.

Thank you very much.

* (15:30)

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It's certainly an honour for me to stand today and put some comments on the record in regard to the condolence motion for Reg Alcock.

And it has been so very interesting to hear people speak about him as they have. I personally did not know him very well. I did not have that privilege nor did I have the privilege of working with him, which, I think, would've been very, very interesting because I think he would've been a colleague that one could learn a lot from.

Every time I think about Reg, I do think, imagine what more he could have accomplished if he had still been here. He had so many more ideas and he had so much passion for what he did. I am sure that we have lost some really great ideas and great policy with his passing. He certainly was a dynamic force. He had a very, very impressive career, and he did everything with so much passion, and he had such a positive presence when one was around him. He got interested in something and he got excited about something, and, certainly, in a conversation with him, that really rubbed off too.

I do remember having some discussions with him about the, you know, his very strong views on good governance and accountability, and that was something that was very important to him. I also was very impressed when I was watching him with all the things he was doing with computers because he, as somebody else said earlier, he really was ahead of his time in embracing the whole information technology era and using it the way he did, and he spoke about that so passionately. And I guess at that time, when I was having conversations with him, it probably wasn't my view to get that excited about it, but obviously he was doing something that really mattered to him, and he was right, you know, in terms of jumping in with both feet in what he did in that area.

I got to know Reg probably in the mid-'80s when I was still involved with Child Find Manitoba, a missing children's organization, and, at the time, Reg had been appointed by the provincial government to be the director of Manitoba's Child and Family Services, and he also was somebody that, while he was a director of that, he ushered in the first official protocol for dealing with child sex abuse in any province in Canada. And in those days, that was probably one of the most challenging aspects to the work we were doing at Child Find Manitoba and, in

following years, was to address the issue of sexual abuse of kids. Whether it had, you know—was done by a pedophile who abducted a child or whether it was a family member, it was always so appalling to know that there were little children in Winnipeg, you know, 10 years old, that would be sent out to the kiddie track here in the city to actually be a child prostitute.

And those things are just so hard to get your head around and probably was one of the reasons that I felt pretty passionately about politics, too, was if there was anything I could ever do to address the issue of stopping sexual abuse of kids or stopping any abuse of kids, that would be something that I would want to have a hand in, and whenever I do have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, it is something that I very strongly would want to try to make a difference in because the issues are just overwhelming when one looks at that.

Probably one of the hardest jobs I ever had at Child Find was actually putting together an annotated bibliography on pedophilia, and that was something that was incredibly difficult to do because you had to read everything. Nobody at the time in the mid-'80s was doing very much about it. It was an issue that, you know, we really didn't have much choice because when we were looking at stranger abductions in Canada and you're wanting to prevent them, you have to know a lot more about the subject. And there wasn't a lot of research or a lot of documents in one place, so through the Child Find library that we had been developing at the time, it was something that I, as the director at the time, felt we really needed to do.

So I really admired what Reg Alcock was, you know, doing in his job and the, you know—his advocacy for the well-being of children certainly got my attention. And when he was able to use his position to spearhead an effort to rewrite the Province's child protection laws, it was certainly something that I was very—support of at the time.

Those always weren't—well, and never really are—easy issues to deal with, but when people in our roles, and with the influence that Reg Alcock had, it is people like this that can make a real difference by taking on passions like that and doing something with them, something very concrete in what he was doing. And to have that legacy is pretty remarkable. So I do want to acknowledge particularly that aspect of what he did.

Certainly want to also say to Karen, I know she is such a champion for Reg and was a great partner because she also had, you know, some political blood running through her too, and certainly understood the issues, and was a perfect partner for Reg, in that they approached what they did as a family and as a great husband-and-wife team. I'm sure this—his passing at such an early age of 63 was an incredible shock. And certainly want to say from myself, my family, and from the members of Charleswood and also from all the colleagues that worked with Reg, and friends that knew him, certainly our deepest condolences go to them all.

I do remember that a former colleague of ours, Denis Rocan, had a very close friendship with Reg Alcock, too. And sometimes you'd see the two of them in conversation and you'd wonder what they were in cahoots about, because I know that Denis did have a great deal of respect for Reg and they did have a friendship that went beyond politics. And I still can remember a picture, I think, of Denis Rocan putting up a sign for Reg Alcock in one of the elections. So I'm sure that in Reg's passing that this would have probably been quite a blow for our former colleague.

Everybody has made mention of the legacy of Reg through all of the things he did. But there are a few comments that people have put out there that I always find intriguing, hearing what other people have to say. And Kevin Lamoureux said, Canada lost a champion today and is in a better place because of Reg's tremendous contributions.

And Colin Jackson, Reg's best friend and founding artistic director of Prairie Theatre Exchange, said, a life well lived and anchored in grace. And, certainly, those are beautiful words to have a best friend making comments like that. And Reg was passionate always about what he did or about his politics, but I think when you hear the words anchored in grace, you know, he certainly did his job with a great deal of integrity and a great deal of passion.

There was another quote that was very interesting, too, and that was from Paul Hesse, who said that Reg was a huge presence—physically, intellectually and in the lives of the people he touched. I remember feeling that he was an outgoing man with a keen curiosity and interest in opening up government and making it more accessible. I also knew that with his passion came an occasional temper, but he was never mean, just energetic.

It's always interesting to hear other people have, you know, the insights and the comments to make—certainly, obviously, had a great deal of respect. I know Gail Asper has made some comments, too, and said that Reg was a true champion for change and believed in the vision of what the Canadian Museum for Human Rights could bring to our city, province and country.

* (15:40)

And it really is sad that he's not going to be here to see some of the fruits of his labour, because I know there's been a lot of credit given to Reg for his ability to bring some money forward to the museum. I understand Lloyd Axworthy had indicated that Reg was instrumental in getting the \$70 million that the federal government committed to the museum's capital fund. That is certainly very, very strong commitment that he had to human rights and a passion and an intellectual passion for it as well.

So, certainly, we have lost a great force from this province and this country because he certainly has left his mark, but he certainly had a life that is one that we can all, you know, recognize and congratulate him on and, you know, indicate that he really has left a mark for a lot of people in this province and country, and our deepest condolences to his family.

And it really is a privilege to be able to stand in the Legislature and have this opportunity that we all have to make these comments about a person that has walked in these same shoes, sat in these same chairs, and, you know, we all have this privilege certainly of trying to make a difference. He certainly didn't sit back and wait for things; he was a man that took them on and personally championed issues and really wrapped his arms around what he was doing and he tried to do it very well. So he's a great role model, too, for all of us here as we continue to do our jobs. So it's a privilege to be able to have added my comments to this condolence motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I'd like to put a few words in memory of Reg Alcock who was a dynamic man, a great leader, and to some extent I would say I had very close relationships in the last few years, and I would—it would be difficult for me to put them in order.

But let me briefly start saying that when I met Reg Alcock in 1993, I used to be the president of the India Association of Manitoba and I was having a

fundraiser and I asked him—he was, I think, MLA at the time, and some of the members of the community said that we should invite him to speak. So I asked him, he unfortunately was busy, he did not come, but we had good meetings with him. And he started talking about my children, both of them were young Liberals taught by the member from River Heights, and he said, well, looks like you have a very interesting family—my name—why don't you come and we'll have a coffee one day? So I said, well, let me see, we'll have to—on how I can do that.

He invited me for coffee, after a year I went and saw him and then he said, why—do you have any interest in running for politics? And I laughed, I said, you must be kidding. Me, in politics? Absolutely no. But then he said, no, there should be some room for you to come and say where—Liberal Party needs some people that should come from a business background and all that. And I said, no, Reg, it's not possible for me to even think of running politics at that time.

So this is how I started meeting with him, and then he was very close to the, you know, Canadian community at large. He would come in events and functions that whenever people invited I used to be there as one of the persons involved in the association, and I had a very, very good, you know, wordings, understanding from him about what kind of Canada we want to build. And I was impressed—very impressed that he had a prospective, as the member from River East said, social side and financial side. So he was talking about both things that impressed me—a man of his calibre would think of both things which are not opposed to each other, but we can do it together it to make everything work.

And I was very impressed with his style of talk, a very honest, very simple man, very common, accessible. And I had a tremendous amount of pleasure in meeting with him on several occasions and talking about some issues that the community used to raise, and I, particularly, on a national front, I had some issues about how to develop relations with—which I had been working tirelessly with other countries like India and other countries, and he was very much interested in international relations and trade himself, so I was very, very happy to have met him.

But one of the things which I like to really remember myself with a great amount of passion was when, in 2004, the human rights—at the museum, we had an installation of Mahatma Gandhi, the statue.

He was the minister, federal minister, then, and he was attending on behalf of the Government of Canada. The Lieutenant Governor was John Howard, and we had mayors. Sam Katz was there, the High Commissioner of India was there. And we—once the statue was unveiled, Mr. Speaker, this was a very touching moment for a lot of people who would not believe that Mahatma Gandhi's life-sized statue will be at The Forks.

And when I mentioned to him that this is the site that about 121 years back—now, I would say about a—yes, today, 121 years back, but about maybe 111 years back at that time—that Swami Vivekananda, who went to the world conference of religion in Chicago, crossed through this, and there is a statue of Swami Vivekananda installed. Yesterday, I was there at the centre, the CP station, and when I mentioned these things, that this is where we are doing in Manitoba, a small city called Winnipeg, we don't know—Reg was so happy to know that history. He said, well, this is what we need to really put the right perspective to say how we have come along so well to bring Mahatma Gandhi's statue here in the Human Rights Museum, and when people started touching Mahatma's feet and emotions and garlanding him and all, Reg was equally very emotional. And he said, well, this is an amazing feeling I get from people who came to pay tribute to this statue.

So I was—knowing Reg at the time, it was not that much as I knew him. That particular event, we had about three hours together, and I was representing the government of Manitoba. And I think Premier Doer, when he heard about all that, he said, well, God, I should have gone. This was a very, very important function, and Reg was extremely, extremely passionate about the values of Gandhi, and he mentioned in his talk some of the things that I really admired.

Second meeting with him and a long encounter was in 2005, I think. The University of Manitoba Asper School of Business had the annual dinner, which I, again, represented the premier at that time, and he was a speaker, and I spoke. And we started talking about science and technology and all, and Reg was very, again, very nice, talking about some of the things that he likes to do for Canada's development, university funding, research and development funding, and all these things which I mentioned that unless the country develops the future by more research and development, more into fundamental research to build our country's research and R & D-based, knowledge-based industries, we

would not be able to compete in the world. And he totally agreed with me and he said, well, this is something that we should work.

By then, I am already in politics, so he said, now, how come you entered politics? I asked you 10 years back. You said no; you laughed. So I explained to him, I said simply this is what has happened: It was a health-care issue that I saw a challenge, and I thought, now, I should come and run to make sure that we don't let the health care be diminished, and I'll put my—whatever I can forward to do that.

* (15:50)

So he said to me that I have—a lot of my friends were Liberal friends—have donated money to you. And I said, yes, they have. And I said, by the way, a lot of Conservative Party friends are also committed to my fundraiser. They also donate. So I gave him an example, that in '99 when I ran in Fort Whyte, I, at a fundraiser, it was Reg Alcock who came and said hello to—when all the candidates were Liberal candidates—she came to give me \$100 because she was opposing me in the Fort Whyte. But she was at the fundraiser. So Reg said, well, you seem to be a very popular man in the community. And I said, yes, Reg, it's not only this community. I'm very friendly with almost all people that I meet and, about fundraisers, I have donated, myself, to both parties. And, of course, my party is there, but I have donated to Liberal. He said, why don't you ask me? The next fundraiser, I will donate some money to you. So I said, well, this is great, because he said, at one time I was an NDP and I think we will try to work together and say—

So Reg was very—in a way, a very open-minded man. And I remember one of the gentlemen, whom I shouldn't really name, yelling at him because his assistant did not convey the message to him. And he apologized to him; he said, I'm really sorry. He was a minister, a federal minister. But this gentleman said, what do you think, Reg? When I become minister and when I call you, you don't recall my calls? He said, no, I never got your call. So he literally yelled at him, but Reg did not lose his calm. He said, I'm sorry. I will talk to my assistant and find out what happened. This is humbleness of a character of a man that I remember being a federal politician, an MP and a minister. Very busy, but he was humble. He was Treasury Board president at the time. But then I asked this gentleman, I said, how can you be so rude to him, he's, you know, he's a busy man. He

said, no, no. He's nice to me. He will never misunderstand. So that was a very good feeling I had about him. And I think that this is some of the character that we see in some politicians that make the country better, make the society better, make the government better.

So I have a tremendous amount of sad feeling when I heard he passed away with a massive heart attack. I felt very sad for Karen, whom also I had met several times, and their children. So I send my sincere sympathies to Karen and the children and Alcock's extended family, that we have lost a great friend, a wonderful Manitoban and a great politician that would always work to build the society better.

He was working at the university, I know, and he was doing a great job there also as associate dean, and he was trying to get the business going very well—the business school, I should say.

So, with these words, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pay my tribute to the family and to Karen, and, we, again, join all of us here to pay a great tribute to the man that he sat here one.

Thank you very much.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I am thoroughly delighted to join colleagues in the Legislature today to say a few words about Reg Alcock.

I have to say that I didn't know Reg extraordinarily well, but our paths kept intersecting in a number of ways over the years, and so I wanted to get up and just say a few words about that so that I could, like so many have done today, pay tribute to a, really, a quite extraordinary man.

Mr. Speaker, as with all stories that I'm connected with, it begins with hockey, and I don't just mean last night's Kings-Hawks game that I'm still trying to recover from as a very difficult evening for those of us who cheer for the Hawks and, in particular, cheer for Jonathan Toews from Winnipeg.

But, as it turns out, hockey is at the centre of my friendship with Reg Alcock. Our two daughters played on the same hockey team for a couple of years, six or seven or eight years ago. It's funny how time flies, and it's always hard to nail those details down in the way that you would like to.

But, at that time, my daughter Hilary, who is my second child, played on the same team as Sarah Alcock. And, in fact, not only did they play on the same team, which I think was the Twins playing out

of Fort Garry, but it might have been at a younger age, as well. I know for a fact that they played on the same line—not the most skilled line in the world, I have to say, but always the hardest working line, and they went out and gave their all each and every game.

And so we kind of got to know Sarah, first a little bit in the sense of how you get to know any kid playing on your own kid's hockey team, and then from there, of course, we got to know Karen, because like—as hockey parents will know, you spend a lot of time hanging around with other parents when you're freezing at some particular rink or other, especially Silverstone, which was the home rink to the Twins which we euphemistically referred to as Shiverstone because it was so darn cold there, and so we got to know Karen a little bit as well.

And, of course, Reg's duties in Ottawa made it pretty hard for him to be there in the same way that I was always there or that Karen came there to support Sarah and being—and support the team, as well, but we did see Reg from time to time there at the games. And, of course, from my vantage point of the world it was always great to see—not only another dad there supporting his daughter playing hockey, but further to that, to have a politician of such distinguished repute as Reg Alcock, to see him for real and to know that he was just another dad just like the rest of us cheering on his own kid from a family that supported and loved their own kids just like we did, helps to remind one of just how utterly normal those of us are who sit in elected positions. And was great to learn that about Reg, too, that he was a loving, caring dad just like any other, that he was a hockey fan and he—and that, of course, he would do anything to support his kids, and I have to say the same was true of Karen, Mr. Speaker.

I know that I dropped Sarah off at the Alcock home on more than one occasion, and I know that the Alcocks certainly dropped Hilary off at our place on more than one occasion. And for that, it's the kind of friendship and collegial relationship you have with other parents, and always wanted to make it known when I knew that this condolence motion was coming up that we had this most special relationship and to know that we, my family, Susan and Hilary especially, but all of our kids felt a close sense of kinship with the Alcock family just over that most basic thing as minor hockey played by young women, which, of course, is always extraordinary to think about.

My next passing of crossing paths with Reg came in a quite different manner. Of course, Mr. Alcock was defeated in a federal election, and as he himself observed that he was so busy out there knocking on doors for other people he might not have spent enough time in his own constituency. But after that Reg, of course, became—came back to Winnipeg and started to do the kind of things that we know of him. He was always activist, always wanted to be involved.

Members have talked about his work with the Asper School of Business and his—the Canadian Human Rights Museum, and he had many other activities that he's been involved in. But I, oddly, was working at City Hall at the time and got a call from him one day and said, can I spend some time—he said, can I spend some time talking to you? And I have to admit I was not quite sure what he wanted, but to have Reg Alcock call on me, it seemed pretty good, and, of course, as the first thing you do is you talk about your kids and you talk about hockey and you talk about how life is going for your families, and then we got past that and he said he was calling on behalf of one of Manitoba's fine First Nations who wanted to talk about moving forward on an urban reserve here in Winnipeg.

And, at that time, I—well, I'd been working in the CAO's office for the City of Winnipeg for quite a long period of time and I had responsibility for many files related to our Aboriginal initiatives at the City of Winnipeg. It was a great honour to be able to do so, and I had a particular responsibility for urban reserves and, within that context, establishing what are called municipal services agreements which are negotiated as part of the Treaty Land Entitlement process and one step along the way leading to the creation of an urban reserve here in Winnipeg, in Manitoba.

* (16:00)

Mr. Alcock called me that day and said that he was representing that First Nation, and he was not really doing it for gainful employment. He was doing it because he believed in the concept and that he believed that it brought not only economic benefits to the city of Winnipeg, but, of course, to the First Nation as well. And so he wanted to be a bridge builder in getting past some of the difficulties that we had encountered in developing and negotiating the municipal services agreement but, in addition to that, getting past some of the biases and prejudices against the concept that existed in Winnipeg at the time. And

I'm proud to say that Reg spent some time on that file with me. We managed to kick-start that process which had been kind of stuck at the time, and one thing led to another and we were able to, in fact, get a municipal services agreement together with the First Nation and we have as a result one of Manitoba's—or Winnipeg's only urban reserve in St. James. And it was a credit to his character to have a solid—and no surprise to any of us—to have a solid relationship with the First Nation on the one hand and be able to come in, knock on some doors, make some telephone calls, begin the dialogue anew and begin to get us on the path toward establishing that most interesting concept that, as I said, has direct benefit both for the city of Winnipeg and to the First Nation, which, in this case, is Long Plain First Nation.

So at both ends of the spectrum, both on a personal and professional relationship and on a family relationship, I've got to know the Alcocks pretty well, got to know Sarah a little bit, got to know Karen a little bit, got to know Reg a little bit. And I was always impressed with the family-first notion, the community spirit involved, the activism and energy and passion that Reg brought to any issue, and from there we—from this initial meeting that we had in my office at City Hall we began spending some time together having lunch and getting to know each other more personally after that. And, of course, we spent a great deal of time talking about municipal politics and Reg's interest in urban development issues. We spent a great deal of time talking about my previous attempt at political life where I'd been dusted in Winnipeg South Centre federally on a couple of occasions by Mr. Alcock's Liberal Party. And so we talked a lot about my aspirations to run again provincially and we talked about the state of federal politics and, of course, it was fascinating to talk to someone who'd had first-hand experience in Ottawa but was always a Winnipegger and Manitoban first, and so I enjoyed those conversations greatly and I learned a great deal from him.

And, frankly, Mr. Speaker, we were only really, genuinely, getting to know each other at the moment that we learned the quite sad news that Reg had passed away, and we thought immediately about our life together as hockey families and I was ever so disappointed to hear about his passing and how that would affect his family. But at the same time I also remembered quite fondly our evolving friendship and relationship.

And so I'm pleased today to put a few words on the record to pay tribute to this fine Winnipegger, to this fine Manitoban and this fine Canadian, and to also offer a note of condolence and sympathy to the Alcock family. I haven't forgotten those wonderful hockey years and I doubt they have, and so I think fondly about them. I know that all Manitobans would join with me today as I join with other members of the Legislature to pay tribute, as I said, to a fine Winnipegger, a fine Manitoban and a fine Canadian, Mr. Reg Alcock. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any—honourable Minister of Mineral Resources.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I, following many of these eloquent statements, I do not intend to say a lot because I can repeat many of the very fine statements that have been stated today about the character and the nature of Mr. Alcock.

I just want to put a few words on the record that, firstly, I had the honour of serving with him, and it was a different kind of a relationship that one enjoyed with Reg. I actually even went to his nomination meeting when he first ran federally. Several of us went from this building here to watch the nomination meeting out of interest and a form of friendship. Subsequently, when he was in Ottawa as a minister, he was most helpful to many local projects that—he was most helpful, and I remember visiting him in his office as he'd set up all of his high-tech—all this high-tech computer equipment and was micromanaging everything, as he tended to do, but he did not forget, and he put first Manitoba and Manitoba's interests. He was a very unique man in that sense.

I don't speak often at these—during these periods of condolences, and when I do, I want to speak—what I want to say during condolences, I wish—I hope I would say to that person if they were sitting in the room with me, and I would say that to Mr. Alcock, that he was a very dedicated Manitoban. He was a very interesting man. He was a pleasure to work with. He was committed to his family and to the community. Like all of us, he had defects, but that's being human.

And so I felt very much that it was a particular honour and pleasure to serve with him, and I was greatly upset by his loss to both his family and to this community because he was too young, with too much hope and too much energy and too much commitment and love to give, to go so soon, but

that's out of our hands, Mr. Speaker. I just am thankful that I had the opportunity to work with him and to forward some projects that have helped this community, this province and we're all better for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on the motion?

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

Will now honourable members please rise for a moment of silence, please?

A moment of silence was observed.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Acting Government House Leader.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): On House business.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if we might call Bill 64 and 72 for debate on second reading.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call for debate on second readings, bills 62–64 and 72.

Bill 64—The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Starting first with Bill 64, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. It's a pleasure to continue debate on second reading on this bill intended to make changes to the small claims court, and many will recognize the issue around the small claims court as being in some ways the people's court, the ability for individuals to access the court system in a relatively informal way, one that doesn't require legal assistance, although legal assistance can be brought, but it's the kind of thing that's supposed to be accessible.

Often we hear about how the courts are not accessible for average people, not just in Manitoba but in other jurisdictions, as well, Mr. Speaker. And there's often a high cost, certainly formality, involved with bringing forward a procedure to the court, and that often results in people not bringing forward

matters that they wouldn't mind having determined by a judge, or it results in them self-representing, which also causes issues within the court system.

* (16:10)

And I remember the former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada speaking a few years ago about the great challenge that is caused in our legal system, where people self-represent because they cannot afford a lawyer, and the difficult thing that that does, not only for those who are self-representing, but also for the judge in those cases, for others who are working in the court system, because the legal system can be a somewhat complex thing and is there to protect individuals' rights, but it's difficult to protect your rights if you don't always know what your rights are in that legal context.

And so small claims court, of course, doesn't allow every matter to be adjudicated there. There are certain restrictions, both in the nature of the crime or the nature of the case, as in they're not criminal cases that go before small claims court, but also the amount that can be adjudicated for, in that particular system, Mr. Speaker. In fact, we had more recently, or somewhat recently, a change in the limit that could be used in small claims court, so it went from I think it was \$5,000 at the time to 10 or 15 thousand dollars, I believe it is currently, which allows cases that are of more significant financial value to go to small claims court, which makes it more accessible for those who have issues.

Now there's been discussion about bringing it even higher and having the limit even higher. In fact, I think, I—if I recall correctly, one of the New Democratic members was arguing that point just a little while ago, that that limit should be even higher to make it more accessible. That's something I'd certainly consider entertaining, Mr. Speaker. I think the government should look at because we do know that there are many matters that are high in financial value, but may not necessarily be complex in terms of trying to come up with a resolution. And so, having the ability to bring those things to small claims court might make sense. It might alleviate the other courts or it might give the opportunity for people to bring a matter to court that they might not otherwise do.

It is not a difficult thing to imagine consuming \$15,000, for example, in legal costs. Now that's not to say negative things about the legal profession. They are educated people who do good work and

they have their costs too. But when you're facing a potential legal bill of \$15,000, there's obviously a disincentive to bring a matter that might be around that value to court because you may win on—you might win your point and you might feel justified by winning your point. You might feel that it was the right thing to do, but, financially, you may not be any better off.

Now costs can be assigned, but there are always challenges, both in what those costs may be, what proportion of costs are assigned, or even collecting those costs can sometimes be a challenge, Mr. Speaker. So there is good sense, I think, to looking at potentially raising the limit, but, certainly, you know, empowering and engaging the small claims court in ways that are reasonable to increase accessibility and increase the ability for those who need to use the legal system, I think makes good sense.

Now the devil is in the details, the saying that gets bandied around here a fair bit at times, Mr. Speaker, and it's a saying that has some justification. We need to see, of course, how this will actually operate, how will it actually function, and sometimes you can't actually see how it's going to function until you put it into place.

And there are, of course, the unintended consequences of legislation, and sometimes things that look good on paper don't work as well in practice, but, you know, we'll be able to look, I think, back on this particular bill and how it changes the small claims court, and we'll find out whether or not it had the intended consequences that one might hope.

Now what I would say while I have the floor and while I have the opportunity on the relevant point, Mr. Speaker, is to say that there are a number of things within the legal system that need to be reformed, that need to be changed. We know that the court system, as it exists today in Manitoba, is exceedingly slow. It is exceedingly difficult for people to navigate, and we know that it often takes a long time between a charge—and I'll use the criminal context, in this case—between a charge and a resolution.

I would also draw to the House's attention that the Provincial Court is supposed to produce an annual report annually; hence, the name: an annual report, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it is in The Provincial Court Act that there must be an annual report produced annually. The word is must, not should or maybe. The Provincial Court Act says that there

must be an annual Provincial Court report. There's very good information in that report in terms of court utilization, the nature of cases that are coming before it, but when I checked the most recently, there hasn't been a Provincial Court annual report produced since 2011. That means we are three years behind on the annual report for the Provincial Court.

Now, I've raised this with the Attorney General, and he says, well, it's not my responsibility. It's up to the chief justice to prevent—or to present that report. At the end of the day, the fact is we don't have an up-to-date annual report for the last three years, Mr. Speaker, and there's some good information in there that would be helpful for us when we're examining the backlog of our court system, and I don't think it's inappropriate that this Legislature somehow isn't able to get annual reports that the law says have to be produced.

So I leave that as frustration for the government and I've left it already with the Attorney General. He sort of said there's not a whole lot he can do, but I don't know how we craft legislation looking for certain things and then have no way to ensure that it actually happens. But the point being, I think we need to have an annual report and bring them up to date for the Provincial Court, not be three years behind and ensure that we can actually get this information before the Legislature so that we can examine how the court is operating.

So, you know, when I look at this particular bill, there's some merits to this bill. There are some positive things to it, but, ultimately, we need to see how it operates and how it's going to function. I don't know what kind of a response we'll get at committee in terms of those who'll make a presentation. I hope we do have people who will come and give their views on it. I understand that the operation of the court system isn't something that necessarily grasps the public's attention, isn't necessarily something that people are—it's not a talker as they say in the news media industry, how the courts operate necessarily, unless something's gone terribly wrong. But, in a case where you're looking at legislation, I do hope that people will look at this, particularly my friends in the bar association and those who are operating in the court system.

I hope that they'll take a look at the legislation and come and give their views at committee, and then, ultimately, we'll see in time. I expect this bill will pass this session, even though it's a non-specified bill under the sessional agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I expect it'll find its way through the legislative process, and we'll find out how it operates in the long run.

But, in the meantime, I'm hopeful that the government will do its best to try to get us that annual report of the Provincial Court and to try to bring those things up to date as the law says that they should be up to date, and I look forward to hearing what presentations there might be at committee later this week. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 64?

House ready for the question?

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

Bill 72—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 72, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen).

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Midland?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Indeed, it is always a pleasure to get up and speak to legislation. Considering the experience that I've gone through the last few weeks being the official election observer for the Canadian government in Ukraine and, Mr. Speaker, if there's one thing that I have learnt, it is the importance of what we do here, importance of our democracy, and I come back loving Canada more than I ever have. We are very blessed and very fortunate to have a very strong system even here in the province of Manitoba. In fact, there are often times when I would say to individuals, the way democracy works you don't have to agree with the results. You don't have to like the results, but in the end you have to respect the process, and that's certainly what we have here in Manitoba. We have a process that is a fair and free and democratic system.

I pointed out to some of them—I think the last five elections, I didn't particularly like the outcome, but I always respected the process. And we have before us a bill that's been put forward by the government. I know it's one of their more controversial and tougher pieces of legislation, and I

understand that part of the controversy is about the fish, the walleye, and there are different viewpoints on that so perhaps it is time that this legislation go in front of a committee.

And it's another one of those beautiful, beautiful things about this great province that we get to represent, is that every piece of legislation goes in front of a committee whereby the citizens of the province, in fact, I understand individuals from across the country can come and put their name on a list and we will listen to their presentations and what they have to say. This would be something that I know the people of Ukraine would love to have. They would love to have this kind a system, and we are fortunate enough to have it.

* (16:20)

So, you know, perhaps if there are individuals who don't agree with the legislation that it should be the walleye or perhaps it should be a different grass emblem—and I see here it's supposed to be the big bluestem. The big bluestem is supposed to be the official grass emblem of Manitoba, and I can't wait to see what that pin's going to look like, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm sure the world is waiting to see our bluestem grass pin.

And then, of course, they'll have to have the official soil pin. I'm not too sure if we would want to be travelling, say, for instance, to Kiev and say, if you don't mind, I'd like to pin some dirt on your lapel, actually, the official soil of Manitoba.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? And perhaps they would appreciate it, because if one of the things that I—you know, I knew this bill was going to be controversial, I can barely get my—I can barely be heard in this Chamber. And these sleeper bills just seem—they seem to arise a lot of passion in this Chamber.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I had the opportunity to travel Ukraine, I understand why a lot of our families, why our people would have initially of settled in Ukraine; what a beautiful country and how it resembles Manitoba and the prairies and the rich crops that are growing there. In fact, they were ahead of us by about a month, they had a much nicer spring and nicer summer, and even the rapeseed, the bloom had already come off the plants and it was slowly getting ready to be harvested. And I understand why individuals would have loved to settle in Ukraine.

In fact, my father was born in the province of Volyn, and I explained to a lot of the individuals there that if we ever said, wow, you know, we really do have, you know, beautiful crops in Manitoba, the answer back would be, oh, but you should have seen what they were like in Volhynia, those were crops. Or if we said, you know, wow, you know, this fruit or this vegetable tasted really good, and the answer back would be, oh, but, boy, you should have seen what it tasted like in Volhynia.

So, Mr. Speaker, I dare say the comparisons were, I think, accurate; I think you could definitely compare the Prairie provinces and Ukraine very much so, very similar in the kind of agriculture they have and their cities, very beautiful like we have beautiful cities here. I'd say just even the friendliness of Kiev would be like the friendliness of any prairie city, in particular in—of Winnipeg, where you always have that real friendly feeling.

And, of course, I have to choose my words carefully here when I compare the food between Ukraine and Manitoba. We ate some really, really great food. We—*[interjection]* the minister responsible asks if this is a food bill, and I would ask him to read his own legislation because in the bill it talks about not just about the bison being the mammal emblem of Manitoba, but the walleye as fish. It actually—and the bluestem, I mean, it—there's food all over this legislation. So perhaps if we could focus the minister on this legislation.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, the food in Ukraine was just magnificent, and I would say it was as good as what we could get here. There are some things, of course, that are better here, and I would like to point out that for instance there's Yudyta's, or as we would know, Judy's Ukrainian shop at The Forks. I did have blueberry perogies in Kiev, and hers—because she uses the Manitoba wild blueberries, hers are just that little more better. I'd have to say they are far better because Judy just does a great job on those blueberry perogies.

But this legislation again helps to define who we are and what we are as a province, and there should be a good and fulsome debate. I understand there already was some debate on choosing how these emblems were going to be picked, and, certainly, now it should go to committee and give the public one more opportunity to voice their opinions if they agree or perhaps they disagree on it.

And for all the countries in the world that are looking for free, fair and democratic elections and

free, fair and democratic governments, you know, they look to us as Canadians and they look to our chambers across the provinces where you have that opportunity, where you're not bullied or pressured or you're worried about your safety.

In fact, in Luhansk and Donetsk of Ukraine, where armed individuals stormed the ballot stations and physically seized the ballots and physically seized the ballot boxes and the voters' lists and the people were denied the right to even have a vote, here we open up our doors and we allow individuals to come, not just to have free and fair elections, but actually have a say on the legislation, to come and be critical.

We give them 15 minutes in which they can say their piece. And they have to be respectful. They cannot be derogatory or racist or abusive of any way or any of those things. But they have a right to have their say. *[interjection]* And the minister responsible says it's the only place in Canada. I mentioned that earlier on in my comments. *[interjection]* And we're pleased that Manitoba is one of two in the country; Nova Scotia is another province where it is allowed. But we feel that the process we have in Manitoba is better than the one in Nova Scotia. That's why we often refer to it as being the only one, because our—actually, our system is just that much better.

And we love the fact that a lot of Manitobans—we love that Manitobans avail themselves of this. In fact, I understand tonight—we understand that tonight at committee, on one of the committees alone, there's going to be 19 presenters. And that's wonderful, Mr. Speaker.

So it's time for this piece of legislation to go forward. We look forward to hearing the public's input. And perhaps the public will come forward with a recommendation of the way we should make it even stronger or better. But we will await their involvement and their input.

So, Mr. Speaker, I leave my comments at that and thank the Chamber for this opportunity to say a few words on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate? Is there any further debate on Bill 72?

House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on House business, I would like to announce that following bills previously announced for consideration at the Standing Committee on Private Bills on Wednesday, June 4th, 2014, to 6 p.m., Bill 203, Bill 208, Bill 209 and Bill 214, will not be considered at that meeting.

Instead, I would like to announce that Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, June 4th, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 64, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act; Bill 72, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act; Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act; Bill 208, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Support Our Troops Licence Plates); Bill 209, the lymphedema awareness act; Bill 214, The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the following bills previously announced for consideration at the Standing Committee on Private Bills on Wednesday, June the 4th, 2014, at 6 p.m., Bill 203, Bill 208, Bill 209, Bill 214, will not be considered at that meeting. Instead, the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, June the 4th, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 64, The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices

Amendment Act; Bill 72, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act; Bill 203, The Nurse Practitioner Day Act; Bill 208, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Support Our Troops Licence Plates); Bill 209, Lymphedema Awareness Day Act; and Bill 214, The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act.

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Now, the honourable Acting Government House Leader, Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak).

Mr. Chomiak: Monsieur le Président, je voudrais demander si vous regardez tous les chambres pour finir le jour et demander à 5 heures.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might canvass the House to see if there's agreement to call it 5 o'clock.

English

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might canvass the House to see if there's agreement to call it 5 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to consider it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 2, 2014

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