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DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 21, 2015

The House met at 10 a.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 morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'm seeking leave of the House to move directly to Bill 205, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), sponsored by the honourable member for Charleswood.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to proceed directly, under second readings of public bills, to Bill 205? [*Agreed*]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 205—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Bill 205, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), as sponsored by the honourable member for Charleswood.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Martin), that Bill 205, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour for me to be able to bring forward this bill for second reading.

Under this bill, under The Workers Compensation Act, certain injuries are presumed to be caused by a worker's employment. This bill extends that presumption to emergency response workers who contract post-traumatic stress disorder.

I became more aware of that, a little bit, I think, through my time as a nurse, and certainly as a registered nurse I have had many opportunities to work in many areas in health care and in a tertiary care hospital. And certainly through the experiences I had, I also worked with a number of first responders and, particularly, paramedics when I was a nursing supervisor in an emergency room. So I certainly had some exposure to some of the things they saw every day. But it never really hit me until I was in this job. It never became so profound until I actually met with two first responders who were going through what they believed to be post-traumatic stress disorder, and it was a wake-up call for me, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that. One was a firefighter and one was a paramedic, and I spent time with both of them. I met the spouse of one of them; I met the children of another. And I heard what they were saying. We stayed in touch with emails and updates, and it made me seriously aware of the challenges that first responders are facing. And these two particular individuals haven't had an easy journey and still are not having an easy journey.

And, Mr. Speaker, contemplating suicide is one of the aspects of what can happen with post-traumatic stress disorder. And I don't think any of us really understand how frequently that can probably happen or how quickly it can sometimes happen or that it is such a big issue amongst post-traumatic stress disorder. And it is; my research has shown that. I've spent a lot of time, now, in the last year and a half or more looking at what post-traumatic stress disorder is, and it does have very, very significant effects.

And, you know, I have to say that having worked alongside first responders in hospitals, I've seen what they have brought in. I've seen the patients that they have brought in to our emergency rooms. I've seen the bodies that they have brought in. I've seen the drownings that they have had to bring in. I've seen the, you know, the gunfights and the knife fights and the children, and I recall one particular

instance of a drowning of a little, beautiful four-year-old girl. I melted down, and as a nursing supervisor, I couldn't even deal with that death. Those paramedics had to find the child in the pool, try to resuscitate a beautiful four-year-old girl, bring her into the hospital, and they live with that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome today some paramedics to the gallery who live this—these experiences. They're the ones that have to provide support to their colleagues, and they have brought forward some interesting data that I think we all need to pay serious attention to. Between April 29th and December 31st of 2014, 27 Canadian first responders died by suicide, and already in 2015, 15 first responders have taken their own lives. The survey data has revealed that 73 per cent of Manitoba paramedics identified a personal need for psychological support following a critical incident or a traumatic call that they had experienced; 68 per cent identified a personal need for psychological support resulting from the cumulative effect of incidents they had experienced throughout their career. I can't imagine having to deal with one intense experience, you know, and trying to live with that. Can you imagine having to deal with that perhaps day after day, week after week, year after year, and that is what is happening.

* (10:10)

Over 25 per cent of these respondents have indicated that they have contemplated suicide. These are workers in Manitoba. This is a safety issue for workers and it is one that needs to be dealt with now. Over 38 per cent of first responders know a paramedic who has contemplated suicide. I met with two of them. Nearly 51 per cent have expressed concern that a fellow paramedic might be at risk for suicide, and they do not want to—in the environments that they work, they're afraid to speak up because it does tend to be a bit of a macho environment. And when you work in that environment, you become fearful of speaking about your weaknesses. And we have to get past that, we have to get past the stigma of that and we have to say to all of these folks that we recognize it, we understand it, we are going to help you.

And we have to help them not just by putting forward this legislation. There's a lot more to do in terms of embracing the whole issue of post-traumatic stress disorder from a prevention angle, from a treatment angle, from, you know, what they can do within their workplaces so that the workplaces are

there to safely handle, manage, refer, treat first responders that are going through some of these horrific situations.

And with post-traumatic stress disorder it's—you know, there's—we can say it as a word, but beyond the word, when you look at what the experiences are, they can be devastating. The effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, the signs and symptoms a person would have would be extremely hard for somebody to live with. And it's so hard for their families. It's hard to believe that a first responder might be contemplating suicide even though they have two small children at home, but that's the reality of this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there have been wake-up calls across Canada, there have been wake-up calls in Manitoba, and I don't think we should be wasting time moving on this issue. This bill is here. I have to say, I didn't invent it by myself. It was written by, I believe, an NDP member in Ontario. It has been brought forward there, it's being looked at in other provinces and, you know, I don't think it matters who brings the idea forward. The bill is here, and if the government doesn't like the bill in its immediate form, there is an opportunity to make amendments, and I'm open to that, but the bill is fairly benign as it is written. I would suggest that what this government needs to do, because the work really comes after that, is accept this bill. Let's move forward on this, let's not draw this out for any political or partisan reasons and let's help the people that really need the help—the first responders.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I just would like to encourage the House to do the right thing today and pass the bill.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her comments and I welcome the visitors to the gallery.

And I agree with the member. We had a conversation in the hallway. There—you know, this is not partisan. This is way more important than any of us and any political agenda. This is not—this is a significant matter.

But what I want to say to the member is if you're asking us and we agree to deal with it, we want to deal with it. In fact, we are working on a more comprehensive bill that we're going to bring back, and it will entail this plus more for PTSD. And if you give us a few weeks, I think you will see in this

House an even better and more comprehensive bill dealing with PTSD. And it doesn't matter who gets the credit, but it's going to—we hope it'll pass this House, because it is significant and it is important.

And let me digress for a minute. PTSD, First World War, you know, they used to throw people into the hospital and shoot them or lock them up. That was PTSD. Even as recently as the Vietnam War, there was no recognition of PTSD. We've had some trouble with federal government with respect to veterans and PTSD.

Mr. Speaker, every worker in every occupation can and does suffer from PTSD and it's—it is a recognition of how far we have come as a society that we, in fact, should and will recognize PTSD under The Workers Compensation Act. We are long past—we are too far past the era when a hand injury or a broken foot or a disc joint replacement or something of the physical nature is the only recognized compensable injury. We're far past that as a society, and thank heavens that we recognize that. So I thank the member for bringing this bill.

I ask the member, and I ask all members of the House and I ask the representatives to understand that we intend to bring in recognition. In fact, we intend to bring in a bill that recognizes even broader the application of PTSD to workers right across this province. We intend to do it as efficiently and as quickly as possible. We intend to do it this session, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that the spirit that the member has brought this bill to the House—she will recognize that it's a good bill, but it's dated in the sense of we can do better, and that she'll support and members opposite will support our endeavours to bring in a broader and a more comprehensive bill.

I, too, have spent a fair bit of time, because of my experience in—as Health minister and in the Health area, as well as I'm lucky enough right now to be married to a psychologist who has a whole world of activities to spend on my brain. And, you know, we've discussed in detail some of these issues. I know that there's specialists, for example—finally, there's specialists actually at the WRHA that deal specifically with PTSD—not enough. I don't think there's enough in terms of recognition. That's why I think that presumption is very, very, very important in this regard.

I think one of the surprising things that we've discovered and learned in this regard, that it's not a—it's not just paramedics or nurses or those people

involved in the health-care field who suffer from PTSD, but it's a much broader application across the spectrum. That's one of the most surprising, I think, results to a lot of people with respect to the application of PTSD and its insidious nature. The member's right; suicide, a complete inability to participate in everyday life is a consequence.

I salute—and I take the opportunity and I salute the work of the paramedics. I reflect on the comments the Premier (Mr. Selinger) made yesterday, how we've evolved from a volunteer service to, I think, about five times more people participating as professionals now in the—as paramedics, the fact that we renewed, completely, our fleet, the fact that we renewed the transportation system. What has to happen now is to reflect and recognize the trauma and the impact of the kind and the nature of the job that they do.

The member's talked about examples. There's a myriad of examples, Mr. Speaker, I—of the unbelievable, horrific nature of so much of what individuals must face who are our first responders and the work and the competence that they display. There's a myriad of books now coming out recognizing that. And I think it's incumbent upon people, all of us, to recognize that there is a risk in employment of encountering PTSD and that it's not just the issue of the treatment and the presumptive nature of it that's important that we recognize, but it's the fact that we recognize the symptoms. And the member talked about the macho nature of some of the professions and it—how stigmatized so much related to mental health and related situations are. And we're—we should be a lot better, but what—we're nowhere close.

*(10:20)

I've stood in this Chamber, on that side and this side, advocating, as have many members, for recognition of mental-health-related issues and to remove the stigma of announcing or even saying publicly that one's involved in—one suffers from those issues.

On this specific issue, I'm glad that we have an opportunity to discuss this today. I'm glad the members brought that. The member and I had a discussion in the hallway how we have changed a bit in this House and that we met bills that have been brought by members. Just this week, the member brought a bill that we passed and we brought a motion to the members, seconded, on something that was very important.

And I think on the issue of PTSD if we—I don't think this is going to get political and I'm thankful for that. I think we maybe matured as a society and as a Legislature, that we're going to be able to bring in a bill that's going to incorporate what the member suggested plus—we're going to bring it in plus.

Now it's not specifically in the area that I'm a minister of, which is why I'm not getting into the specifics of it, but I know, as Government House Leader, that we announced in the Throne Speech and the budget, I believe, and that we're going to bring in that bill. And I think the members will be very pleased.

I think the fact that the members opposite want to do this, the fact that we want to do this, the fact that the leaders in this have been the paramedics, I think is really important. And I'm very happy that we're going to have an opportunity to do the kind of things that we—that—you know, legacy is not that important in life but it is nice to be able to participate in something that will help people into the future and will protect lives and will make lives of those who do the terrific work that they do in the front lines.

In the last few years I've been beside paramedics as they've done their work on loved ones of mine. I know how important their work is. And so I welcome the opportunity of participating in this debate and I thank the member for bringing this matter before the House.

I look forward to a discussion and I'm not sure that tactically dealing with this bill would be—I think this bill ought to be melded into what we're going to be doing as a whole, and I think the member will be very pleased, as will the paramedics, as well all of the other professionals, with what we're going to bring forward in the next several weeks. We're not going to delay. We're going to bring it in and I hope it has speedy passage. And I thank the members for the opportunity of speaking on this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): I'm pleased to rise and speak to The Workers Compensation Amendment Act, the presumptive of post-traumatic stress disorder.

I appreciated the member for Kildonan's (Mr. Chomiak) comments that this really isn't—this is far more important than any political agenda. And I took to heart and I've seen first-hand some of his comments. He talked about the evolution of the idea of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mr. Speaker, I come from a military family; my father fought in World War II in North Africa and Italy. And during those times, post-traumatic stress disorder was simply referred to as shell shock, and it was something that, you know, you essentially—was ignored and it's just part of the experience, I guess, for lack of a better word, and you were just sent back to the front line. There was no recognition, obviously, of the impact of the horrors that you'd witness and the trauma that you witnessed.

My involvement as a son of an individual military family, I continue to see the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder. My father served in the military. He served overseas and served on peacekeeping missions, Mr. Speaker. And don't let the name fool you; the idea of peacekeeping missions are often less about peace and more about trying to keep the peace and there's a lot of ugliness and horrors and trauma in keeping the peace. And so as a child of a military family and growing up on a military base, post-traumatic stress disorder was front and centre in all our lives, and it would affect not only the individual—the individual military person—but their family, the extended family and more importantly the community as a whole. Because even as a child growing up, PTS—post-traumatic stress disorder still wasn't highly understood and a lot of—and there's a certain—at least in the military there's a certain bravado that you would—simply buried it, repressed it and sort of went on. And we know all too well some of the statistics brought forward by my colleague, the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), the number of suicides that have occurred to date and even occurred this year is quite something.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to relay an incident in my own life that just gave me a small window into the life of first responders and the impact of what they deal with on a daily basis. Previously, I worked for a not-for-profit, and about two and a half years ago I was out for a noontime jog through Wellington and I came across a car crash. It was a Pontiac Torrent. It had—was speeding to excess, had lost control on a curve, had spun and hit a tree. A young lady, 17-year-old Julia Romanow, was ejected from that vehicle. She wasn't wearing a seatbelt and she was ejected onto the roadway, and there was four other children in that vehicle all around the ages of 17. And I remember coming around the corner running and seeing—and I was the first individual on the scene and seeing that scene. And, honestly, at the time it was—there was almost a surrealness about it

and I thought I had just happened to stumble across a movie set, that maybe MPI was doing one of their commercials, and thought to myself at the time why was there this dummy, this mannequin sprawled out broken on the roadway.

Obviously, as I approached the scene, I quickly realized that this was no movie scene; this was, in fact, reality. The screams of the two young girls that were still trapped in the vehicle were quite piercing. Obviously, seeing this young-beautiful young woman lying broken—and I won't go into anymore description than that, but it's the kind of visualization that stays with you. And I remember as other vehicles stopped and asking if anyone had a blanket to cover this young woman and give her some measure of dignity at the time and then returning to the vehicle. And so you had two young men who were walking around who were clearly in a complete state of shock, and then the two young ladies in the vehicle. There was blood and broken glass everywhere, and I remember trying to do my best to comfort the individuals until first responders arrived. And when they finally did, they brought in the Jaws of Life to extricate the—especially the one young lady who was in the front passenger seat who was pinned because the speed of the vehicle it was—literally, just was crushed.

And so I returned to—back to the office, Mr. Speaker, and thought, you know, probably best I just go home for the rest of the day and clean up, and hadn't really noticed the blood that had proceeded to cover my running clothes and that. And it was some days later when, you know, you get a creature of habit so that was part of my running routine, and even then a few weeks later as I ran passed this site and you would see, obviously, the loving tributes of family and friends to young Julia at this site of candles and teddy bears and flowers and that. And for quite some time, anytime I ran by that site it always gave me pause, and even now two and a half years later. And just recently when I ran the Winnipeg Police Service half marathon it takes you right passed that point, and as I passed that I did do a brief pause to remember that incident.

And it was a few weeks after that incident I received a call from the Winnipeg Police Service, Mr. Speaker, and they said, you know, obviously we're aware that you were on scene and your involvement, and they wanted to know whether or not they could offer me any kind of services, any kind of counselling services to, obviously, deal with the trauma that I had experienced.

* (10:30)

And now as I have the opportunity to speak to this legislation and I think of that very small window of trauma that I was personally witness to and its impact on me as an individual, I can only imagine the tenfold impact when this engaging and interacting and being involved in that kind of trauma is one's career; that that's one's daily activities; that when they get that call they simply do not know what kind of scene they're going to arrive upon, they don't know what kind of trauma, what kind of horrors.

And, more importantly, we just don't know at what point that continued immersion in trauma, whether you're a first responder in terms of police or paramedic or firefighter, is finally going to impact you to the point where it causes that kind of permanent distress, that permanent post-traumatic stress where it finally surfaces, because there's no denying all of these incidents have an impact.

But again it depends a lot, and its impact on an individual can be quite variable. But it's layered, Mr. Speaker, and as you go call upon call that these first responders have in our communities—and thank God for these individuals who, again, this is the profession they've chosen, to take care of us—this has to have an impact.

And so, I mean, the necessity of this bill, I think, is quite clear. Members opposite have said as much, and, again, they said this is more important than any kind of political agenda. Mr. Speaker, this bill was originally introduced last year, and I would just suggest to members opposite that we pass this bill and they bring forward any amendments that are required to supplement or enhance this bill during the amendment stage. And I think that is a—that's an option that we can—that is worth consideration.

I mean, the—we're—let's be honest. We're at May 21st today. The House is due to rise on June 11th. So when members opposite talk about they'll be bringing forward legislation in the next several weeks, session is due to close in about 3 weeks. So obviously we want to make sure—the House is due to rise, and we'll see if they call us back or not, but we want to make sure that—obviously that members of the public have an opportunity to come and speak and make any decisions or make any comments on this bill, they have make those enhancements and that.

So we just want to make sure that this is done, Mr. Speaker, that it's done in a timely manner. And I think passage of Bill 205 would be a step in that direction. And I think my colleague has said it's—they're not considering that this bill is sacrosanct in the sense that it can't be, obviously, amended to suit the bill being suggested by members opposite.

So, again, with those words, Mr. Speaker, I'm encouraging members opposite to take a look at Bill 205, to pass that bill, and let's obviously move forward on a situation that is—occurred for far too long and has been ignored for far too long in our community.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I appreciate the opportunity to speak today, and I do perhaps have a unique perspective. I'm acting Minister of Labour and I've had the opportunity to meet with our Minister of Labour and her officials, so I certainly can speak to reinforce what our House leader said just a moment ago, which is that we have made it clear, we've announced our commitment and we are moving ahead in terms of PTSD.

I also am a former opposition critic in terms of workers' compensation. I think it's important to start the debate and discussion today with really recognizing the degree to which we've come some distance in terms of workers' compensation.

Certainly, you, Mr. Speaker, in your former role as opposition critic for workers' compensation, will reflect on the degree to which we've moved beyond simply recognizing immediate physical injuries in the workplace and workplace-related injuries generally, to really recognize a lot of the underlying dynamics.

One of the things I'm very proud of is the degree to which we've moved on presumptive coverage for firefighters, the degree to which—hard to believe now, but we had to fight for a better part of a decade, Mr. Speaker, because court decisions and political decisions did not recognize the pretty obvious fact, scientifically proven fact, that there were certain conditions, certain cancers in particular, that were clearly related to occupational exposure, to the kind of carcinogens that firefighters face on a regular basis.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've now expanded. We're now seen as a model throughout the world. I've had the opportunity to speak to firefighters, for example, and community leaders in various locations,

including in Europe, and they're looking at the made-in-Manitoba model. In fact, Australia now has moved in many states to bring in the made-in-Manitoba model, and it is largely because we've been leaders in recognizing what to a certain extent should be common sense but, in reality, was not recognized in the law.

And I've often felt that that's been part of the difficulty with workers' compensation, because its evolution, more than a century ago, was very much one of reforming a system whereby workers had the theoretical right to go to court but, in many cases, practically could not go to court, and the balances were built in workers' compensation were never intended to shift the onus entirely onto the injured worker. Particularly in cases where there was clear, scientific evidence, it just made sense that the presumption in the case of the prescribed cancers is occupational. They make common sense.

I think there's a very similar theme here, as well, because what we're dealing with with PTSD is an injury every bit as much as a physical injury. I know, you know, it's really only been in the last number of years it's been clear recognition of PTSD. It's often associated with military, military deployment, and certainly anyone that's had family members or friends deployed in some of the very difficult scenarios that we've seen in recent years, and certainly going back to the world wars and Korea, will know that PTSD, while it was not recognized, was a reality for many people. A significant percentage of people that were in the armed services suffer from PTSD and it's only recently that it's been fully recognized. It's now been diagnosed; it's now recognized for the psychiatric and psychological condition it is.

And that's important, because in the context of what we're dealing with here with the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba, I think it's important to recognize the degree to which there are very traumatic scenarios that many people are exposed to in the—in their workplace that can lead to PTSD.

I had the opportunity yesterday to meet with, coincidentally, both paramedics and firefighters, and both brought some unique perspectives in terms of this. And I've seen it myself. I know from first-hand the impact that traumatic events can have. I know in Thompson we had a major fire a few years ago. It was quite miraculous that no one was killed, there was a young child was rescued. I talked to

firefighters who came, probably within seconds, of being in a very, very difficult situation. Not one of the firefighters that went through that didn't have some degree of PTSD afterwards.

I know one very active firefighter after that, to this point has still not returned to full active duty as a firefighter. And I think we tend to underestimate the degree to which the incident often is not recognized, even with firefighters and paramedics, to the degree it should because, in many cases, people aren't necessarily even taking time off work, but they're often re-assigned. In many cases they continue in their same duties, but they internalize a lot of the issues. And what was very clear to my mind is the degree to which it can have very serious consequences.

The member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) talked about people contemplating suicide and, actually, in many cases, actually committing suicide, and that's been the case across jurisdictions. And that is how serious PTSD is. It can lead to that.

Impact on families, and that's something as well that, in talking to first responders it's very clear that PTSD has a huge impact on families, on spouses and on children. And the key issues we move forward, I think, is to get it right, and once you get it right I think one of the key issues that I want to put on the record is the degree to which we want to make sure that it reflects PTSD in the broader occupations where that occurs.

* (10:40)

Emergency responders, obviously, is a clear starting point, and I think we all recognize that with firefighters, paramedics, police officers as well, because police officers are often in very difficult scenarios, very traumatic scenarios, and I think that we have to recognize that. I think it's important to recognize, by the way, the degree to which firefighters and paramedics or police officers, in many cases, don't really know even what they're getting into.

You know, a fire may turn into a murder scene. There are all sorts of unanticipated situations that can happen that are particularly critical in terms of that. But there are other occupations as well, Mr. Speaker, where I think, obviously, that is the case. And I note, with interest, the member for Charleswood's comments from her nursing background, and, you know, I do think we have to consider the degree to

which there can be scenarios in which PTSD can impact on nurses as well.

And I know we've certainly recognized the basic principle. I want to put on the record, if I could, the degree to which our Labour Minister is committed to this. We made the announcement in the Throne Speech. We made the announcement, again, in the most recent budget. We're committed to moving ahead on PTSD in the same way we did for presumptive coverage for firefighters.

The real issue here, I think, is to make sure that it's broad enough in scope but practical in its application as well. And, certainly, I would point to the fact that there are objective measures to determine if people do have PTSD. There are also objective measures to determine when people can make significant progress, and I think one of the points I would like to make, by the way, is the degree to which one of the key elements we're looking at with PTSD is to recognize that it is a treatable condition. It is just as much a treatable condition as a—many physical ailments. And part of the intention here of recognizing it in the presumptive manner that we are, in terms of PTSD, is to make sure that those that have PTSD get clear recognition for it and also get the treatment, the counselling, the broader support they need to deal with it. And there are also some very clear objective measures on how you can assess that. There's one particular scale which is used, and I think that's important to note, by the way, because what we're looking about cure—it's not just recognizing a problem; it's also providing a solution.

And I think if we're to sum up the debate over PTSD is, I think, over the next period of time, we're going to be sending a real message of hope to the many people that are—have either suffered PTSD or in occupations where they could be dealing in situations when they're in there with PTSD. And, if I would add to that, I think if there's a particular sign of hope, it's the degree to which it's clear there's broad cross-party support for this in terms of the basic principle. And I certainly want to indicate again and reinforce what the House leader said, and that is that we are absolutely committed as a government to moving forward over the next few weeks this session—

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

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a few words on today about the Bill 205, the workmen's compensation amendment

act-PTSD. You know, it's so important that our firefighters, our police services and our EMS individuals are so-have-come up to accidents that happen on a daily basis.

I was a firefighter for more than-from 1994 to 2000, and in the-ambulance-as a firefighter for the volunteer fire department for Wallace District Fire Department in Virden, Manitoba. And I know what people have to go through, especially firefighters, or EMS people, or police officers when they come to a scene of an accident.

One accident that I remember being-that happened in Virden was when the Trans-Canada Highway was four lanes, it went into two lanes, and it was a long weekend. I'm-fortunately, I was away that weekend; we had some family commitments. But I remember the people, the responders from the fire department who had to respond to that accident-was-they were very devastated. I remember we had, you know, counsellors coming in to talk to our individual firefighters. It was so important.

That accident happened on a, like, the July long weekend, and two individuals were driving westward-westbound, and this family with three kids and parents were driving eastbound. And I believe that the individuals who end-the guys believed that they were still on the four-lane highway, as it went into two lanes. And he had a head-on collision with this family. I remember the father who passed away, but the unfortunate side was that the two car-two individuals, young guys that were in the car, basically burned. And I-we're not quite sure if they died on impact, but it was devastating. And I remember counselling had to happen.

And so my time-my story was-my first response to-of accident happened on the intersection of 83 Highway and 256, right by [*inaudible*] It was a Saskatchewan licence plate vehicle with two individuals and a couple, and-a North Dakotan couple who were going southwards on the 83 Highway. And the first thing I can remember being on there was the accident didn't look too-so bad. It was-the cars were not too bad, but one car went-didn't stop at the stop sign and hit another car, and the one car ended up in the ditch.

But the devastation was that three out of the four people were dead instantly. And to come up to an accident like that was-it was sort of-you know, it was something that I will always remember. And I felt like I handled it better than I thought but, you know, even after a few days, you know, one of our

chiefs, Bill Edwins [*phonetic*], wanted to make sure that the people who responded to it, especially the first people who-this is their first accident that-as a-firefighters, we had some-a counsellor come in. And I think that really helped. And I think it's a big-it made a big difference to my colleagues. It was so important to have that service. And, again, it was so important that we had that service.

And I think-I can't imagine-this was one accident that I came across, but there's paramedics who come-who actually come to scenes of accidents on a regular basis, day after day, and this can take a toll. And we've seen this in the military; we've seen this with police services and firefighters. It's so important that we address these PTSD.

One member in my family, my wife's father, who was in the air force, World War II, again, they said that he had shell shock, just like my colleague said from Morris that his grandfather had. But this came-was very serious because he had a lot of mental health issues throughout his life, and to a point where even to-up to his death at age 81, we had-family always had to challenge these health issues. But if he would have had treatment on an early basis, this-these challenges wouldn't have affected the family as much as they did. And-but he was a good father, he worked hard to, you know, make a living for the-for-to bring food on the table. He was a good person in society but he had his issues, and these issues affected the relationship with the family.

And so when I came in the-married my wife, these issues we had to deal with. And, again, it's so important that this PTSD actually gets looked at because it's so important to our society and to our women-men and women who out there all the time responding to-for accidents, to-you know, if it's a shootout or in-at a bank robbery, you know, people are affected by these traumas. And so I'd like to put a-these words on the record, and I'd like to-hopefully this-the members opposite will pass this bill.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): I'd like to start by thanking the member from Charleswood for bringing this forward and giving us an opportunity to have a discussion in the Chamber on this.

I certainly would like to also start by recognizing how serious the implications are for post-traumatic

stress disorder and some of the more commonly associated problems that are tied to post-traumatic stress disorder, such as the anxiety and the depression, occasionally the alcohol and drug abuse which are used as coping mechanisms for this.

*(10:50)

It's a terrible thing, and I think, certainly, from the role as envoy, when I've talked with members of the military, often the person that's suffering with this condition is kind of the last one to know. And I think sometimes the family members and the co-workers detect those issues arising even more quickly than the person who's suffering from it.

I just want to quickly read a definition of PTSD: It's an anxiety disorder that may develop after a person is exposed to one or more traumatic events such as a serious injury or the threat of death. The diagnosis may be given when a group of symptoms such as disturbing recurring flashbacks, avoidance or numbing of memories of the event and high levels of anxiety continue for more than a month after the traumatic event.

Now, I happened to marry into a family of firefighters, and I know that the firefighters in my family always had a hard time unplugging from their jobs. And one of the coping mechanisms for my father-in-law was one of the things that I mentioned earlier, and when he would come home from his shift he would take a shower; he would come downstairs; he would have a bite to eat; he'd sit in his recliner and push it back the whole way, and then he would turn the radio on. So he was still actually at work even when he wasn't at work. And I know that some of the things he saw—not that he talked about it very much, I more heard it through my mother-in-law. But, you know, taking dead children out of a burned home and seeing other probably very horrific injuries tied with—as a result of the work that he did, I'm sure never ever left him. And I don't know how he managed to do it for the many years that he did. He just retired a couple of years ago, actually.

And I think that the coping mechanisms for men of his generation were drinking, primarily, and I think that in the day and age that we're in now, it's a much healthier environment for us to be able to address this because we talk about it a lot more. It's something that, from the military through to other workforces that have these kinds of traumatic encounters in their daily working life, that we talk about this, we talk about it and it helps in—not only in finding ways for us to better support those that are

living with this and struggling with it, but it also helps reduce the stigma for those that do have it so that they're not afraid to admit that something is happening to them as a result of their work and that they need some help. And I think that is a very good thing and I think that finding ways for us to best support many, if not all of the people that have to deal with the potential risk of developing PTSD, is important for here in this Chamber.

The military, as I had mentioned before and as some of my colleagues have talked about, have an excellent unit called the Joint Personnel Support Unit, and their whole—their sole focus is to help CAF personnel who are coping with physical injuries or PTSD to return to work or transition out of military life and into civilian life and into the workforce. And they follow a rehabilitation recovery and reintegration process. And I have to just quickly credit the Canadian Armed Forces for the good work that they've done in trying to get their military personnel to talk about these things when they come back from tours and getting them the help that they need.

We have stated in our Throne Speech this year that we're bringing forward new legislation for firefighters, for our over 1,500 paramedics, and I know we have some with us here today and others also who are suffering from PTSD, and I think that that's very important, as my colleague mentioned earlier, that this is something we are moving on and working together to make this the best possible legislation is a good step forward.

And I also want to mention that in 2013 we introduced a five-year plan for workplace injury and prevention, and that has made mental health a workplace priority.

PTSD is currently covered by WCB and emergency workers continue to receive coverage for these claims when they're made, but I think it's important to recognize that it isn't just firefighters and paramedics and our police and RCMP who are at risk, but we also receive claims from correctional workers, from health-care aides and from social workers. And I want to make sure that when we're moving forward on this legislation, we're being as expansive as possible in helping all of the people that have the risk of developing this and not leaving anyone out. And I think we can do that co-operatively and collaboratively.

I happen to be attending an event this evening called Cvet's, and I'm not sure if people are familiar

with what Cvet's is, but this is their second annual event. It's United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg that have partnered. And Cvet's is a—it's a program that provides medical service dogs to Canadian Forces veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder—excuse me—as well as first responders such as RCMP, police, firefighters and paramedics. And this program links individuals who have served us and are currently suffering from PTSD with a trained medical service dog and then these dogs are their companions and help them through their daily lives.

And Cvet's Pets, it was initially started to aid no-kill animal shelters in Winnipeg but it's evolved into an organization which helps both animals and people. And their primary function today is to aid in funding the Courageous Companions program, which helps train and place service dogs with, as I said, veterans and first responders who are struggling with PTSD. And I love their motto, which is Rescuing One Soul to Save Another.

And I attended this event last year as well which was really an incredible event, well organized. They raised over \$21,000 and they recognize all of those who are in the field including paramedics, or firefighters, or police, as well as the military, and acknowledges and values and makes sure that they are acknowledged and feel respected for what they do, and it's a fantastic event. If anyone has the opportunity to go they really should.

So I just—I would like to wrap up because I know there are some other people that would like to speak. But I just want to make sure that everyone here, including those in the gallery, are aware that our commitment is to bring legislation forward. And I know that we'll be taking the advice of members opposite to make sure that the legislation that does come forward is as inclusive as possible for all those who are suffering from PTSD.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Peter Bjornson (Gimli): I'm pleased to rise in the Chamber to speak to this proposed legislation from our colleague from Charleswood and I thank her for bringing it to the floor and the opportunity to speak to it.

And I would like to welcome the paramedics who are here to be part of this debate today and thank them for the job that they do each and every day, on behalf of the families who find themselves in peril and very vulnerable and very tragic circumstances. I'm so glad that we have people like

you who are prepared to do the job that you do each and every day on behalf of Manitobans.

I can't talk about PTSD without talking about some very good friends of mine. And it was April 18th, 2002, when four Canadian soldiers were killed in a friendly-fire incident just outside of Kandahar, Afghanistan, members of the Princess Pats Canadian Light Infantry. And a very good friend of mine from Gimli was one of the first to respond to that situation, and that was very early in his tour of duty. And for him, he has the support of his family, he has his faith. He has coped quite well considering the trauma that he experienced in Afghanistan on his tour of duty.

I also had a very good friend who served as a city of Winnipeg police officer who was engaged in a very violent situation and he found himself in a situation where he had to fire on an individual and significantly injured that individual. And after having gone through that experience, he went back to the Winnipeg Police Service and said, who can I talk to? And they said, what do you mean? He said, I just shot somebody; I need to talk to somebody.

There were no supports in place for him, almost 30 years ago, when he was involved in this situation. And because of that, things changed at the Winnipeg Police Service. It was because of that incident and his commitment to make sure that people who needed the support got the support that they needed. And that started a ball in motion to make positive change, to provide those supports, so that individuals who find themselves in crisis situations, get the supports that they need.

And that's something that—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Gimli will have seven minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 4—Provincial Government Mismanagement Hurting Manitoba's Mining Industry

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it is time for private members' hour, and the resolution under consideration this morning is entitled Provincial Government Mismanagement Hurting Manitoba's Mining Industry, sponsored by the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen).

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I move, seconded by the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen),

WHEREAS Manitoba's mining industry is the fourth largest primary industry in the province and the largest employer in northern Manitoba, representing a workforce of approximately 4,500 and 5 per cent of Manitoba's gross provincial product; and

WHEREAS the mining, exploration and extraction sectors are deteriorating in Manitoba because the provincial government refuses to address significant concerns that hamper growth and sustainability within the sector; and

WHEREAS according to Professor Jack Mintz, Palmer Chair in Public Policy at the University of Calgary, quote: Coupled with the highest mining tax rate in the country and a relatively high corporate income tax rate, Manitoba's mining tax regime is among the least efficient in Canada. End of quote; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has harmed the extractive sector because of a failure to issue work permits once a mineral exploration licence has been granted and has broken its promise to post the current status of work permits online; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has failed to provide appropriate resources for the Manitoba Geological Survey that supports future development of the extractive sector in Manitoba and continues to ignore the recommendations of The Mining Association of Manitoba despite successive budgetary and legislative submissions from that association on the need to restore Manitoba to a competitive position to attract investment and create jobs; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has failed to support Manitoba's extraction sector by not keeping any records of meetings from the minister's Mining Advisory Council which was established with representation from First Nations, industry and government to provide advice on consultation, resource revenue sharing and educational opportunities, among other areas; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's share of natural exploration expenditures as of March of this year was only 1.6 per cent as compared to 2011 when Manitoba saw more than four times that amount spent in the exploration sector.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge that the inaction of the provincial government has markedly harmed the extractive sector.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Midland, seconded by the honourable member for Spruce Woods,

WHEREAS Manitoba's mining industry is the fourth largest—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed in today's Order Paper? *[Agreed]*

WHEREAS Manitoba's mining industry is the fourth largest primary industry in the province and the largest employer in Northern Manitoba, representing a workforce of approximately 4,500 and 5% of Manitoba's gross provincial product; and

WHEREAS the mining, exploration and extraction sectors are deteriorating in Manitoba because the Provincial Government refuses to address significant concerns that hamper growth and sustainability within the sector; and

WHEREAS according to Professor Jack Mintz, Palmer Chair in Public Policy at the University of Calgary: "Coupled with the highest mining-tax rate in the country and a relatively high corporate income tax rate, Manitoba's mining-tax regime is among the least efficient in Canada"; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has harmed the extractive sector because of a failure to issue work permits once a Mineral Exploration License has been granted and has broken its promise to post the current status of work permits online; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has failed to provide appropriate resources for the Manitoba Geological Survey that supports future development of the extractive sector in Manitoba and continues to ignore the recommendations of the Mining Association of Manitoba despite successive budgetary and legislative submissions from that Association on the need to restore Manitoba to a competitive position to attract investment and create jobs; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has failed to support Manitoba's extraction sector by not keeping any records of meetings from the Minister's Mining

Advisory Council which was established with representation from First Nations, industry and government to provide advice on consultation, resource revenue sharing and educational opportunities among other areas; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's share of national exploration expenditures as of March of this year was only 1.6% as compared to 2011 when Manitoba saw more than four times that amount spent in the exploration sector.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge that the inaction of the Provincial Government has markedly harmed the extractive sector.

Mr. Speaker: The resolution is in order.

Mr. Pedersen: First of all, I want to welcome the—our guests in the gallery today: the Manitoba association of prospectors and developers, The Mining Association of Manitoba and the Mines Accident Prevention Association of Manitoba. We welcome you here to the Legislative Assembly for this resolution.

It's always nice to have guests in the gallery, Mr. Speaker. The unfortunate part is the reason why they're here is because this government couldn't run a lemonade stand if it had one. Now, we know that the NDP family has been pretty dysfunctional in the past year. We've seen the—we've known it for a long time, but now the results are public, now, of this dysfunction.

The so-called gang of five, the member from Minto, Fort Rouge, Seine River, Southdale and Dauphin launched their failed coup, and it wouldn't be so bad if they just—if it was an internal battle that didn't affect anything else. But it's affected Manitoba, and that's why these people are here today representing their industry, because this is a reflection back on Manitoba of the dysfunction within Manitoba, and it's embarrassing. It's embarrassing for everyone and especially embarrassing for Manitoba when we look at how the mining sector has dropped in the last number of years because of this dysfunction within the province. We know the importance of the mining sector to the Manitoba economy as being the fifth largest—5 per cent of gross provincial product in Manitoba and the largest employer, of course, in the North, and very important not only to the North but to all of Manitoba. So we have—with this dysfunction, then, our share of national exploration

and deposit appraisal expenditures are now at their lowest level since 1997. And this isn't a reflection back of the mining industry itself. Mining—prices for minerals ebb and flow as with many of our natural resources. Agriculture is certainly symptomatic of that and so is the mining industry. But what the mining sector needs is stability. They need stability, they need predictability, and that is not here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics are out, and I'll let some of my colleagues go more into that because it—but it's—obviously, we're—we have dropped so much from where we were in this industry. From the national perspective, we're now at 0.08 per cent of the deposit on appraisal dollars in Canada are now coming to Manitoba, less than 1 per cent. And it wasn't always this way. We were much higher just—but in the last five years in particular—and this comes from the—when you read the resolution itself, the committee that was struck doesn't even keep a record of their minutes. So how do the—they're not keeping record of meetings from the ministers at Mining Advisory Council. So how does anyone even function? And that's—that reminds me of the inability to run the lemonade stand because they can't even keep this particular council—records of this council. So it creates instability within an industry, and an industry that provides a lot of jobs and a lot of investments. And it's not just the mining and the exploration and the mining, it's the spinoff from that and that spinoff comes through all of the province. Winnipeg could be a tremendous hub for that. There's a lot of jobs being lost, a lot of them because that investment is not there.

And, again, it's because of this inability of this government to be able to give assurance, and not just verbal assurance. This comes from actions, from being able to actually come through with what they promise. Because this government is great on promises, we see that all the time, but they're very poor on results when it comes to creating investment opportunities in this province.

Our entire mining sector has declined seriously just in the last number of years and this—again, this is not related back to the price of the minerals or to the demand. The demand is there for these resources, but yet this government has failed to create an atmosphere where investors feel confidence to be able to come in and invest their money and know that they will get a return on money. If you do not create an environment where they are assured of at least—only the risk of—there's always risk with

investment. But if they feel confident, investors feel confident about the risk of the resource, they will invest. But when the risk of government mishandling, government stalling, that is the first place—money goes where money is wanted, and when you're—when this government sends out the signal that they do not want investment here, investment will go otherwise—otherwhere—elsewhere, and that's what we have seen in the last number of years.

* (11:10)

Our lack of tax competitiveness—there isn't a tax out there that the NDP doesn't like and won't continue to raise. When they raised the sale—the provincial sales tax, the retail sales tax, that had a negative impact on all of Manitoba's economy. And it doesn't matter whether it's a working family or a mining expiration company or a prospector, that higher retail sales tax has an impact on investment.

Because we're much higher than Saskatchewan now—at Saskatchewan's PST at 5 per cent, ours is at 8 per cent, so we're at a competitive disadvantage there. They also charge the sales tax in Manitoba versus other provinces which do not charge their retail sales tax on that, so again, it's a disincentive to invest and it's—we—this government just doesn't understand that you have to create the atmosphere of—and you have to follow through on what you—to create that atmosphere, and you have to follow through to make sure that companies can be assured of having—of, at least, getting their investments back based on the actual resource that they're investing on. And when they continue to be hampered by government that stalls, that goes against their own word, that is a disincentive for companies. And this mining sector has seen this first-hand, as have all other sectors of the business climate in Manitoba.

We're—this government seems to think that they're the only ones who can create jobs, and it's the private sector where the real jobs are created and that we need to encourage private investment. And you need to create that atmosphere, and that is not possible with a government that is in love with sales tax, with—in love with taxing people, and by those taxes they are encouraging—or they're discouraging companies from investing in Manitoba. And that's what we continue to see in this mining sector.

To those of our visitors in the gallery today, a change is coming and a change for the better is coming, so thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the great quotation of Napoléon Bonaparte as he sat in Saint Helena, and that was, from the sublime to the ridiculous. I don't think I have heard—I'm embarrassed for the people that are in the gallery. I hope they'll come and talk to us. I hope they'll come and talk—meet me in my office later on. I'm embarrassed for the discussion that goes on today.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite quoted high-tax regime here and said, you know, said that we're—they quoted this fellow, Jack Mintz. You know what Jack Mintz went on to say in his report? Let me requote the same report the members talked about. He said: Mining companies enjoy a lower marginal tax rate for taxes and royalties than non-resource companies, but tax breaks are unnecessary and wasteful. The next step requires provinces to start eliminating preferential and wasteful tax breaks for miners.

That's the study the member quoted that somehow supposes that we are out of line, Mr. Speaker.

Are we out of line, Mr. Speaker, where we opened two mines last year to employ 900 people? Are we out of line when PDAC, the Canadian association, said that we have the best incentives for investment and the best incentives for mining exploration in the country. I can quote.

Mr. Speaker, the members wouldn't know how to find the lemonade stand, never mind build it or operate it. We have people—you know, let me read from a prospectus from a company that's now investing in Manitoba as they explore for gold mine—about \$50 million—and who are employing about 20 per cent of the population of a First Nation. One of the reasons why they came to Manitoba—let me quote. They're coming here and I quote: Manitoba has the lowest cost rate to the mill in the world for hydro.

And they want to raise the rates and privatize Hydro.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's extraordinary that members opposite have the gall to criticize the mining. So we have a minister's advisory mining council. Why do we have that? So we have an opportunity for mining companies, for prospectors and for First Nations to sit down and discuss issues and educate each other about what's going on.

In fact, some of the individuals that are represented in the gallery attend those meetings, and they've been very, very helpful. That's one of the reasons why we've had people from Mega Precious that are doing exploration up at red sucker sake, one of the best places in North America to do business. That's why AuRico, which has recently invested money at Lynn Lake and is employing First Nations people, said it's the best place to explore for gold in Canada.

And, you know what? Not only that, but last year members opposite criticized us for not being competitive as a result of the Fraser Institute recommendations. This year, Fraser said we're the fourth best in the world—the fourth best in the world. Members opposite say nothing—they say nothing. Last year, they said, you weren't competitive because Fraser said you're not competitive. This year, Fraser said we're fourth best and, in fact, second best in Canada. Can't they get their act together? There are more mining going on in Manitoba when the members opposite dissed and destroyed the economy of Manitoba during the mean, lean Filmon years.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at some of the incentives that are provided, I think it's some of the best in the country. Next—in July, there's a minister's meeting of mining and energy. They've asked us to present to the ministers across the country Manitoba's incentives for exploration and—for our exploration guidelines, which are—which according to PDAC are the best in the country. We have more applications this year that are doubled, so I don't know where the members are coming from.

When we opened two mines, they criticize us because we're not doing enough exploration. When we put in the best incentives in the country for exploration and now we're getting more applications than ever, they criticize us. They say we can't operate, we should—oh, you know what, I realize we didn't take minutes. Oh, my. Good heavens. We didn't take minutes, according to members opposite.

All we did is provide action; all we did was fund a First Nations corporation that could do joint ventures with other First Nations corporations to provide employment; all we did was put in place a program where 10 First Nations people from Sagkeeng could get training on the job; all we did with Vale was keep Vale open and operating and have First Nations up in the North have jobs at Vale for the first time in history; all we did was put in place, at the University College of the North,

programs and two mining simulators so people could be trained in the North about mining jobs. That's all we did.

And all we did is have probably the best tax regime and the most competitive tax regime, even though their own expert in their own PMR said that we shouldn't be doing that. They can't get it right. They say we're overtaxed, but their own—their own—their own report that they cite in the PMR says we should be taxing more, not less. It's true, Mr. Speaker. We haven't taken in a lot of revenues from mining companies in terms of royalties. That's because they get a tax holiday. We'd rather have jobs, and the hundreds of jobs like the 900 at Lalor and the 900 that are at the two mines that have been opened—

An Honourable Member: Reed.

Mr. Chomiak: At Reed, Mr. Speaker. We're going to have the jobs so people pay taxes and have a living. One job in one First Nations community to one person makes a significant difference, never mind 100 or 200. I—they don't even talk about the North. They never even talk about mining. They talk about it once a year when the Fraser Institute comes out. They criticize us. This year when the Fraser Institute comes out, they didn't say anything, not a peep, because the Fraser Institute said we're the second best in the country. Whoops, goes another.

So we're calling people and hear them say, we're overtaxed—we're overtaxed—when their own expert says we should decrease taxes. You know what, we'd rather have the jobs than taxes. We'd rather have the milling than the—we'd rather have the milling done here. We'd rather have the training done here. It's done at the university college of north. It's done with the mining council, Mr. Speaker.

I remember going to Wabowden where they trained six hard-rock miners, and we went to the graduation ceremony for six hard-rock miners. That was six First Nations families. The hall was full—the hall was full of family members because six men and women were going to get full-time work in mining which pays well and was provided for. That hall was full. They appreciated it. Those 10 students who went through the drilling program in Sagkeeng have a future. Those men and women that are working now at Vale have a future. Those men and women that are working at Lalor have a future. The fact that we have a mining advisory committee where First Nations, nine chiefs—nine chiefs—were sitting around

a table. They couldn't even get one chief to talk to them, Mr. Speaker.

* (11:20)

So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, not only is it the wrong resolution at the wrong time, it's wrong-minded. They don't have a comprehension of the importance of mining. They don't put any incentives into mining. Their own resolution says we should decrease taxes when, in fact, we already have the lowest taxes. There are some tax discussions that we've had with the mining companies; we continue to do. But we have the best prospecting and investment taxes in the country, according to PDAC, according to Fraser. And you know what? I hate to quote 'frader'—Fraser, because, usually, their—I don't agree with their analysis, but members opposite used to stand up every year and criticize us until this year, for some strange reason. And maybe that's because we're amongst the best in the country.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, this is not a motion that's worth discussing. It's inaccurate. It's not—it doesn't reflect reality, and, yes, while there certainly could be more done in mining, at this time in the exploration cycle, the best thing to do is to incent exploration, which we're doing, and it's to provide the tax holidays, which we're doing, and to train individuals and workers, which we're doing. And all of the support to places like Vale and the places that we've given support to to keep them open and operating, I think it's appreciated at the executive level; it's certainly not appreciated by members opposite.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I—first of all, I want to welcome our guests to the gallery here, and I'm certainly going to be interested in their take on the minister's presentation this morning. It's always interesting to hear what the minister has to say about mining.

You know, clearly, we on this side of the House we recognize the importance of mining, and we don't take the mining industry for granted like the minister does, and his caucus over there.

Mr. Speaker, we know there's 4,500 people involved in the mining industry in Manitoba. That's just direct jobs. There's a lot of spinoff jobs as well, you know, in terms of all kinds of industries, you know, rail, trucking, construction, engineering, environmental services, legal services, all of that. And, certainly in regards to northern Manitoba,

clearly, the mining sector is the largest employer of northern Manitobans and certainly the First Nations sector. And we applaud the good work that people like Vale and the HudBays of Manitoba are doing in terms of training and employing First Nations communities, and we think there should be more of that. That's why we bring this 'resolution' forward.

Now, the minister talks—he looks at this thing like there's rose-coloured glasses. Now, there is good things happening in the mining industry in Manitoba, and it's in spite of what the NDP government are doing. And what we're going to do today is try to lay out the issues where the government is failing this very important industry here in Manitoba. Now—and we're happy that the HudBays of the world are able to develop two new mines in Manitoba. Now, I'm not sure if this is NDP math again at hand. The 900 jobs that the ministers talk about, well, there's not 900 new jobs there, Mr. Speaker. That's not the reality at this point in time. We'd hoped there would be 900 more jobs, and if we get a good government here in Manitoba, maybe there will be an additional 900 good jobs in Manitoba.

The point of the matter is we're trying to point out here is about competitiveness. And Manitoba is not competitive with other jurisdictions, and it's up to the government of Manitoba to create a framework that will attract business to Manitoba. And, Mr. Speaker, if the minister is serious about the industry, he would look at the numbers, the hard-core numbers that show that we're not attracting business like we should. And we have to compete on a global basis. That's the nature of the mining industry now. We compete on a global basis. And we also compete with our neighbours. We compete with each province beside us. And we have to show that we can be competitive to attract that business. And this is the same in the extraction side, and it's the same on the exploration side.

Now, clearly, you know, Mr. Mintz, in his report, he's laying it on the line; he's just saying that Manitoba is not, from a tax perspective, not competitive. You know, we look at—there's only three provinces in Canada that actually charge the mining industry provincial sales tax: BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. And we know BC offers some rebates to the mining sector to assist in there. We know Saskatchewan has only 5 per cent provincial sales tax; Manitoba, 8 per cent sales tax. So our neighbours right beside us are charging less sales tax, and all of the other jurisdictions do not charge sales tax there. So, clearly, we're not competitive, just

singly on the sales tax side of it and that, clearly, when businesses look to invest in Manitoba, that has implications for investment, and it's clear.

And, of course, the Mining Association, you know, they make proposals, submissions to the Province prior to the budget and they've come out with a number of good ideas there that would attract business to Manitoba. But, of course, this government has chose to ignore every single submission that the industry has put forward; they've simply chose to ignore it. And I would say, submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that this government is taking the industry for granted and it's certainly not the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the exploration side of things, because really the exploration side of mining is a reflection of the future in mining. And to take a look at some of the hard numbers in terms of the investment money coming into Manitoba and then we'll look at why it's not coming into Manitoba, and that's where this government is failing.

Mr. Speaker, we reference Natural Resources Canada. We believe the numbers from Natural Resources Canada and we have a hard look at that, and they come out with annual submissions in terms of how much money is going to each jurisdiction in Canada. Now, clearly, we recognize around the world there is some issues with mining globally in terms of the costs and the evaluations of mining. But what we still have to look at is where we stand in Manitoba versus other jurisdictions. So if we look at the pie, in Manitoba last year on the exploration side, we only took in—1.6 per cent of all the exploration money in Canada is coming to Manitoba. This is the lowest percentage on record of the percentage of exploration money in Canada that's actually coming to Manitoba, the lowest in record. And just a few years ago we were four times that amount; just five years ago we were four times that amount. So, clearly, we are not sending a message to the industry that business is wanted here. In fact, we look at it, the junior exploration companies were actually dead last in Canada, which is not a record to be proud of. And if the minister was serious about this industry moving forward, he would look at these statistics and realize that something has to be done here in Manitoba. And that is why we bring this resolution out—forward. And, you know, we're talking about some good ideas here for things with Manitoba that we can do. You know, it's about developing some frameworks.

Now, let's talk about why things aren't being done here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. There's uncertainty around access to land; are we going to be able to develop mining resources here in Manitoba or is the government going to set aside a provincial park all across this great province?

Clearly, people are saying there's issues with developing licensing. You know, we've got people that applied for a licence for five and six years and don't hear back from this government whether they're going to be denied or going to be accepted. Five or six year delay in issuing a licence, Mr. Speaker, that is completely ridiculous. It's no wonder people don't want to come here. We would stop that ridiculous delay in licensing permits, that's certainly one thing we would do right away.

And, Mr. Speaker, these timeframes are ridiculous. They cost money—and the minister should know that those in the exploration business, there's timeframes they have to work within and those timeframes are very tight. And if this minister keeps delaying like he is, those investors are going to be looking to invest otherwise, and thus is the case and it's happened time and time again.

Now, clearly, the minister is not addressing his duty in terms of the duty to consult, and he has failed to deliver a process. Without that lack of process, you know, people won't be engaged. We—and I think it's up to the minister to put together a process that it a competent process, Mr. Speaker, that's obviously respectful of rights and the legal obligations that we have. But the minister and his government have failed to do that, and he's failed the industry and he's failed First Nations and Metis people because of that and it's a very sad state of affairs.

Mr. Speaker, we would love to do some more business. The First Nations would love to do more business. But because this government is lacking direction and leadership, we're not able to get there. And that is the point of this resolution, is to point out the issues where the government is failing—and we're clear on this side. We recognize the issues that are holding the industry back, holding these prospectors from developing and the mining companies from developing; it's pretty clear what the issues are. It's just going to take a government to actually address those.

* (11:30)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to reference a thesis by Gail Ferguson. Gail Ferguson did a thesis here

just released, and this is a current thesis where she went on and talked to 30 respondents who were interviewed, and these were Aboriginal, government and other in the mining industry. This was all done from August of 2014 to November 2014, and she really lays this out. So this is current document, current material, with people that are in the industry, and she's laid it out very succinctly.

And I want to quote from her conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and what she says is—and this is what people are telling her in the industry: A lack of an integrated and co-ordinated approach across Manitoba government departments has led to a need for improved understanding of the roles and responsibilities of interested parties. There is frustration with policies and communication structures. There's insufficient implementation of existing provincial policies, and this has increased the uncertainties regarding land claims, designation of protected areas and delays with obtaining exploration work permits. These uncertainties have continued to diminish the province's ability to attract mineral exploration and mine development and to foster lasting relationships among Aboriginal, government and mining industry. Aboriginal and industry representatives are particularly concerned with the need and clarification and performance with current policies and guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, that's what it's all about. This government's dropped the ball and it's time for change.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): You know, I must give some credit for effort here. It's got to be pretty tough when you're a Conservative critic for Northern Affairs or in terms of mining. And, you know, I've watched the member opposite, and he's trying. He's raising questions and he's—you know, he's come up with the fact that minutes weren't kept of the minister's Mining Advisory Council.

Mr. Speaker, effort, maybe, but you know what? I want to read into the record how 485 mineral exploration and development company executives feel about Manitoba's position in terms of mining. This is from the Fraser Institute: Canadian rankings, we're No. 2; worldwide rankings, we're No. 4. This is Manitoba.

Now, that didn't appear in this resolution. And I do have to give some credit, by the way, because I notice the dep. leader was in Thompson right around the time this came out, and, you know,

it was interesting watching him go from this doom-and-gloom scenario they had where we ranked, you know, because of some previous survey. I'm amazed that they didn't even bother to amend it to bring in the fact that the Fraser Institute—now, this is the Fraser Institute; we're not talking about a left-leaning, left anything—has said that Manitoba's the second best in the country and the fourth best jurisdiction in the world.

Now, I don't know when the last time the member took the time to travel around northern Manitoba where a lot of the mining is taking place. I would like to take him on a bit of a virtual tour about the reality of mining today. And, by the way, I do know that members opposite, when they released their northern strategy—they released it, actually, in Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker—and, you know, I realize it's like an expedition for them to come to northern Manitoba, but they might want to start coming up Highway 6—by the way, they will see some improvement in the highway from the highway work that's taking place—and I would like to invite them to go on a tour of Vale. And what they will notice at Vale, by the way, is that it's 2015, and the smelt—well, I've been there done that.

And maybe the member opposite might recall that only a few years ago Vale was going to shut down the smelter and the refinery. And what we did, Mr. Speaker, we worked with the steelworkers and we worked with the City of Thompson and we worked with Vale and we worked with the federal government, and we now have an extension, the smelter and the refinery is going to be open at least until 2019. That's how we work with the mining industry.

You might want to take a little drive down Highway 39, and we'll go to Snow Lake in the constituency of the member of Flin Flon. And the member may not have—I don't know if he's visited Snow Lake recently, but there's a mine there. It's the second best zinc deposit in the world—the Lalor Lake mine opened up when we were in government. And I could take him on a tour, Mr. Speaker, we might want to go up Highway 391 and see how close we're getting again to gold mining in that area, and he might want to talk to people about the exploration that's taking place.

And I can tell you, we've had two new mines open. This is the reality in Manitoba in this province with a government that's committed to mining. We have a dynamic mining sector and we do work with

the mining industry. We have one of the best jurisdictions in the world in terms of competitiveness, and we're going to build on that.

And I want to tell the members opposite, by the way, because you know what? They did announce, when they brought in their northern strategy, they always like to pick on something. You know, years ago, when it came to the North it was UCN. Remember, they were opposed to UCN. They were opposed to building campuses for UCN, and thank goodness we had an NDP government that built the new campus in my home community, the new addition in The Pas, and the many community campuses for UCN.

What did they also do? They also said they were going to cut funding for roads in northern Manitoba. Of course, they didn't make that announcement in northern Manitoba either. Their definition, by the way, of northern Manitoba is anything north of Riding Mountain, okay. I guess that's where, when you're in the Flat Earth Society, you reach the end of the flat earth.

But what did they do in their strategy? The one thing they've targeted for cutting is the East Side Road Authority. Well, talk about speaking out both sides of your mouth, Mr. Speaker. You know, if we're going to see—going to be the next level in terms of mining in this province it's going to be very much dependent on two things, and we're working on both. No. 1 is engaging in a real way with First Nations, and I want to commend our minister of mining for the groundbreaking work he's done in working with First Nations in this province and bringing all those interests to the table.

But the other one—despite building those transportation networks—I mean, how many mines are out there that could be developed, that need one thing? They need the transportation connection. I'd say Thompson right now exists not because of the nickel deposit strictly, but because the fact there was a rail line very close. The Bay Line wasn't built for mining, but because that connection was there in the early days of Thompson, they were able to connect in with a spur line and the rail was critical. Rail was in place well before the roads were put in place.

So how are we going to develop those mining deposits when you have members opposite once again are picking on northern Manitoba? Only thing they said they would cut is the East Side Road Authority. What does that mean? For the 22 communities that don't have road access it means

the Tory times will be tough times, Mr. Speaker. But for the mining industry, it would mean many of those deposits that are out there just will never get developed because not the transportation in place.

Now, I want to talk about some of the other key elements, Mr. Speaker. Why, again—if you want a party that's bad for mining it's the members opposite, and I want to talk about Manitoba Hydro. Kelsey, for example, in my area, the Kelsey dam was built to provide power to the Inco plant back in the 1950s. And what's kept the mining industry as competitive as it is in this province in many ways is the affordability factor, the fact that we have some of the cheapest power anywhere in North America.

And, Mr. Speaker, what would put that in jeopardy? Well, two things. One is the obvious, and that's privatization. And if members opposite say they have no plans to privatize Manitoba Hydro, some of us remember when they said they had no plans to sell off MTS either.

But it's not just the privatization. It's also in terms of the power supply. Let's put it on the record, Mr. Speaker. I like asking these trick questions, but, you know, name me one hydro development that the members opposite have been involved with since the 1960s. It's a trick question. The answer is: none. When Conservatives get in, they shut down. They shut down Limestone. They actually not only shut down Conawapa, they ripped out the copper dam, got involved in a lawsuit with Ontario and set back hydro development by a decade plus.

Now, they opposed Wuskwatim; they opposed the Keeyask dam, okay. What they do, Mr. Speaker, is—what they don't get is some of the biggest beneficiaries of that development are our energy, you know, consuming industries such as on the mining side. I mentioned that with Thompson, but because we have some of the cheapest rates and we have the available power supply, we have, I believe, a huge opportunity throughout the world.

* (11:40)

But, if the members were opposite, to quote their Hydro critic, I think he's talking about jamming the brakes on. Well, Mr. Speaker, you elect Tories; they jam the brakes. They jam the brakes on environmental, you know, in terms of environmental protections. They jam the brakes on hydro. They jam the brakes on the kind of economic development we're seeing in this province.

So I want to suggest not only, Mr. Speaker, do we rank highly with the—*[interjection]* I appreciate the member for Tuxedo maybe speaking on this, because I—she came to Thompson actually about a couple weeks after the survey came out. And I want put—hear her put on the record, second best in Canada, fourth best in the world in terms of mining.

But I want to suggest the following. There are issues, and I value our working relation with the mining industry. I—we worked really hard with Vale to save 500-plus jobs in Thompson and that's a huge accomplishment for this government. We're working hard in terms of the needs of HudBay right now in terms of road access. We're going to have major upgrade to the highway. This is part of our model as a government. Because, Mr. Speaker, when it comes down to it, I'm sorry if we neglected to keep minutes; that's all they can come out with. What we've done is we've invested in infrastructure. We've sat down around the tough times that we've worked with companies like Vale.

And I do believe that our mining industry is, indeed, one of the leading industries in the world. But we can do more, and we will do more. I like to quote this a lot of times. But I think, in mining, you can say much the same thing: Much accomplished; more to do. But I can tell you one thing: We're going to keep moving forward.

All the members opposite want to do is jam the brakes on and move backwards. So I reject this resolution, Mr. Speaker, and, quite frankly, the members should be embarrassed to bring an issue—withdraw it.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, where to begin.

This minister, the previous speaker, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), talked about jamming on the brakes, Mr. Speaker. The only person jamming on the brakes is he and his colleagues, and they're jamming on the brakes of the mining industry in this province, and they should be ashamed of themselves—they should be ashamed of themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I am shocked that the member for Thompson, especially given his seat in northern Manitoba, we know that the mining industry in Manitoba is the fourth largest primary industry in this province, and it's, in fact, the largest employer in northern Manitoba. And I'm shocked that the member for Thompson would stand up and say how wonderful things—all the wonderful things that he's

done for an industry that has gone from first to 27th now, I believe, or something. And I think it's unfortunate that they're not listening to people from the industry.

And I know that there's members of the industry in the gallery today, and I know that many of those members of the industry have tried to knock on the door of many of these ministers. They've tried to get through to these ministers, but these ministers are refusing to listen. And we're going nowhere in Manitoba, and it's putting one of our largest industries in Manitoba in jeopardy.

And, I think, members opposite should support this resolution, because this resolution is about—it's full of facts and realities. And, if this government wants to come to terms with reality of when it comes to the mining and exploration industries in this province, then they would support this resolution, because it's time for us all to work together when it comes to mining—this mining industry in our province. It needs all of us to work together, and we cannot afford to have a government any more that slams the door on a major industry and our province.

So I encourage all members opposite and all members of this House to support this resolution. It's the right thing to do. Let's not—let's stop putting a jam on the brakes—or jamming on the brakes, Mr. Speaker, like members opposite are when it comes to the mining industry. Thank you.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): I'd just like to say a few words against this PMR.

Coming from the North and lived there all my life, it's important to realize that the North and mining are important. And I remember I was talking to Chief Dumas, and I have got many opportunities from mining up in my community, from my dad working in the mine and also myself working in a mine. I worked at about four or five different mines in the area.

Mining in Flin Flon has always been tentative in the fact that, you know what, we only think we have five more years of ore. Well, you know, we've been there I think 100 years, I think, next year. And so we're always looking for ore. And there's great possibilities still in the greenbelt, which is one of the strongest mining areas, probably in the world; there's many mines that have been opened there.

I want to talk, I guess, from that perspective. Yes, there's 4,500 mining jobs that are created in the North. And this gives the opportunity to all

northerners to get these good jobs. In my constituency, I have the highest per capita income, but I also have the lowest per capita income. And that's where our government is working to try and train and educate and make sure that all people in the North have the opportunity to take advantage of mining.

I know the possibilities of mining up north at Brochet, they're looking at maybe possibly uranium mining up there. I know in Lynn Lake mines—there's been many mines opened and closed there, but right now, Carlisle mining is looking at opening a gold mine there. And that raises optimism.

And, of course, in the Flin Flon area, triple 7, the HudBay took over the War Baby, so they're looking at that. But also Callinan, just out of Flin Flon, has some properties that they think could add the life to Flin Flon.

Of course we've talked about the two main mines that have been started by HudBay and Lalor and Reed. And I'm proud to say my nephew is working in Snow Lake, and he says, this is the best kept secret, well, he said in the world, but, I mean, in Canada, probably in Manitoba. He's got a great paying job and a great community, and they're looking for people to come there, not only for jobs but also to start businesses. So Snow Lake is really look—their optimism's really looking good.

I think what we have to look at—and I appreciate the opposition remarks. You know, things aren't perfect. But I'm a member of the Mining Advisory Council with the minister of mines, and I have a lot of respect for the minister of mines. He's taken on a tough job. Mining is not the same as it was 20 years ago. We have to work very closely with the First Nations, and the mining minister has an advisory council with 10 chiefs. And we're working together.

It's very important that we work together with the mining companies, with the exploration companies, the junior mining companies and First Nations to come up with a better system, and getting rid of some of the bureaucracy that the member on this side has mentioned, because he's right. There is, you know—when you go to get the licences or fees, it is taking too long. But we are working together.

I know the honourable minister of mines is working with the Minister of Conservation to work some of these plans out. I know that people are concerned that there's too many parks in Manitoba. Well, you know, like, in the Grass River park, there's

been like 60 mines there that have gone there. And I know there's possibility of diamond mines in northeastern Manitoba. And, you know, we'll look there. We'll maybe trade land.

I'm saying that the Manitoba, and our government, the NDP, is always looking for opportunities to making mining stronger, healthier and an opportunity for all northern Manitobans. And that is so important, because when I grew up, there was, like, Flin Flon, Lynn Lake, Snow Lake and Thompson. That was it. And the other communities weren't taking part in some of the opportunities in mining. But now we're training. We've got the Flin Flon mining school. We've got Thompson taking students from Vale and training them to work in the mine. This is all important.

Do we have more work to do? Darn rights we do. And when—I thank the mining committee up there for coming and listening to us, because we're listening. We're listening to you. There's got to be some changes. We can't give you any advice on the lemonade stand—that's your baby, so we won't do that—but definitely in mining, it's important that we all listen, and like the last speaker said, it's important for all of us to be together and strengthen mining in Manitoba.

We mentioned the Fraser Institute, which is not even mentioned in the PMR, which, you know, I don't know why—second in Canada, fourth in the world. Those are good numbers. But you know what, they're just numbers. And we've got to even do better than that.

So thank you for giving me time to speak, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very pleased to speak. Actually, I didn't expect to be speaking this morning, time-wise. But I have to say that I've listened to some very good comments and the minister's comments really nailed it down pretty good, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen).

* (11:50)

The fact of the matter is that Manitoba has a long history of mining, and this government, as mentioned by the previous speakers, has a phenomenal record and one that the Conservative opposition are having very much difficulty in exploiting. I mean, we have got a—the Fraser Institute producing a report this year indicating that Manitoba

is, I believe, the second in the country and fourth in the world in environment for mining.

And I can tell you there are a lot of other opportunities that mining can present itself to Manitobans, and one of them is the whole area of aluminum smelting. And, you know, those of us who have been around for a while remember the good old days when Sterling Lyon was the premier of Manitoba, and a big announcement was made how the government was going to promote a—an aluminum smelter. And, you know, Manitoba's attractive to people that want to smelt aluminum because of the—our hydroelectric resources. As a matter of fact, the mining consortium that want to smelt the aluminum in Manitoba are looking for, you know, I believe it's 300 megawatts of electricity. They cannot find that in a lot of other places. So while bauxite is not mined in Canada, it's brought in from areas where it is mined. In Guyana and other spots it's mined. It's smelted, I believe, in Quebec; I believe, in Kitimat, if not mistaken, in British Columbia.

Anyway, the big plan for the Conservatives was to build a big aluminum smelter, as I recall, somewhere around Stonewall, if I'm not mistaken. And everything was going fine with this smelter, and all of a sudden the Free Press did some digging and they revealed that, I think, one or two Conservative MLAs managed to go and negotiate leases, options to buy land in exactly—exactly—where the smelter was going to be built. *[inaudible]* to the reporter how he was planning to drive his cows all the way from around Virden, Manitoba—that's quite a long way—so they could graze around Stonewall, and that was a pretty big nose-stretcher, even in those days.

So, you know, looking forward—and I, you know, I've got to be able to—I guess we have to be able to predict what a Conservative government just might do if it—we ever got one here in Manitoba. But, you know, we know that the aluminum smelter idea is still out there. They're currently interested in Manitoba, at least, as far as, you know, the Manitoba government's ability to expand our hydro production. I don't know how keen they will be when they find out what the Conservative plans are regarding Manitoba Hydro expansion, whether or not they would sell it off. But we can look forward to a future of a smelter being built here. *[interjection]* I'm—you know, I'm waiting for the member to start announcing that. He's making policies for this future government. He's already saying there's going to be, you know, tax free, tax holidays. So let's hear from

him. You know, how far are we going to go here? Are we going to be building a aluminum smelter? Is that what we're to be look forward to in the future here?

The fact of the matter is that this is not a very strong file, I guess, we could—*[interjection]*—from—the part of the Conservatives. They do not have a strong base from which to make the arguments that they are strong in the mining sector. And when we look at the way Manitoba mining is developing—you know, you have to recognize that a lot of our good fortune, our good economic fortune at the moment is due to the low interest rates. Any corporation—and corporations are flush with cash these days because interest rates are low. They—rather than having to in the old days when interest rates were 8, 9 per cent 30 years ago when interest rates went up to, briefly, 18 per cent, I mean, a lot of individuals and corporations simply took their money and invested in GICs and things like that that gave them very high interest rates, a few points above inflation.

Well, today that's just not the case. If anybody's looked at their investment portfolio, whether you're an individual or whether you're a corporation, you're realizing your money is sitting there and it's actually not doing very much. And that's provided a huge incentive for private industry and, in fact, governments to take the money and put it to better use, and almost any economic activity out there is better use than just leaving it sitting around.

So companies are looking to produce, whether it's, you know, new mines, whether—any type of economic activity is been—is seen a very, very huge increase in activities in the last little while because of the interest rates.

So, you know, I have to feel sorry for the opposition, because they, once again, find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, and, as much as they, you know, want to criticize the government, they're sitting back here very unhappy that we are having a terrific economy. They—we have national studies showing that Manitoba is either going to be, is, or will be the number 1 economy in the country.

And, once again, they see their fortunes start to slide and they start looking forward to who the next future leader of the Conservative Party will be, because each and every time they bring up a new leader, doesn't get them anywhere. The current leader's actually muzzled the members. You know, I've listened to the members now over the last while,

their speeches on the budget, and I just—they've been ordered to keep quiet, you know. He'd been told by the new management—the new-old management, you know, out comes the envelope, if you say anything that's, you know, causes us any difficulty, you know, you are going to suffer.

So we're looking at a very, very quiet group over here, desperately—I think they're actually noticing that their position is eroding, because they've got, you know, policies like this where the member introduces a resolution which is already out of date, doesn't amend it, brings it in, brings people into the gallery trying to impress them, and does everything but. You know, like, if you can't put a resolution together and if your argument doesn't make sense, then, I mean, clearly, there's got to be some more adult management applied over here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had planned to make some comments on some other very valuable contributions that the mining industry is making to Manitoba, but, clearly, you know, this group has really got to do a little more work on its resolutions like this. Thank you.

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): As somebody who actually benefited from this government's policy of having schools in the North, graduating from UCN, you know, I think that it's just amazing that the

opposition would come up with their northern plan and not think it out properly.

We look at their northern plan when they didn't want to invest in UCN, when they said no to anything in the north. Well, how would that affect the mining companies who need to have good educated people up there? How about people in the nursing field, when they're—when they were in and all the nurses were gone and people were leaving this province? How would that happen?

They always want to point to Saskatchewan and talk about how great it is over there. Well, how about the more expensive child care in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? How about the people who work for the mining companies here who benefit from the lowest—second lowest child-care rates in the country being right here in Manitoba? How about our health-care programs, our free cancer-care drugs that people in Saskatchewan don't have?

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for St. Norbert will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 21, 2015

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