

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Daryl Reid  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 8, 2012**

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 24—The Energy Savings Act**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** I move, seconded by the minister of culture, heritage and citizenship, that Bill 24, The Energy Savings Act; Loi sur les économies d'énergie, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce this bill which is intended to improve energy efficiency and conservation across the province. Amongst other things, it enables Manitoba Hydro to develop an on-meter efficiency improvements program as a financing tool that is linked to the building rather than as an individual loan.

The proposed act will improve energy efficiency and conservation initiatives by making funds available, improving planning and reporting, and increasing access by all Manitobans.

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

**Bill 208—The Remembrance Day Awareness Act and Amendments to The Public Schools Act**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I move, seconded by the member for Agassiz (Mr. Briese), that Bill 208, The Remembrance Day Awareness Act and Amendments to The Public Schools Act, be read for the first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Graydon:** This bill proclaims November 5th to 11th in each year as a Remembrance Day awareness week by amending The Public Schools Act. It also requires schools to hold Remembrance Day exercises on the last school day before Remembrance Day.

I believe it's important that the young and new Manitobans understand how our free and democratic

society was preserved by our veterans, and I encourage all members of the House to support this bill.

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

No further bills?

**PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** Oh, hold on one sec.

Leave of the House to return to introduction of bills?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been denied.

The honourable member for Steinbach, on a petition.

**Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—Steinbach**

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by P. Toews, R. Krentz, P. Koop and thousands of other Manitobans.

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

#### **Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern Manitoba**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

During early October 2011, parts of southeastern Manitoba were hard hit by wildfires. Thanks to the swift action of provincial and municipal officials, including 27 different fire departments and countless volunteers, no lives were lost and property damage was limited.

However, the fight against the wildfires reinforced the shortcomings with the communications system in the region, specifically the gaps in cellular phone service.

These gaps made it difficult to co-ordinate firefighting efforts and to notify people that they had to be evacuated. The situation also would have made it difficult for people to call for immediate medical assistance if it had been required.

Local governments, businesses, industries and area residents have for years sought a solution to this very serious communications challenge.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the appropriate provincial government departments to consider working with all stakeholders to develop a strategy to swiftly address the serious challenges posed by limited cellular phone service in southeastern Manitoba in order to ensure that people and property can be better protected in the future.

And this petition is signed by O. Gentes, S. Derbowka and L. Gosselin and many more fine Manitobans.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have 20 grade 9 students from the W.C. Miller Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Jeff Andrews. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

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

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Access to Winnipeg Jets Season Tickets**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, just in the past month, this Premier broke his promise on taxes. He praised ministers who break election laws. He supports ministers who abuse the civil service for political purposes. He appointed his party auditor to a Crown corporation board, and now we have a situation where a minister in his Cabinet yesterday misled the House over the NDP-run, front-of-the-line ticket master scheme that they're running for Winnipeg Jets tickets.

I want to ask the Premier: In light of the dishonest comments made in the House yesterday by the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), how can anybody trust anything that this Premier and this government have to say?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, there are several factual errors in what the member said, but let me focus on this. The member did not mislead the House subject to any rulings you might make.

The reality is the member said he would provide information, and information will be provided on all the questions that he was asked, and he will do that as he committed to do.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is 24 hours behind on his briefings, because yesterday in the House the minister said, we're still working on compiling the information. It takes a lot of time. We're working on it even though six weeks has gone by.

And then it turns out this morning that in response to a FIPPA request from the Taxpayers Federation that the corporation turned around a response by March the 30th, which is now more than a month ago. And so at the same time as he was

running interference in the House, they had already compiled information and provided it to the Taxpayers Federation.

\* (13:40)

And, Mr. Speaker, further detail is required, but how are Manitobans supposed to take them seriously and take them at their word when you have a minister who, in the House, denies any information when it turns out that three ministers now, and counting, have received Jets tickets, when he denies that he's got that information at the same time as they're providing it to other parties?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member who was being questioned here indicated he would provide responses to about 10 questions, and he will do that.

And the member also needs to know—the members opposite also need to know that with respect to Jets tickets we've brought out a very clear directive that no minister or senior official should receive the benefit of free tickets from a Crown corporation or any private business. This has been clarified so that we can have greater certainty about how these matters are to be handed—handled. The three Cabinet ministers that did receive tickets have repaid those tickets, and that has put the matter to rest from their perspective as they paid for them out of their own pocket.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the repayment of the money and the cobbling together of a policy didn't happen until after they got caught. If it wasn't for the fact that people were asking questions, they would have carried on taking their free Jets tickets. They would have carried on abusing their positions in office.

And what we have, Mr. Speaker, is a pattern: a broken promise on taxes, the support for a minister who breaks election laws, support for ministers who abuse the civil service. We have party auditors who are supposed to be independent being appointed to Crown corporation boards, and now we have a rampant, front-of-the-line ticket master distribution scheme being run for the benefit of NDP ministers.

The Jets have their GST line. On the other side we've got an MSA line of three ministers who line up for freebies—front of the line when other Manitobans are waiting.

How can this Premier expect Manitobans to trust his comments and trust his integrity when so much of this sort of nonsense is going on under his watch?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member is very good at exaggeration in this matter. The reality is as follows: that the members who received the tickets have repaid them and a new policy directive has been put in place, which applies to all members on this side of the House.

I hope that there is a policy directive from the Leader of the Opposition with respect to members on his side of the House. We see no policy directive from him at this stage of the game. I hope he brings one forward very quickly. We have put a policy directive in place that does not allow ministers to receive tickets, or MLAs to receive tickets, from Crown corporations or private corporations inside Manitoba. That policy will also apply to senior officials.

The reality is this, Mr. Speaker: We know the Jet tickets are a very hot item; we know that there's a shortage of them; and we require a special policy to ensure, at a time when there's a shortage of tickets, nobody gets an unfair advantage in receiving those tickets. And that's why the policy directive is put in place.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition: What is the policy he has for the members of his caucus?

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

**Mr. McFadyen:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier, in his attempt to deflect away from the conduct of his government and his ministers, is now attempting to cast aspersions on other members of the House. The fact is that there's not a member on this side of the House that has received free tickets from Crown corporations. There's not a member on this side of the House that has abused a ministerial privilege.

And so, rather than attempting to throw mud at other members of the Legislature, I would ask that the Premier be called to order, take responsibility for the government that he leads, stop making up excuses for their two-for-one tax credit schemes, for their falsified election returns, which he was part of, for the fact that they appoint auditors to Crown corporations, for the fact that he breaks his election promises, for the fact that they break election laws and he covers up for it, for the fact that he supports

ministers who abuse the civil service, for the fact that he appoints auditors to boards who should be independent.

Rather than accept responsibility for all those things happening under his watch, why does the Premier—

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

Before I recognize other members of the House, I just want to caution all honourable members when we're talking about points of order or matters of privilege here, we stick to what breaches of the rules have occurred as a result of the item being called to the attention of the Speaker. So I ask and caution all honourable members to make sure that we indicate to the Speaker which rules have actually been broken.

The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Selinger:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, the very simple point I was making was is that we've put a policy directive in place that applies—the very simple point was is that we've put a policy directive in place that applies to all ministers, MLAs and senior officials in this government. If the member opposite wants to raise the bar on public performance I look to him to set a standard for his caucus on a go-forward basis so that we know what the rules are that apply on the other side of the House as well. That's a totally reasonable request. If the member wants to see a higher standard, he should show some leadership.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order that was raised, I thank all honourable members for their contribution. I must indicate to the House that I didn't hear any indication of which particular rules might have been breached that would allow me to rule on. So, therefore, I must indicate to the House that there is no point of order.

#### **Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Access to Winnipeg Blue Bombers Tickets**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, in the response to a freedom of information request, the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission revealed that in the 2011-2012 Winnipeg Blue Bomber season, the MLCC was in possession of 126 season tickets or 1,386 regular season, pre-season, and playoff tickets. Yes, you heard right, 1,386 individual tickets.

Can the minister provide a list of all political staff, board members and MLAs who may have had access to the 1,386 Winnipeg Blue Bomber tickets?

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the member for Assiniboine misled the Legislature. Perhaps today he can tell the truth.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister charged with the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act):** Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the—my colleague is following up on a request, a very large request, that was made by members opposite. My colleague is following up on the 10 questions that have been put to him. I'm sure that members opposite would want my colleague to be thorough and to be complete in his follow-up on this important question.

The important point is, Mr. Speaker, that this government has put in place a policy upon which will govern ministers and MLAs of this side of the House, a policy that I will be sitting down with the Crown Corporations Council to make sure the Crown corporations know what this policy is too. We want to be very clear that we'll put a fair framework in place that doesn't disadvantage everyday Manitobans.

**Mr. Schuler:** Mr. Speaker, this is a policy by the seat of their pants. They make it up as they go along.

Of the 1,386 Winnipeg Blue Bomber tickets that the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission had access to, 286 of those tickets are not accounted for in the freedom of information request. They seem to be missing.

Will the minister release the list so that Manitobans can know which political staff, board members, or MLAs may have used the missing 286 Blue Bomber tickets?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that the hottest ticket in town is that of the Winnipeg Jets, and there's no doubt that this government has been very clear that we need to have a policy in place. Given the—given what—given the experience that we've had over the last year, this Cabinet very clearly has put in place a policy that says that Cabinet ministers do not receive—

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

I'm having difficulty hearing the answer to the question posed by the honourable member for St. Paul, and I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members of the House to allow the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Struthers:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's very clear that this government is putting in place a policy that ensures fairness for Manitobans. It's a policy that we've been working and doing our homework on for a number of weeks to make sure that we get it right, to make sure that we're thorough, to make sure that we respond to the situations that we foresaw developing out of what was a very successful Jets year, which means, Mr. Speaker, that tickets are hard to come by and Manitobans expect that no one in this House gets—elbows them out of the way to get a ticket. We're going to ensure that.

I want to know where members opposite—

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please, Minister.

**Mr. Schuler:** This out-of-touch government and this out-of-touch minister now get up and they're basically saying that they're entitled to their entitlements. That's a disgrace, Mr. Speaker.

In the freedom of information requests, 286 tickets are unaccounted for. How is it that there seems to be so many tickets missing in action? The number, Mr. Speaker, is frankly staggering: 286 tickets missing.

Can the minister who's responsible for the Crown corporation get out of his seat and tell us the truth? Who got those tickets?

**Mr. Struthers:** The member for St. Paul is exactly wrong, Mr. Speaker. He's incorrect.

Mr. Speaker, this government is putting forward a policy that makes sure that nobody is entitled. We'll make sure that nobody in this—on this side of the House feels a sense of entitlement when it comes to Winnipeg Jets tickets.

We're very clear. This policy will be strong. This policy will be enforceable. This policy will be clear to everybody on this side of the House. The policy will be clear to the Crown corporations involved.

The only thing that's not clear, Mr. Speaker, is whether members opposite think that they're above this and that they can go to games whenever they like on whosever ticket is going to pay for theirs. They should come clean and they should stand up with us and put a fair framework in place, as this government is doing.

### **Crown Corporations Policy for Access to Sports Tickets**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Yesterday afternoon, after this government was caught with its hands in the Jets ticket cookie jar, they quickly ran out and they started scribbling out a policy on the back of a napkin. Part of that napkin was leaked in the media today and it showed up in some of the published prints this morning, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) can table for the House this great policy he's been talking about. Can he table for the House so we know what this policy actually is?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister charged with the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act):** Mr. Speaker, work on this policy started a number of weeks ago, well ahead of anybody in the opposition even being interested in this whole topic. We've been working to make sure that our policy is consistent. We're making sure our policy is consistent with what we see happening in other jurisdictions. We've done that homework.

We've looked at several options to make sure that we address the problem of accessibility when it comes to Jets tickets so that we can have a fair system in place.

Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that we will have a policy in place that—we'll have a policy in place that will prohibit Cabinet ministers and folks at Crown corporations from accepting free tickets for the Winnipeg Jets.

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

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yesterday the minister—and he repeated it again today—said that this policy, which still isn't done, is going to apply to Jets tickets but not to Bomber tickets. I think he is so completely out of touch with the public, Mr. Speaker. That is what the minister said; he said in a paper, and he said it today.

The public is wondering why it is that these minister and the Crown corporations heads of boards should be getting free tickets for any sporting events on the back of taxpayers. That's what the public wants to know.

I wonder why it is he sees the distinction between the Jets tickets and whether or not his friends in his Cabinet should be getting free tickets to the other sporting events in this province.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, first of all, I think the member knows that the hottest ticket in town is the Winnipeg Jets tickets and that there is a very much a demand for those tickets. There are very much a demand for those tickets and what this government does not want to do, Mr. Speaker, what this government does not want to do is set some people up, as an entitlement if you will, but set some people up in the position where they elbow out of the way other Manitobans who want to get to Jets games.

We're moving forward with this policy. I would invite members opposite to move along with us, or do they believe they are entitled to get ahead of Manitobans in the lineup for Jets tickets as well, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Steinbach, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The policy says no free Jets tickets for Cabinet ministers but free Bomber tickets for Cabinet ministers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, he just doesn't get it. It's not about scarcity. There's many a people out there who might want Bomber tickets and they might be able to get them at the box office but they can't afford them. What they're upset about isn't that the tickets aren't available; it's that the government is getting tickets on their taxpayers' dollars when they can't afford the tickets. That is the issue. My goodness.

Why is it—can this minister stand up and justify giving free Bomber tickets to his friends in Cabinet, but he says the Jets tickets are difference? Why should taxpayers who can't afford those tickets pay for your tickets, sir?

**Mr. Struthers:** We're very clearly saying to Manitobans that they're not going to pay for our tickets because we are putting forward a policy that says that we're not accepting those tickets, Mr. Speaker. You know, I hear members opposite—I—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

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

I'm having continuing difficulty hearing the questions and the answers. I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members to allow me to be able to hear the comments being made in the Assembly so if there is a breach of the rule I might be able to provide some direction on that.

And also I ask all honourable members of the House when they're making comments, please to direct them through the Chair.

The honourable Minister of Finance, to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Struthers:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to be very clear. Those ministers who have accepted tickets and attended the games have repaid that money. That, we've been very clear about.

Any tickets that have been accepted to Jets games, they've been repaid, and we're putting in place a strong policy to make sure that we don't have the situation where Manitobans are left out. And, as we move forward, we can consider whether this policy needs to be put in place for Bomber games and for other events, if that demand is there. We are very intent of putting a fair framework—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Minister's time.

#### **Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Misinformation on Winnipeg Jets Season Tickets**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the minister who is responsible for the Manitoba Lotteries and Liquor Control Commission brought false information to this House. He denied that there was information that he had information on which Cabinet ministers, which MLAs and staff, actually had access to Jets tickets. He said they were working on that information, and yet, we hear that, clearly, over a month ago, five weeks ago, he provided that information to another party.

Will that minister stand in his place and admit today he brought false information and he misled this House, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** Clearly, the member opposite is not—the question she's asking is simply not accurate. I have had the opportunity to look at *Hansard* to look at what was asked yesterday. And what was asked yesterday, what was asked at the committee, was for a list of names.

I'm now looking at the FIPPA that the member opposite is referring to. There are no names on that FIPPA whatsoever. So, clearly, it is different information.

What they have asked for is a list of names. That was one of about 10 questions that they asked. The minister has committed to get them that information, and he will get them that information.



**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, clearly, Mr. Speaker, we cannot trust this government or believe anything that they have to say.

Yesterday, the minister said that he didn't have the information that was requested, but we learned that he'd already given that information to another third party, clearly, over a month ago, Mr. Speaker.

Did this minister, did he mislead this House, or is he simply so incompetent he does not know what his department is doing, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Howard:** I know that all ministers on this side of the House endeavour to make sure that they can answer questions fully and that members opposite get the information that they request.

So I am going to just once again refer to *Hansard* of yesterday and the question that was asked by the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler). In his question, he said: He said that he would provide a list of all political staff, board members and MLAs who may have had access to the Winnipeg Jets season tickets. My question is: Can he provide that list to the Legislature today? The minister at the time responded that he had made a commitment to do that and was working on that.

Today they allege that that information was already in hand, but, in fact, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the FIPPA there are no names. It is not the same information that was requested yesterday. It is listed by office. And that was not, as I read *Hansard*, that was not the question that the member opposite had asked.

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Morris, on a final supplementary.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that breaks their election promises. This is a government that allows Cabinet ministers to break the law with no consequences. This is a government that allows ministers to use their staff for political purposes, and now we hear that they've appointed members to the Crown corporation's board that were NDP donors, and yesterday they brought false information to this House.

Mr. Speaker, the minister either misled this House with false information, or he does not know what his department is doing; he's totally incompetent. I ask that minister: Which is it, Mr. Speaker?

**Ms. Howard:** I mean, I will say for the member opposite again that we are endeavouring on this side of the House to provide them the full information that they requested. The minister committed to doing that and the minister will do that.

But I would caution the member opposite—I would caution her—sometimes when one has a big brush of mud, some of it gets splashed on yourself. And before she gets too into talking about auditors, I would remind her that in her 2007 election return, the same person that audited that return is also listed on the list of donors, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Manitoba Liquor Control Commission Access to Winnipeg Jets Season Tickets**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** And yesterday in the House, the minister responsible for the liquor commission indicated clearly that he needed some time to gather together the information. Last night, three Cabinet ministers had to pay money back. So, Mr. Speaker, government already knew who got the tickets and who didn't. And we still don't know today whether that's the only three Cabinet ministers.

If they had the names for Cabinet ministers, what other staff or board members received tickets? Obviously, they have the information and the minister didn't come clean yesterday.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister charged with the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act):** Mr. Speaker, we've—I've been very clear that this government is coming forward with a policy that will be fair, that will address the accessibility issues when it comes to Jets tickets.

I also was very clear, Mr. Speaker, that any minister in this government who received tickets, Jets tickets, paid for those Jets tickets out of their own money.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will—we are endeavouring to get the information—all of the information to all of the questions that the members opposite are interested in. We've been up front in saying we would follow up with that, and that's under way.

Mr. Speaker, my hope is that members opposite would take this as seriously as we are.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, this is damage control at its best.

Mr. Speaker, three Cabinet ministers came clean last night after the minister responsible said that he didn't have any information or any names. Could they not go to all of their staff and ask the same question that they did of the ministers?

Mr. Speaker, how many staff members, how many board members, and how many possible other ministers or MLAs in this government received tickets?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the member for River East is trying to be helpful. I think she's trying to contribute in a positive way. But we have to be careful about how we characterize some of the questions that come across. The tickets were paid weeks and months ago, so let's not try to be overly clandestine on the other side.

We're up front in putting forward a policy that says no to the acceptance of tickets for ministers on this side of the House. We're going to sit down with the Crown Corporations Council and talk about an approach that the Crowns can put in place as well and follow the leadership of this government, Mr. Speaker.

But I would caution members opposite to be very careful on how they characterize some—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Minister's time has expired.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** But damage control and putting a policy in place after you get caught, Mr. Speaker, is not a way to govern and be accountable to the taxpayers of Manitoba and to people who can't afford Jets tickets who are paying for Cabinet ministers and their staff for Jets tickets.

Will the government today, and will the minister, have the courage to stand up? Rather than having everyone else speak on his behalf, will he stand up today, will he have the courage to tell us now how many ministers, how many MLAs and how many political staff received Jets tickets through the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I would ask members opposite to be very careful in how they characterize and how they put their questions forward. Nobody on this side of the House—nobody on this side of the House had their tickets paid for by the people of Manitoba. Nobody. It is incorrect to— for members opposite to suggest that in this House. It's absolutely incorrect.

And, on top of that, Mr. Speaker, this government is putting in place a framework, a fair framework, for the distribution of Winnipeg Jets tickets. Crown corporations, from time to time, advertise and they sponsor games. Our view on this side of the House is that the tickets that are obtained that way should go to minor league hockey teams. That's what we're looking for.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that that kind of support for the Winnipeg Jets is fine; what we don't believe is fine is if some people have a—elbow their way to the front to make sure they get—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Time's expired.

### **Crown Corporations Policy for Access to Sports Tickets**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** You know, Mr. Speaker, those minor league teams have been here for more than a year. They would have loved to have had those tickets last year, but instead Cabinet ministers and friends of the Cabinet were getting those tickets.

This shows just how out of touch this government is. The minister is crafting a policy based on the scarcity of tickets, whether or not something is a hot ticket.

I want to tell that minister that for a single mother who might want to take their kids to a Bomber game, for example, that's a scarce ticket because she can't afford that ticket. Why should she pay for your ticket, sir?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister charged with the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act):** She's not. Mr. Speaker, I also want to make sure that members opposite understand that the—up to a thousand minor league players right across the province, through the Manitoba Lotteries Flight Deck program, have been receiving tickets. And that's the way it should be.

And if members opposite are so committed to having minor league hockey players and school patrol groups come forward and benefit, then they should come with us and follow our lead in terms of getting a framework in place that is fair for Manitobans when it comes to distribution of these Jets tickets, Mr. Speaker. We think this is an important issue of fairness, and we're willing to move forward and act on it. I only wish members opposite would do the same.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, for the September 20th game there were two tickets that went to the board of MLCC, four tickets to head office manager, four tickets to store managers. I wonder if they're minor league hockey players. Is that what the minister is saying? They didn't go, by and large, to minor league hockey players; they went to your friends. They went to Cabinet ministers. They went to people that you wanted them to go to. And now what the minister is saying, and what he said in the press this morning, is that sports tickets are going to continue to go to those who sit on boards of Crown corporations and Cabinet ministers. He doesn't get it.

The issue isn't whether the ticket is hard to get. The issue isn't whether it's scarce. It isn't whether or not it's a hot ticket. The issue is that there is no public function for you to be at those games; you're going there because you want to have fun, and you want the taxpayers to pay for it.

Why should taxpayers pay for your tickets to any of these sporting events?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage members opposite to be careful in their assumptions. In Bomber games, for example, of the 126 tickets, 100 tickets were in the end zone, tickets that were donated at charitable organizations.

So there's a lot of organizations out there who very clearly are committed to making sure that the benefits of sponsorships and the benefits of advertisements in terms of these tickets become these charitable organizations so more people can attend sporting events in this city.

\* (14:10)

But, Mr. Speaker, we are very committed to making sure that we put in place a fair framework for the—these tickets. We're very committed to show leadership. This government has—is going to be—it's very clear in saying that Cabinet ministers will not be accepting those tickets. Crown corporations—I was sitting with them as the minister in charge of the Crown corporations act and council—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. Times.

**Mr. Goertzen:** There were 286 Bomber tickets unaccounted for that we don't know went to anybody in a sports organization. But I would say this, Mr. Speaker, I would say this: If one Bomber ticket, if one Jets ticket, went to your friends, to the Cabinet ministers, at the expense of anybody who couldn't

afford it and who had to pay for it on the taxpayers' dime, that is one too many, sir. And I don't know why this minister and this government doesn't get it.

Why don't they get it, that if there is no public reason, there's no public function, there's no public, valid explanation in terms of why you're going to the game, in terms of a government reason—and I can't think of any—why should the taxpayers pay for you so you can go out and have a good time, while that single mother with two kids at home—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. One minute, one minute.

I've cautioned the honourable members of the House before. Please place your comments through the Chair. That's the rules of the House here. So I ask for the co-operation of all honourable members.

The honourable Minister of Finance, to respond.

**Mr. Struthers:** It would also be helpful, Mr. Speaker, if my friends across the way could pick a story and stick to it. The member—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Struthers:** They call into question what some of the corporations are doing with these tickets, and yet the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), this morning on CJOB, says: Manitoba Liquor Control Commission uses them for promotion and that kind of stuff. We have no problem with that, or even if they used them for junior staff or promotion for staff or that kind of thing.

Why don't—we're coming forward with a comprehensive, fair framework for these tickets. The members opposite seem to be all over the map, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are saying two things at the same time. Why don't they just adopt the same policy that we're putting forward?

#### **First Nations Communities Water and Sewer Infrastructure**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** In 12 years of this government, the number of children in care has skyrocketed from about 5,000 to about 10,000. The Premier's government has taken so many kids away from their families that more than 7 per cent of children have been in care by the age of seven.

The Premier's been apprehending children rather than supporting children and families. The Premier's failure to support families is obvious in the dramatic 500 per cent increase in the number of families who are so poor that they have to use food banks. The

Premier's failure to support children and families is obvious in his failure to ensure all those living in northern communities have access to running water.

Why is the Premier not acting to support children and families in Manitoba?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** I actually—I appreciate the question from the member for River Heights because it focuses on a topic that's very important to Manitobans: reducing poverty among families. We have reduced poverty among single parents in Manitoba by 57 per cent. That's been done over the last 12 years, and the member has voted against every measure we have taken to support families in Manitoba.

We added back the National Child Benefit that was clawed back from people on social assistance by the members of the opposition party. We've added that back; the member from River Heights voted against that. We provided a family benefit that applies to working families, low-income working families; all members on the opposite side of the House voted against that. We've dramatically expanded the Healthy Child program in Manitoba so that we provide prenatal benefits, home visiting and nursing services to young families when they're getting started. It's considered one of the best programs in the country. And we've more than doubled the number of daycare spots in Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Marni Brownell, a senior research scientist at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and other—and a prestigious international journal, *Lancet*, has said there's no evidence the Premier's policy of taking lots and lots of kids into care, rather than supporting families, is working.

Indeed, yesterday, when I asked, the Premier said he's putting \$90 million into an east-side road and more into training, but he's not putting money directly into ensuring no families are without running water.

Why is the Premier ready to support everything else but ensuring families have access to the clean running water to have a shower, to wash their hands, to keep clean and well? When will the Premier act to support one of the most critical and basic rights, the right to clean running water?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, again, I do appreciate the question. We do support that in an unprecedented way.

The road on the east side provides the—access for goods and services to those communities at a much lower price than having to fly them in. The training that's being provided to people so that they can install clean water and clean sewage treatment systems in their communities is essential to ensure that the employment opportunities go to the people in the area and they have the skills on how to install these kinds of facilities and maintain them in the future. Those are fundamental commitments that we've made.

The federal government last fall indicated after the Deputy Premier met with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs that they would make some additional investment in that community. We know it's not sufficient. We've said we will go with you every step of the way and provide additional investment on our side of the House.

We are committed to working towards reducing the number of families in First Nations communities that do not have access to clean water or sewage. We will do it through training. We will do it through infrastructure investments, both roads and as well as airlines, and we will take any necessary additional measures that we can to ensure that those families get treated equitably with everybody else in that—

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he'll support roads and training, but there's an urgent need to ensure families have clean running water.

His government has been aware of for many years the successful Ontario-Canada partnership set up on Bob Rae's initiative in the '90s which brought running water to Ontario First Nations communities.

The Premier has failed to act to have a Manitoba-Canada partnership. The partnership's essential because the federal government supports running water to the community, but not the needed retrofits to homes so they can use the running water.

I ask the Premier: How many dollars has he allocated in this year's budget to retrofit homes in First Nations communities so that they will have running water?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, we've been very proactive in offering a partnership with the federal government to resolve this problem in First Nations communities in Manitoba. We've been active in meeting with them, asking them for meetings, putting resources on the table so that they would

move their resources along more rapidly and in a more timely fashion. We've acted in terms of training. We've acted in terms of infrastructure. We've said that we'll work with you every step of the way to ensure those facilities are installed in communities in Manitoba in First Nations communities where they do not have access to running water or clean sewage treatment facilities. We know it is a basic human right to have access to those things and we want to work with the federal government to achieve that. Every time they step up to the table, we were already there and were willing to work with them.

The member knows that, and I just have to say, when he was a member of the federal Cabinet he did not take the opportunity to solve this problem. Unfortunately, it still lingers in Manitoba.

We're willing to do our share at this level of government. We need a federal government to go with us.

#### **Newborn Screening Program Expansion**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Mr. Speaker, each year 16,000 babies are born in Manitoba, and this year this will include my own second child, who my wife and I are patiently waiting on any day now.

Could the Minister of Health please inform the House of the most recent investment in—our government has made to ensure newborns in this province have the healthiest possible start in life?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Thank you very much for the question. I was very privileged to be with the member for Concordia today, privileged indeed in that he may have had to step out for the arrival of his newborn. We all wish you well in that regard.

I was very pleased to be with members from the Children's Hospital today, Mr. Speaker, members from the Children's Hospital Foundation and members from the Cystic Fibrosis Canada organization to announce that Manitoba has expanded its newborn screening programs with the use of tandem mass spectrometry. We now rank in the top three in the nation for the breadth and depth of screenings that we do for our newborns.

And, Mr. Speaker, we know the more screening that we can do for our newborns, the more opportunities that we have for early intervention to

help those children and their families get the best possible start in life; that's our goal.

#### **Maintenance Enforcement Program Request for Minister's Assistance on Case**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I asked the Minister of Justice for help for a constituent. I emailed him again on Sunday and Monday and he never responded. My office spoke with his assistant this morning and got the runaround, and I have a constituent that is desperately in need of help.

\* (14:20)

She is a single mom with two small children. She separated from her husband two years ago. He pays her absolutely nothing, not even child support. She was forced to spend all her savings on legal fees, and she's received a foreclosure notice and she may be kicked out of her house tomorrow.

I would ask this minister: Would he please look into this case to ensure that this mom and her two little kids are not homeless tomorrow?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I've been practising family law for 14 years; I know how frustrating, how difficult many of these cases can be. And when individuals choose not to pay support and choose to try and evade their obligations, certainly the courts are there to assist people.

So, indeed, when I received the request from the member, I actually took the initiative to email her personally on Friday afternoon, provided the name of somebody at Legal Aid that could hopefully help the individual to get different legal age coverage. I understand there's been an issue with the woman's lawyer now being unavailable for the next while.

We'll make sure that Legal Aid provides another lawyer, but as the member opposite knows, I can't intervene in a particular court case. That's not the role of the Attorney General, but we'll make sure that Legal Aid provides appropriate coverage and this woman can deal with the challenges that she has.

And, again, we hope—we certainly hope that the court can assist this woman to get anything she's entitled to under Manitoba and Canadian law.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Mr. Speaker:** I have a ruling for the House.

Order, please. Following the prayer on Thursday, April 26th, 2012, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mrs. Taillieu) raised a matter of privilege regarding the government's alleged interference with the distribution of passes to the public gallery of the legislative Chamber on Thursday, April 19th, 2012, as well as the use of the committee rooms that day. She indicated that guests of her caucus were denied entry into the gallery and were not offered the option of using the committee room, which had been set up for public gallery overflow. She asserted that the gallery and the committee rooms had been, in quotations, "reserved for the NDP guests and not guests of the opposition," end of quotes. She concluded that these actions were, in quotes, "an abuse of power from a political source," end of quotation, which put staff in a position have—a position to, in quotes, "have to do the government's bidding," end of quotation. The honourable Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) also offered advice to the Chair, and I took this matter under advisement to—in order to consult with the procedural authorities.

As members know, there are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity. Second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the member's privileges had been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader indicated that she was satisfied that she was raising the issue at the earliest available opportunity, but I would note that she raised the matter one week following the events and I am unsure whether or not that was, in fact, the earliest opportunity to raise the matter in the House. When raising such matters I would encourage members to clearly explain to the Chair how they may have met the requirements of timeliness.

On the second issue of whether sufficient evidence has been provided, there are a number of considerations that must be taken into account. I would first like to remind the House that when dealing with privilege, the Speaker is only considering the procedural aspects of the situation raised.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader correctly referenced *Beauchesne's* citation 24, which defines parliamentary privilege as the sum of peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and our rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers. She also referenced *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* first edition by Marleau and Montpetit, which lists the individual privilege of members as, among other things, freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation. While those references are valid, to establish a prima facie case, it is essential to demonstrate specifically how the privileges of members or of the House have been breached.

Turning to the establishment of the prima facie case of the—of a breach of a member's privileges, as identified by O'Brien and Bosc on pages 60 and 61 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, these privileges include: freedom of speech; freedom from arrest in civil actions; and freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader stated that the events of the day, as she described, denied the rights of MLAs to bring visitors to the gallery. I must point out that the protections of parliamentary privilege do not extend to guests of MLAs, only to MLAs. As identified by Joseph Maingot on page 100 of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition, in order for non-elected persons to claim the protection of privilege, they must be taking part in a parliamentary proceeding, such as witnesses appearing before committees. I would note for the House that observing the activities of the Legislature from the public galleries is not the same as participating in a proceeding of Parliament.

The matter raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader is not unlike one which occurred in this place in June, 1990, when the then honourable member for Rupertsland raised a matter of privilege regarding public access to the galleries of this Chamber while members were considering amendments to the Canadian Constitution relating to the Meech Lake Accord. In his ruling on that matter, Speaker Rocan also stated that privilege does not extend to visitors to a—Legislature. He also advised the Assembly of House of Commons Speaker Sauvé's ruling from May 29th, 1980, in which she stated that a complaint made by an elected member,

that some of his constituents had been denied access to the gallery of the House of Commons, was not a question of privilege, but one of security. In 1990, Speaker Rocan determined that while the matter raised was a most serious complaint, it was not a matter of privilege.

In the current matter, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader also asserted that the alleged interference with the gallery and the committee rooms was an abuse of power. Whether or not there was an abuse of power may be a topic of debate between members, but it is not a violation of parliamentary privilege.

In reviewing the events of that day as described by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I do not find a demonstration of a specific breach of any member's privileges. The honourable Official Opposition House Leader did not establish how the actions she identified made it possible—impossible or more difficult for her to carry out her parliamentary duties, and this is the fundamental test which must be met by a claim of breach of privilege.

In consideration of these many factors, I would respectfully rule that a prima facie case of privilege has not been demonstrated, and that the matter raised is not in order as a matter of privilege.

I would ask honourable members to note, however, that with this ruling, I am not passing a value judgment on the concerns raised by members, and I remind the House that this decision is not based on the substance of the matter; it is based very specifically on procedure, which is the limit of the Speaker's responsibilities in such matters.

For the record, I would also like to note that the events of that day were challenging for the Assembly staff, and I applaud their efforts on that occasion, as I appreciate the pressure under which they performed their duties. I recognize that members may have legitimate concerns about the events of that day, and I would encourage a meeting with the House Leaders to discuss access to our public galleries and the use of our committee rooms.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the events of that day may have been definitely challenging for staff and challenging for everybody with—but, Mr. Speaker, with regard to your ruling here, there are things in here which we cannot agree with, and so we're challenging your ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been questioned—has been challenged, pardon me.

\* (14:30)

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in support of the ruling of the Chair, please indicate by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed, signify by saying nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, I'd like to request a recorded vote please, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order, please. The 60 minutes allowed for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm ordering that they be turned off, and we'll proceed to a vote of the House.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

#### Division

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

#### Yeas

*Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.*

#### Nays

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.*

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 34, Nays 19.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Mr. Speaker:** I have another ruling for the House.

Order, please.

During members' statements on Friday, April 27th, the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) rose on an alleged matter of privilege concerning the budget documents she said were provided during the budget lock-up on April 17th, 2012. She contended that a backgrounder on fee increases was provided in the media lockup but not in the third-party lock-up. She suggested this impact on her—impacted on her ability to serve as the Finance critic. At the conclusion of her remarks, she moved, in quotations, that this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs for consideration and then reported back to this House. End of quotations. The honourable Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) and the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) also offered advice to the Chair on this matter. I took this matter under advisement in order to consult with the procedural authorities.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter to be raised—the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached, in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

The honourable member for Tuxedo asserted that she was raising this matter at the earliest available opportunity. However, the actions she noted took place during the budget lockup on April the 17th. I do have some questions as to whether this matter was, indeed, raised at the earliest opportunity based on the information provided. I would, therefore, encourage members, in a case such as this, to provide information and clarification to the Speaker, to help make the case that the matter is being raised at the earliest opportunity, as that would greatly assist the Speaker.

The honourable member for Tuxedo has made the argument that she was impacted in her ability, as the Finance critic, to perform her duties due to the information not being provided in the third-party lockup. However, she did not advise whether this information was or was not subsequently provided to MLAs after the budget lockup was over, as copies of the budget documents were provided to MLAs after

the lockup. Also, if she is attempting to argue that a prima facie case of privilege exists because staff did not receive a copy of the document during the budget lockup, may I remind the House that I just ruled last Thursday that parliamentary privilege does not extend to staff.

In addition, I must also advise the House that Joseph Maingot advises on page 224 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* that, quotations, parliamentary privilege is concerned with the special rights of members, not in their capacity as ministers or as party leaders, whips or parliamentary secretaries, but strictly in their capacity as members in their parliamentary work. Therefore, allegations of misjudgment or mismanagement or maladministration on the part of the minister in the performance of his ministerial duties do not come within the purview of parliamentary privilege. End of quotations.

These findings are supported by several rulings from Manitoba Speakers. Speaker Rocan ruled in 1994, Speaker Dacquay ruled three times in 1995-96, and Speaker Hickes ruled in 2005-2006 that ministerial responsibilities do not form the basis for privilege. In addition, Speaker Hickes also made it clear in a 2008 ruling that privilege does not deal with members in their capacity as party leaders or critics.

And with the greatest of respect, I would rule based on the information provided there is no prima facie case of privilege.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of Chair has been challenged.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please signify by saying aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed, please signify by say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Recorded vote, Mr. Speaker, please.



**Mr. Speaker:** Recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

### Division

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

\* (15:40)

### Yeas

*Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Pettersen, Robinson, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.*

### Nays

*Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Smook, Stefanson, Taillieu, Wishart.*

**Madam Clerk:** Yeas 34, Nays 19.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

\* (15:40)

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Sylvia Mitchell

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a long-time community leader, businesswoman, and philanthropist who lives just outside of Douglas, Manitoba, Ms. Sylvia Mitchell.

Ms. Mitchell is the president of Klondike Farms Ltd., which is a widely known and well-respected family farm and cattle operation in southwestern Manitoba.

Ms. Mitchell and her late husband, Donn, married in 1959, where they settled down on a piece of land which was homesteaded by Donn's grandparents. The Mitchells have been dedicated and accomplished ranchers in their community, and over the years, they have won many prestigious awards for their farm and their herd of registered polled Herefords. In 1997, Sylvia and Donn were inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Just recently, Ms. Mitchell donated \$100,000 to the Brandon Regional Health Centre Foundation's A Sense of Home campaign. This will make a significant difference in the lives of rural patients who will have the opportunity to experience a home away from home while undergoing cancer treatment in Brandon, Manitoba.

When Ms. Mitchell was interviewed following her contribution to A Sense of Home campaign, she said: Having gone through this and having friends who have had to experience this terrible disease, it has made this cause very close to my heart. Ms. Mitchell is a cancer survivor of 18 years and her remarkable optimism and perseverance gives hope to people who are facing similar hardships in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I would personally like to acknowledge and thank Sylvia for her significant donation to this very worthwhile cause. We all admire people like Sylvia who inspire others both young and old by their accomplishments, contributions, and their lifetime of service to our great province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### University College of the North Symposium

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, on May 3rd, I had the chance to attend an important symposium in The Pas which was hosted by University College of the North. The theme of the symposium was Gateways North: Expansion, Convergence and Change, and it was held to mark the 100th anniversary of northern Manitoba becoming a part of this province. I was honoured to speak at the opening ceremonies and to welcome visitors and residents of the north.

People came together at this conference to discuss the history of the north and the challenges northern residents face today. Guests had the opportunity to attend sessions on treaty relations, self-governance, the creation of Cree syllabics, the development of Frontier School Division, health services in the north, and much more. There were excellent presentations from local elders and many engaging speakers, including Tomson Highway.

I particularly enjoyed a session led by James Trepanier on Northern Nationalism and Scouting's 1970 Canadian Arctic Jamboree in Churchill. I was a scout member of first troop in The Pas in my midteens and I am still grateful for the experience.

Scouting gave me the chance to build many essential skills, to learn when to lead and when to follow, and of course, to have a lot of fun. It was interesting to hear Trepanier's historical approach to the topic.

Keith Goulet, a former Saskatchewan Cabinet minister, gave a major presentation on language and its use and misuse, and several elders spoke of similar challenges from residential schools to economic development in the north. I would like to thank the symposium co-ordinators, speakers and participants who all contributed to the success of this event. In particular, I would like to congratulate the University College of the North. Everyone who attended the symposium came away with a better understanding of the north, of its past, present and future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Siloam Mission**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** I rise today to honour the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce Spirit of Winnipeg Awards 2012 recipient for charity, Siloam Mission. Siloam Mission is a Christian humanitarian organization that arranges food, shelter, medical and employment services for Winnipeg's poor and homeless. They offer safety, community and encouragement for the less fortunate, and, of course, a familiar destination for charitable donations from those who are willing to give in Winnipeg.

The services at Siloam Mission are likely the most important assistance our poor and homeless people will benefit from on a day-to-day basis and it deserves our humble affirmation, both in this Assembly and across the province on an ongoing basis. They have 4,300 volunteers and donors, each year providing 1,200 meals every day, 110 beds per night in their emergency shelter, medical services which includes a gym, free dentistry and optometry, employment training, clothing, art programming, one-on-one transition services and 87 units of supportive housing for people who are preparing to move forward with their lives but could use some support during their transition.

Siloam Mission is a member of a larger community of charitable organizations in Winnipeg and the accolades they were given by the Spirit of Winnipeg Awards were designed for a charity that has adopted an innovative approach to doing business.

There were also two other finalists for this year's charity category and they were the immigrant centre of Winnipeg and Winnipeg Harvest.

The immigrant centre of Winnipeg provides a number of settlement services and programs for newcomers free of charge. They also stick with newcomers in the long-term and provide assistance for adaptation and integration into our city and our different communities.

Winnipeg Harvest collects and shares surplus food from the food industry, farmers, gardeners, food drives, special events and individuals, with hungry people. In 2010, nearly 58,000 Manitobans received food each month from Winnipeg Harvest and their local food bank.

It's a great privilege to rise today and honour these charities and the exceptional work they do in our city and our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Flin Flon Choirs**

**Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, the last few days have certainly proved to be an exciting time to be a Flin Flon resident in Winnipeg. First, the Flin Flon Community Choir performed with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra on May 4th and 5th. The community choir, under the direction of Mark and Crystal Kolt, joined the Winnipeg Symphony in the majestic performance of Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in minor, of course, the *Resurrection*, at the Centennial Concert Hall. The performance received a five-star review from the *Winnipeg Free Press*. This choir has an impressive track record, having performed in Carnegie Hall in 2002, as well as joining several times with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. I was honoured to experience this wonderful performance and to hear friends in their element.

And if the WSO concert was not enough, yesterday I was pleased to attend a performance by another Flin Flon musical institution, when The Coppertones Children's Choir sang in the grand staircase. The Coppertones performed as part of the concert series at the Legislative Building presented by the Manitoba Education in partnership with the Manitoba Music Educators Association as part of the Celebrating Music in Manitoba Schools month. The choir's made up of 14 students in grades 4 to 8 from three Flin Flon area schools. They perform at various festivals, community events and Flin Flon Broadway productions as well as with the Provincial Honour

Choirs and other choirs from Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The children in the Coppertones sang beautifully, urged on by their director, Susan Fulford. Accompanied by Mark Kolt, The Coppertones performed "Small Voices" by Jim Papoulis, a song by the Russian child, by Andrea Klouse, and the traditional spirituals, "Wade in the Water" and "Swing Low."

Mr. Speaker, it was a joy to hear music that so often enlivens Flin Flon, so far from home. After hearing both the Flin Flon Community Choir and The Coppertones, I am reminded how music allows us to connect with each other over large distances and that its language is universal.

Congratulations to both the Flin Flon Community Choir and The Coppertones Children's Choir for their animated performances that they brought to Winnipeg over the past few days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (15:50)

#### **Riverdale Community Centre**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take time today to commemorate an important landmark in my constituency, the Riverdale Community Gardens, and congratulate the town of Rivers, the RM of Daly on their recent official opening of the new Riverdale Community Centre.

For more than 60 years, Riverdale Community Gardens acted as a nucleus for activities in the town of Rivers and its surrounding communities. Opening to the public in December 1949, the Rivers Arena, as it was called then, hosted countless hockey tournaments, commercial shows, auction sales and, recently, volleyball tournaments and graduations. As many of us have experienced, each community's recreation complex acts as a place to meet friends, families and opponents.

If the Riverdale Community Garden's walls could talk, they could tell stories of triumph, loss, meeting new friends, meeting old friends and the true community spirit of Rivers.

In 1999, the Rivers Recreational Facility Review Committee had a plan to begin raising funds for a building to include both curling and skating rinks. Now, 12 years later, and countless volunteer hours later, the ribbon was cut at centre ice to officially

open the new Riverdale Community Centre on March 17th, 2012.

A large part of building a new recreation facility in a rural community is fundraising and local volunteers. With this said, I would like to congratulate the Riverdale Community Complex Fundraising Committee for recently receiving \$75,000 in funding from the Molson Coors Community Cheer fund to complete phase 2 of the community complex. Over 100 communities across Canada applied to receive funding, and Riverdale Community Complex was the only recipient from Manitoba. This unique effort by the fundraising committee helps the town of Rivers and the RM of Daly unite under one goal, and grow stronger together, as a community and surrounding areas enjoy the new complex.

As it is sad to say goodbye to important landmarks, such as the old Riverdale Community Gardens, the new facility will create new memories for future generations to come. I have fond memories of Riverdale Community Gardens, as the MLA, and I attended a number of community auctions over the years. I always felt welcome and saw many friends out and about from the Rivers area. Community rinks are a wonderful way to see how volunteers and visitors come together to create a truly unique rural Manitoba atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, I take great pride in recognizing such a significant landmark in the Riding Mountain constituency, as Riverdale Community Gardens acted as the centre for community activities for over 60 years. I wish the town of Rivers, the RM of Daly, the best of luck as they embark on new adventures with their new facility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (15:40)

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

#### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

##### **House Business**

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on House business. Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau). The title of the resolution is Drainage Inside the Dike.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that pursuant to rule 31(8) that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one put forward by the honourable member for St. Norbert. The title of the resolution is Drainage Inside the Dike.

**Ms. Howard:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, would you move us into Committee of Supply.

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**  
**(Concurrent Sections)**  
**CONSERVATION AND WATER**  
**STEWARDSHIP**

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran):** Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

As previously agreed, questions for the department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** The department's been working to get some of the information back to the critics. I just wanted to table because I think reading into the record would not be a good use of time and these are all personal names anyway. They'll be part of the records of the Assembly—of the committee, if anyone wants to look, though.

But, first of all, for year '11-12, those persons hired in Conservation and Water Stewardship, that comprises two documents, and the retirements for '10-11 and for '11-12, and the documents actually show the rehiring as well.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I want to thank the minister for that. I'm—so I'll—just for the record, those will then go into *Hansard* and be recorded in *Hansard*, Mr. Chair, I'm assuming. Those will—oh, wait a second here. So those will go into *Hansard* as far as the list of names and that sort of thing.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister already mentioned about those documents, and they will stay in the file and anybody can look at them.

**Mr. Maguire:** Then I wonder if I could just get a copy of those.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Our page has gone to make some copies.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, thank you.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Chair, yesterday, the minister was talking about the Trails Working Group that examined trail usage in the Duck Mountain Provincial Park. A series of meetings and public open houses were held as part of the process and a report was issued. The report recommended that ATV use not be banned in the park, but that sustainable practices are important when it comes to ATV usage in the park.

So, again, we're just trying to get a handle on whether there'll be a province-wide strategy on ATV usage, snowmobile usage, et cetera, on Crown lands, and whether it will be on a case-by-case basis. Which specific stakeholders are being consulted in the development of policies related to use-related to the use of motorized vehicles on Crown lands?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I certainly welcome the questions and the interest by the member, and I know that it certainly has been a topic of particular regional interest and—if the—you know, I also invite the member to share his own views and certainly take those into consideration.

Just further to yesterday, I don't want to repeat myself from our conversation yesterday, but we're keenly interested in anyone who has views and insights on this matter, to bring those views forward. We know that there have been local clubs and organizations involved and some provincial organizations that have differing views on what should happen with trail use, ATV Manitoba as well. I understand that at one meeting there were about 200 people in attendance and there were views expressed.

On the second issue, a question about the development of a provincial policy, it really is a framework, then, within which the local decision making will be endorsed, but there may be provincial approaches as well that may serve us well as—and I—yesterday I referenced what Minnesota had done and, you know, we'll look at what other provinces may be doing as well.

But on that one, it's really important that we have a broader public involvement which would be province-wide, of course, because it's not just a

regional issue like Mars Hill is. So we hope that perhaps later this summer or fall, we'll have a call for input into that one and we'll look at how that can best be facilitated.

**Mr. Ewasko:** The meeting, Minister, that you talked about that—with the 200-plus people at—that happened over a year ago. Can you state today what stakeholders have been in consultation with Conservation?

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised that there are a number of organizations that have been consulted, and the department is having meetings with them—also includes the power sports manufacturers, but the department doesn't have a list here, but we can provide a list of those that have been consulted. My understanding is that meetings are continuing on the Mars Hill issue.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Minister, you've mentioned in the last—yesterday and including today in the intro a little bit, you mentioned the ATV association.

I'd like to ask: How closely are you—or is the government accessing or chatting with the ATV association on developing these policies specifically?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** ATV Manitoba has been involved from very early stages in the development of approaches for trail designations and looking at the overall policy, but it's my understanding that ATV Manitoba has been involved, certainly in more than one meeting with departmental officials and will continue to have an ongoing role.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Does the Province provide any direct funding or staffing support to the ATV Association of Manitoba?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** No, the department advises that the Province doesn't provide funding support to ATV Manitoba.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Nor staffing support?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** No.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Do you know, then, how the ATV Association of Manitoba—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order. Order, please.

Let me point out, like, members are supposed to go through the Chair and not directly addressing the minister. So I hope, due to the situation, because the member is new, so have to go through the Chair. Thank you.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Chair, I thought I was looking at you, but will continue.

So then, Mr. Chair, do we know how ATV Manitoba funds its activities then?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, we're reluctant to speculate. I mean, there may—there's some thinking that perhaps they have some membership fees or—but that's not information that the Province has.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Mr. Minister.

With respect to the Mars Hill Wildlife Management Area situation, how many more public consultations are being planned to try to arrive at a solution that balances the concerns being brought forward by the broad cross-section of stakeholders who use the Mars Hills, be they snowmobilers, ATVers, hikers, birders, horseback riders, landowners, et cetera?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** So I'm advised that the individual meetings began roughly in December, and so we're at the stage where we're looking for any other further feedback. So, if the member has anybody else that feels they have another perspective to offer, the department would welcome that. We can provide contact information for that individual or organization. And the department is moving to a stage where it will put together a compilation, then, of the views.

They had floated, I understand, some options or some proposal, and there was feedback based around that so, perhaps, the member could have a local role there in making sure that the views, now, come in so that we can get on with the decision making that will have to take place now that we've allowed some time for people to come forward.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, then, upcoming meetings, we don't know of any that are happening?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, just to make it clear that if there are stakeholders that want meetings, the department has been facilitating those and that's been ongoing, as I say, since about December. So, if there are any further meetings that the member would suggest that take place with the—with particular stakeholders, we can get that information.

But my understanding is that they're moving towards a compilation, now, of those views. So—it doesn't mean that—I mean, there's still an opportunity, obviously, for views to be expressed and to come to the department.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Then I would appreciate, for upcoming meetings or anything, honourable Minister, if you could give me a heads-up so that I could attend and possibly share some of my own views or opinions on that matter as well.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I don't want to leave the impression that there's, you know, a series of public meetings coming. I think the meetings that have been held since December are, really, with stakeholders with the, you know, so that they sit around the table and hash out the views of the respective organization.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Minister, do we—do you feel that the provincial government has a role to play in the public education related to responsible use of Crown lands from the respect of snowmobilers, ATV riders, horsebackers—horseback riders, birders, hikers, et cetera?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The fact that wildlife management areas, indeed, are Crown lands, and they're specifically designated for wildlife habitat protection, clearly, it calls on the Province to work with the stakeholders so that there's that balance achieved, that sweet spot is found. At the same time, we have to remind everyone about the importance of protecting the land, and we can do that by way of the development of this policy framework and, of course, a specific approach regionally.

\* (16:20)

But I think the potential for further education remains, and that will be one of the subject areas of the development of the provincial framework because there are approaches—there's literature, there's a use of different kind of media resources to get messages across that might be effective. And that'll be explored and we'll be looking for ideas from the public on how we can best get that information across

But I think the—you know, for example, if we're moving to designated trails as a model, which I think that that is really the future. It's just a question really of, you know, what trails, and then some of the broader issues that we spoke about yesterday.

But, when it comes to designation of trails, this is important, of course, for the respective users to have respect for the designation. And so there'll be different methods that you can use to ensure an understanding and a respect—starting, of course, with signage. But I think that we can be innovative in terms of how we educate. I think the member is right

that education is very important. Another aspect of education, of course, is enforcement, and so we'll be looking at what kind of a regime should be put in place that's fair and respectful for all the users.

**Mr. Ewasko:** So then, just so that we're clear—oh, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just so that we're clear, is the government undertaking any public education campaigns along these lines, not necessarily just with the Mars hills but across the province?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The experience in the Ducks was important for all of the stakeholders and key stakeholders in the province to take lessons from. And what was important there, of course, is that the designations happen, first of all, and that they're communicated and communicated well. And so that will—that's recognized as a key component of how we have to move forward.

When we look at organizations like Snoman, I think they really laid a path in terms of how respective organizations like that, and perhaps ATV Manitoba will have a role with ATV users to communicate amongst its members as well. So it's not just the Province itself that's doing any communications; it's a shared responsibility. So I would hope that that would be a conclusion of the province-wide framework.

**Mr. Ewasko:** What type of resource does the department have to invest in trail rehabilitation in the areas where it is needed?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Again, just relying on the forerunner to—I think, the approach that will take place in other parts of the province as we tune this and make sure there's a robust approach in the Ducks, for example. Fifty thousand dollars was designated for the designation and the maintenance and communications around the trails there. So that will be looked at to see, you know, is that the right approach or not.

But I think that it may well be that there'll be other ways that revenues can be generated. As I say, with the snowmobile trails, that's one model and that could be an option that we would invite feedback on as to whether that kind of approach should be duplicated for ATV use.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you for that answer there, Mr. Minister.

That being said, since I'm a relatively newly elected MLA, the \$50,000, what was that, how is that broken up and what was that spent on?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The allocation is based on the trail development plan there, so it's for trail development and maintenance and presumably for signage, as well.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Was that a one-shot deal or was that on a yearly basis or—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Honourable Minister?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, my understanding, it's in the base budget so it'll—so the—it's currently anticipated that will be a three-year funding arrangement, and then it'll be re-evaluated before the three years is up to determine which will be ongoing allocations for this.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Was that \$50,000 per year over those three years or \$50,000 for the three years?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** That's \$50,000 per year.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Is the department willing to explore partnerships with third parties that are interested in either helping with trail rehabilitation or who are interested in providing public education about responsible trail usage?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I know the member's not going to be surprised by this answer, but that is the ideal world. And, in fact, in most roles that historically may have been government alone, I, for one, always want to bring to a portfolio partnerships and engagement and sense of shared ownership of responsibility. In this case, for Mother Earth or for the particular region that's of interest, so.

When you look at the role of Snoman, for example, and I look forward to meeting with them, face to face, in the coming days, for one, but that really has provided a very workable and wonderful working partnership. And so that's a model that we can celebrate, and I think we can continue to build on—and we are—and there's further thinking happening in that regard.

So that's an example of how we would welcome the participation of other organizations, individuals, and funding sources. It only makes it stronger, particularly when people, you know, get personal benefit from amenities. It can relieve the general taxpayer of the investment.

At the same time, we do recognize that it can be, in certain circumstances, a sellable feature of the province and for tourism, and so there's a greater good, sometimes, at stake as well. But funding partnerships are—that's music to my ears.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Minister, you mentioned a few minutes ago, in regards to signage and enforcement. What type of resources does the department currently have available for trail monitoring and enforcement across the province?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, enforcement happens in a number of ways. First of all, of course, public vigilance is always critical, and I think the public in Manitoba is really attuned to keeping an eye on wildlife and wilderness protection. And the departmental resources, then, really, are the natural resource officers of Manitoba. And they have responsibilities in this regard as part of their other duties.

But, as well, we have, really, a working partnership, in effect, with the—with law enforcement outside of the NROs. They're law enforcement as well, but in terms of police, and the RCMP have been tremendous partners in enforcement efforts in matters under the jurisdiction of the department. And so that'll continue.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Ewasko:** I think from a lot of the constituents that I hear from, specifically about the Mars hills but, in particular, throughout the province on Crown lands, I think everybody has the feeling of urgency to just make sure that there's that balance on usage and rehabilitation, in regards to the Crown lands for all the resources for future generations.

When you mention that we talked about public vigilance to watch or to see the goings-on, I guess, in the areas, who should they particularly—I mean, you mentioned the natural resource officers, but who should they particularly contact?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, it's like with any, you know, concern. I think the public, particularly outside of Winnipeg, know they can call the district office or they can call the RCMP and they do, they do that for both.

I might just add there's another point. You know, we have the ecological reserves, or what I call eco reserves, but I don't think it's as widely known, certainly it's not as known as provincial parks, but those are areas where strict rules have been put in place to protect very vulnerable species and we take a very dim view of any breach of those protection laws. And so I just wanted to remind members of that.

The Mars Hill controversy, I think it's fair to say, has been marked by, I think, very marked divisions of view—views and so the area has not the—or the differing views have not easily led themselves to an early reconciliation, shall we say. Well, we've explored certainly what the common elements are of the approaches. So I think that has to be kept in mind, too, as we move to some conclusion of what should happen there. I think that probably is well known to the member, but that is a feature there and—but that was a feature that wasn't—that was—there were also 'controvations' in the Duck Mountains, but we—I think the model of local involvement and tailoring a response to the local issue is—remains the best way.

But we'll do it in a sure-footed way, to make sure we land on the right spot so that the respective interests know in the end that their views have been taken into consideration and that we can have, you know, multiple use. And I don't mean multiple use of every trail. I think the idea is that that wouldn't be the outcome but that there would be multiple use at least to enjoy that area.

So the department will continue to look and, in the end, we'll have to apply science as it always really must, in light of all of the input, to look at trail densities impact on the wildlife and the natural, you know, the other natural features of the area including habitat. So I think that's really the state of play there.

**Mr. Ewasko:** More so a comment than a question, but, I guess, when we—when we're talking about different stakeholders and talking passionately about what they believe in, when you talk about the eco reserves and about strict rules on paper, the fact of the matter is, is there's fairly large areas when we're only talking one or two natural resource officers to cover an entire area is fairly—you can write all the rules you want down on paper, but it's to make sure that it's happening and then to push it back on the local residents or some of the local landowners, stakeholders, it's pretty tough. So I think that's where I'd like to definitely see the public education piece really get ramped up a little bit there as well.

So I thank you for your answers, Minister.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I have a few questions for the minister, and I want to congratulate you on your new position with regard to Conservation. And I have a couple questions with regard to the new area of the province that I represent, the Shellmouth area.

Could the minister indicate to me if there's going to be environmental hearings or that environmental process occurring in the Shellmouth area? I know that that was part of an agreement prior to my being the MLA, but there was—I think prior to even Len being an MLA, I think, in some ways—but there was supposed to be an environmental assessment done before they look at doing any changes to the dam.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, our water people are saying that if the changes to the Shellmouth make a difference to water flows and have other impact on the environment, then there would have to be an application under The Environment Act to proceed.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I believe that—the organization SAVED is an organization up in the Shellmouth area and they're very interested in probably an update from your department on where you're at with regard to plans with regard to the dam. I believe that leaf gates are something that has—have been discussed, and the municipalities in that area are very concerned that the government will just proceed without doing proper due diligence in the upgrades.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, the infrastructure, of course, is governed by MIT, and if there's changes to be made, MIT would be the lead on that one and would be the applicant, then, for an environment act licence. And at that time, then, the Water Stewardship—or the department would have a role under The Environment Act.

**Mrs. Rowat:** And I will raise the question as well with MIT, but just wanted to raise it with you as a concern with the municipalities in that area.

Another issue with regard to the Shellmouth area, the upper Assiniboine Valley producers are a group of producers that are located between the Shellmouth and St-Lazare, and last session I had raised a question to government asking if they plan to hold an information meeting with stakeholders in that area. There seem to be mixed messages from different government departments, and I was pleased to see that there's an amalgamation of two departments that seem to be going in different directions at times, so that is a positive sign, but the issues and the concerns still remain.

So I'm just wanting to know if the minister can indicate to me: Have they met with the upper Assiniboine Valley producers to discuss their concerns recently?

\* (16:40)



**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, well, as the member rightly indicates, there's been a consolidation of flood mitigation and flood preparation responsibilities in MIT. And, of course, all of us are going to look to see how that works for Manitobans, because we think we've learned some lessons the last year, or two, on that. So if there are—if there's activity with regard to the residents, MIT would be the lead on that one if it's about flooding and flood mitigation.

**Mrs. Rowat:** The question asked last year was: Would the government be meeting with this group? And I was assured they would. And there was—to my understanding, there hasn't been a meeting that has occurred yet.

And one of the questions that they have, which I'll share with you, is with regard to the act, the Shellmouth Dam and other water control works management and compensation act, bills 27. There—in—specific to section 12.7, report on occurrence of damage or loss due to artificial flooding, there seems to be some confusion and—between the stakeholders and government, and there doesn't seem to be a consensus with regard to whether it being artificial flooding or natural flooding.

So, to help resolve that, there has to be a report that has to be released on the damages incurred in 2011. And I'm told that this was supposed to be released late February, early March and hasn't been done yet. So my concern, or the concerns of my constituents, is how can they apply under this act when the minister has not done, you know, your part by providing the report.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, that legislation falls under MIT, and so, you know, we can certainly raise it with the minister, but I can—I mean, I'm sure the member, as well, will be pursuing that with the responsible minister, you know.

**Mrs. Rowat:** I'm raising it with you, as well, because you do have a role in this, you know, and your staff do have a significant role in the decision making and the outcomes attached to the Shellmouth Dam. So I'm raising this to you, as a minister who has a significant role to play in the outcome on this.

And I want to—I, also, put on the record that these individuals cannot make claims under Bill 27 without knowledge of accounting under the Disaster Financial Assistance Program. So, if they don't get the report, they can't file. And so we need your help. My constituents need your assistance and to show some accountability to an act that was proclaimed—

and having, you know, my constituents get some answers.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I mean, this was the nature of—I think this is the line of questioning that had to take place before the amalgamation of flood-related responsibilities in MIT. But that staff in that area have been transferred to MIT now, and that's with Steve Topping's group. And so those questions are the responsibility of MIT now with the amalgamation of the flood responsibilities.

**Mrs. Rowat:** But I'm going to be raising this with every minister that is—sits around the table that has a significant role to play with regard to Bill 27 and the Shellmouth Dam and residents from Shellmouth all the way to St-Lazare. There's significant challenges, significant hurt out there, so I will raise it with each of them, because, I think, each of you have a role to play as leaders within this government. Thank you.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Through you, Mr. Chair, to the minister: your department—and your predecessor, and your government—instituted a coal tax as of January 1st, 2012, \$10 per tonne, and, you have a proposed ban on the burning of coal province-wide as of January 1st, 2014—I believe are the dates.

Can you tell me how many tonnes of coal are being used in Manitoba per year presently?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** There's an estimated total of 100,000 to 250,000 tonnes of coal used in Manitoba each year.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So there's quite a range on that. So what is estimated in terms of the tonnes of emissions, greenhouse gases, et cetera, emitted then from the present usage—estimated usage of coal in Manitoba?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** There's about—this is the advice from the department, that there's about 1.5 tonne of emission for every one tonne of coal. But that is a generalized number because there are different grades of coal, as the member will appreciate. Some grades have a lower emission than others.

**Mr. Pedersen:** And I realize that there's different grades and there's also some very efficient furnaces out there compared to some of the older furnaces. So that emission versus tonnage-use would vary, I would think, much more than that.

But is there any of that 100 to 250 thousand tonnes—which is quite a range—is any of that being used by government or Crown corporations?

I know the Brandon Generating Station is still there. I don't know how much is being used out of that. Does this number include that?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The Brandon plant is included, absolutely, and, as a result of zeroing in on that one, they have really focused on providing really just backup generation there, and in the winter months, I understand that there's very little emissions. There is more that usually is expected in the summer, but I'm advised that the—*[interjection]*—but the expectation this fiscal year is for about 30,000 tonnes there.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So, in putting in this, first of all, a tax and then ultimately a ban on January 1st, 2014, did the department do a study on emissions? Now, you've already stated it's approximately 1.5 to 1 emissions in coal, depending on the coal type, and I would think that would depend on the type of furnace too. But has the department done any kind of study on the amount of emissions produced on some of the older units versus newer units, not including Brandon Generating Station? Just, this would be private units.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that the efficiencies of the furnaces will make an impact on and, indeed, efficiencies in the use of energy but not on GHG emissions.

**Mr. Pedersen:** I guess that's a point in contention that some of my users—that some of my constituents, and rural wide are having, that we have some very efficient furnaces out there and I've toured them, too.

Now, I get—the problem that I'm having is that—the problem that my constituents and rural Manitoba's having, is that this is a major imposition on them. There's some large units out there, and there's even a lot of small units, have significant investment in their coal-burning units and natural gas is not an alternative for them.

In the corner, down the southwest corner of my constituency, which would be that sort of everything west of Morden if I can call it that way, and south of Brandon, they are 35 to 50 miles from the nearest natural gas line and quotes have been anywhere from 35 to 50 thousand dollars a mile to bring in natural gas, if it is even available.

And there's a lot of talk about biomass, but biomass is not really proven and reliable to turn on, in terms of the large number of units that we've got out there.

And there is some talk about support for clients to switch to biomass, but there's—there is a substantial investment, in the terms of millions of dollars, in these present-day coal furnaces. And to switch that off, and then turn around to go to biomass, and I've talked to few of my constituents have looked at it, their current furnaces don't work. They would have to change the complete furnace because there is problems of—and we won't get it into it today—but problems of ash and burn back and this kind of stuff, which these guys are engineers and they understand, and I'm not trying to be one here.

But, I'm just wondering, Mr. Chair, through you to the minister, if the minister would agree to have a meeting with—if I could bring in some stakeholders. And I'm talking about a small group, upwards of half a dozen at the most, who have invested a large amount in their coal-burning furnaces, if you would be open to meeting with them to discuss with them the alternatives or what they are—it's so that they can bring you up to speed as to what they are facing with this imposed ban that's coming through.

And if you would agree to having a meeting here, before session is done, you know, obviously it'll be after Estimates and whatnot, but they would very much like to sit down, either to bring their side of the story to you and so that perhaps they can bring you up-to-date as to what the effects of this is on it.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I met with upwards of about 300 coal users several weeks ago, most from the Hutterite colonies of Manitoba, and heard from many of them individually as well, and met with some of them after.

And I also met with some of the great entrepreneurial and scientific innovators that are at these colonies, developing biomass alternatives, and I was very heartened with what I saw, but I'll just—when I met with them, I said it's very important, as we move ahead, that we bring people with us on this, that we have to make sure that they know that they're getting support for the conversion that they're being asked to respect. And it's our sense that, first of all, conversions generally can be made for biomass.

And I heard the member, and I've had discussions with the member from Portage la Prairie as well about, you know, the availability of biomass and its usefulness right now.

I'm very heartened with what I hear. I'm very heartened by the conversions. For example, at some of the colonies, and very heartened by the conversions that are happening elsewhere, for example, at Pineland, and they're using a lot of stuff coming out of the southeast bush there that otherwise would go to rot. So I think we're at a turning point in Manitoba in terms of biomass production, but we're really attuned to this right now.

Now, in terms of any further meetings, I think we can do even one better. We are going to be getting a report from MAFRI which is a lead on biomass and, as well, Hydro that has been working with the colonies, face to face, to determine the state of play in terms of the conversion and some of the challenges out there. We are looking at getting the latest in terms of how many conversions have taken place and how many are in the works and how many are yet to come. And, of course, that also is very important in terms of the provision of MAFRI's program to support biomass conversion.

What I had said to some of the colonies, when I met, was if they have any concerns about the technical side of things, which largely they have, that we will make every effort we can to make sure that there are technical people that are deployed, then, to meet with them and spend all the time they need. So in other words, that's—that actually would be better than meeting with me because it would have, of course, that technical expertise.

So we're in the midst now of drilling down on that one and looking to see how this is moving along and what more has to be done in terms of additional support, which means, of course, both financial, from the coal tax being converted over to conversion funding through MAFRI and, as well, through the technical advice that they need. So I—they have to have their questions answered and so that's where it's at right now.

**Mr. Pedersen:** So just—thank you, Mr. Chair. So is this January 1st, 2014, date hard and fast? And it takes time to convert these. It takes—there's technical issues, not just physical issues. There's technical issues; there's supply issues; there's—in terms of raw material if—in biomass, is this January 1st, 2014, hard and fast and, you know, what happens to these larger and small outfits that are using coal right now? Are

they—do they turn off the heat on January 1st, 2014, or what are they supposed to be looking at?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, what's job 1 is to ensure that everything is moving in that—in the direction of the conversion date because, obviously, heating has to continue, the colonies have to continue. So that's job 1, and that's what we're drilling down on right now, is to find out just where it is and, as well then, to look at the rollout of the next phase of the biomass support initiative.

In terms of the—as I told the meeting with coal users, we're going to look very carefully at it. I have fresh eyes on this. At the same time, I think that that is a target that is worth pursuing. And how the implementation would look really is going to depend on the information that we get and, hopefully, on the outside, you know, next few weeks as a result of the advice from MAFRI and Hydro on the state of conversions, the successes and the challenges that lie ahead. So it certainly is a hot topic right now for us to make sure that we're going to do this right and that we move along.

But this is a change and I want to go back to sort—the—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, the time is 5 p.m., committee rise.

## FINANCE

\*(16:00)

**Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to some semblance of order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Finance. As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

Surprisingly enough, the floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Just a couple of quick questions to follow up on where we left off yesterday, and then I'm going to hand it over to the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

In looking at the increase in expenditures for all the different—or for the core government operations for all years since 2000, in various years there—I know that there was one year that there was a negative 0.5 in terms of GDP growth as a percentage. But, you know, in that year, in 2008-09 there was an increase in core government expenditures of

6.61 per cent. The year after that, an increase of 5.54 per cent. The year after that, over 3 per cent. The year after that, 4.84 per cent. All the years prior to that, as well, go back to—there's always been an increase in spending in the core government operations. Just wondering—and that there's an average annual increase of 5.1 per cent, and certainly growth is—has never reached that 5.1 per cent.

I wonder if the minister can explain what is—what the policy is behind core government operations—like expenditures in the overall core operations of the government in terms of expenditures versus growth. Is it the intention to try and keep expenditures within the area of where the growth is? Or is it to spend beyond that?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** I think the MLA for Tuxedo, in the numbers that she gave in those years, is, I think, pretty close to being accurate. I understand her question, and it's not so much one of disputing the numbers that are put forward, but of a policy question, in terms of our approach when it comes to expenditures.

And I want to put the Manitoba expenditure number in some context in terms of other jurisdictions. For the last five years, we've been fourth amongst provinces in terms of expenditures which puts us kind of mid to upper in terms of performance. It puts us ahead of the Canadian average—not ahead of in terms of our spending more than others. When I say ahead of, it means, for example, expenditure growth in 2009-10 at 4.4 per cent in comparison to the Canadian average of 14.8 per cent with only—you know, pretty much tied with Nova Scotia and Québec, with only BC, Alberta, and Saskatchewan outperforming us in terms of expenditure decisions. So, in the Canadian context, there's—we're outperforming most.

That doesn't mean we sit back and take it easy and say yes to every request that comes forward in terms of expenditures. We take our time on these and analyze the expenditure requests that come forward. If there's a time in which we need to—we believe we need to stimulate the economy, that plays into the decision making, as it does in other jurisdictions; as it did, certainly, with the federal Conservative government in coming forward with an economic stimulus package that we were very pleased to participate alongside of our federal counterparts.

So there's a lot of thought that goes into expenditure decisions. We still have amongst the best in terms of our debt-to-GDP ratio, and we want

it—we want the trend that began in 1999 in the area of 32 per cent down to this year's projected debt-to-GDP is 20—around 27.4 per cent. We want to make sure that we continue that trend down. And we've been very clear we're going to come back into balance in 2014-15, and at that time we're going to make sure that that trend of debt-to-GDP ratio continues that downward trend again. So just some context in terms of—and a little bit of insight, I hope, to answer the member's question as to how we arrive at some of these expenditure decisions.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yesterday the minister seemed to be very concerned about the global economic downturn when that took place in 2008-09—and 2009, I guess, yes—and, you know, he had mentioned his concern for that. And, in fact, there was a—you know, a slight downturn, you know, here in Manitoba, but it was relatively flat and the—obviously, the economic performance here and outlook was—or not outlook, but the performance here for that year was good when you look relatively across the country. But the minister did say, you know, you need to take that into consideration in that there was a global economic downturn, and you need to prepare for it.

When I look at the numbers that are here in terms of the increases in expenditures after that at a time when you should be preparing for, maybe, other negative years, maybe it could've been worse for us than that particular year. I would think that a policy of a government should be such that you would look at ways to rein in expenditures, not increase them. And, if I look at 2009-10, there was a—in the core spending record, I guess, of the government in 2009-10, there was an increase in 5.5 per cent, and again in '10-11, 3.04, '11-12, 4.84. That doesn't look to me as being a government that is looking at ways to rein in expenditures.

It looks to me like you're using the global economic downturn for—as an excuse for why things did not do as well, but, in fact, in some of those years the economy did do well. The problem here was that your expenditures continued to increase and to—you were spending beyond the rate of economic growth in terms of GDP growth as a percentage. And so it seems to me that the policy is to spend beyond your means—their means, Mr. Chair.

And I wonder if the minister can just explain why he would see fit—and I know he wasn't the minister at the time, but he's taken over for this and I know he was on Treasury Board at the time, but

maybe explain what the rationale—what the rationale behind increasing expenditures at those times, when there could have been a more dismal economic outlook for our province.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, first thing, I'd—the member shouldn't worry about whether I was Finance Minister or not; I was part of the government, and I've been part of the government since 1999, and I was part of the opposition before that. I don't mind answering on behalf of decisions that have been taken over the years. For one thing it's—that's the truth, and, for another thing, I'm proud of the approach that we've taken over the course of the 12 years in managing the fiscal realities and managing the economic conditions in the province of Manitoba.

\* (16:10)

The first thing I want to suggest is that we weren't going to make the mistake that the Conservative government made back in the 1990s, where they exacerbated an economic downturn by getting tight-fisted and restricting spending on such things as health care. I remember being out in the school system and sustaining a 2 per cent cut in some of those years. We—there needs to be a balance in this. To get back into balance, I think we should have a balanced approach. That, I think, makes sense in my mind.

It would not be a wise decision to have a global downturn in the economy, made worse by decisions of a provincial or federal government. As I said, I was really glad that that the federal Conservative government, you know, at the time, supported by other parties in the federal—in the House of Commons, took the approach that they weren't going to exacerbate an already tough situation by making decisions that would restrict further the kind of economic activity that helps economies sustain and withstand global economic downturns.

One of our real advantages going into the global economic downturn was our strong employment numbers. You know, I'd much rather face an economic downturn with people working rather than people unemployed. It was a real strength that our province had going into that. We enhanced that through participation in a number of programs.

I can point out the creation of the Building Manitoba Fund, which, I think, provided not just short-term and medium-term employment but allowed us the opportunity to enhance a skill set of

people in Manitoba so that they could work in our province and have those wages and those benefits plowed back into our local economy.

The last thing in my mind that you wanted to do when you were facing uncertain times is restrict further and cause even more hardship than what exists. I know that some of this doesn't fit into the narrative of members opposite. I understand the narrative that members want to talk about is spending addictions and such things. The fact of the matter is, though, that the facts don't bear out that narrative, and I understand it's difficult for an opposition party to kind of pick their story and then try to get the facts to support themselves.

I think I'd much rather, if it was me, I would much rather kind of view what the facts are, analyze the facts and then come up with a story. But—*[interjection]* I'll just speak louder.

But really, what the opposition are doing is trying to take a square peg and shove it into a round hole and it's not—it's just not working. But I do understand the—part of the narrative of the members of the opposition is to be responsible in spending decisions. I give them credit for pointing that out. I understand that.

That's why Budget 2012, if members care to dig through it, we can provide assistance to them if they need some help in ferreting out the facts that are presented in the budget. We—we're targeting a reduction of 3.9 per cent. We are—we've initiated a program portfolio management review that'll produce another equivalent to about 1 per cent, targeting \$128 million in year to our reduction in the core government.

I—to the member for Tuxedo's credit, she has been talking about doing a review, I understand, an internal review. Well, this is it. This is what we are putting in place, and no one across the table should doubt our determination to achieve the targets that we put out and no one should doubt our determination to get back into balance in fiscal year 2014-15.

So, Mr. Chairperson, we'll—we're going to get there by doing a combination of smart decisions when it comes to expenditures. And we're going to get there by—with some modest increases on the revenue side, as well, and making sure that all the while we have investments in health care and family services and infrastructure, corrections and those sorts of things. And that's another part of the story.

All those years that the member for Tuxedo is—was—had read out into record here a few minutes ago, a percentage in one year or another, the one I referenced was a 4.4 per cent increase '09-010. That's an increase in spending on programs that matter to Manitoba, that matter to Manitobans.

There's health care, there's justice, there's family services, there's education, and I will point out, and I think members need to think about this, we have in the area of family services, we have a legislative requirement not to turn kids away when they come to us for care. And we can discuss and we can debate the best ways that we can offer that care.

And I think part of what we need to do is, as part of our in-year expenditure management approach, is to think about even better ways to offer those services. Because we can't turn kids away, members know that. But offer—come up with some options in terms of better ways to help kids in care. And quite often, my experience is that you find—through that—you find ways to improve services while at the same time managing the costs of those services. That's the approach that we want to take.

I know there'll be those who've made, I think, good arguments in the past in terms of investing in primary care not just as a way to save money, but to improve health care. But I've seen examples where it does actually save money and improve the system overall.

This is an exercise in which we can put a lot of thought into changing how many government programs are offered. And I think we've got to take this as an opportunity to do that and hit some targets that we've set so that we can come back into balance in 2014-15.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Thank you, Mr. Minister.

We now have this year a core government deficit of \$993 million, which is the estimate in your budget documents. This is by a fair margin the largest deficit in the history of the province.

In my view, this large deficit comes from largely as a result of poor fiscal management over the last number of years. And part of that was decisions around poor flood protection in—for flood prevention in certain areas of the province.

Let me start with some questions about the flood expenditures, which are probably, you know, put in capsule form best at the third quarter report. And you

have a full-year projection of \$935 million. And in that third quarter report, as of December 31, the total expenditure was listed as \$531.588 million.

I understand that the expenditure at the end of the year was somewhere around \$600 million. Perhaps the minister could start by confirming that. And perhaps the minister could then provide some insight into what proportion of that approximately \$600 million really is compensation and what proportion is investments in flood fighting, in infrastructure, in restoration and flood proofing and so on.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Struthers:** Yes. I can—the member saw the third quarter numbers that came out and the size of the deficit that we are dealing with. Obviously, I would disagree with his assessment that it's poor fiscal management. I think that the—when you look at what we faced a number of years ago going into and trying to respond to a global downturn, we undertook at the time a five-year economic strategic plan. Each—and we were very up front, that years one, two, three, and four we would be running deficits. We knew that; we indicated that to the member for River Heights; we indicated that to every Manitoban.

The—in year 2, the huge complicating factor in this is what the member's asking about, and that's the flood. We weren't going to leave people stranded on that. We were announcing—made announcements having to do with flood preparation and mitigation, and we made announcements having to do with compensation, and we're working—you know, staff working very hard right through to—at the moment, to make sure that Manitobans benefit from those announcements that we made. We know we have to pay for that, and we know that year 2 of our five-year plan was severely challenged because of the flood, the unprecedented flood that hit us, followed by an unprecedented price tag that we now have to deal with. And we're doing that as best that we can.

The member for River Heights mentioned the \$936-million number. That is a projection of the costs of the 2011 flood that's encaptured in the 2011-12 budget year. Of that \$936 million, the federal government's obligations would be \$445 million, if my memory serves me correctly. The \$531-million number that the member for River Heights mentioned earlier, that was the amount of money that we had paid out as of the end of December, so that the overall projection, though, for '11-12 fiscal year is the \$936-million number.

So, the other—from this department's view, we deal with those general numbers and we reflect the costs of the flood in those general ways. I have been referring MLAs to specific departments if they have specific questions about parts of the flood. For example, the member talked about mitigation projects. He's probably well advised to speak to my colleague the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) on that because that minister is in a position to give much better details than what we can here. If there are questions in terms of compensation programs, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) has some up—would have more up-to-date information on those expenses in a particular way.

So I don't mind working with the member for River Heights to get the general numbers straight, and we can discuss and debate. If he has ideas on how to fiscally manage better, I'm open to that. But, at the same time, there are some specific questions, I think, that I could refer him to other Estimates to follow up on.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I had asked the question about compensation because, I mean, there has been the impression, given that the \$532 million was—or now, I gather, about \$600 million—was primary compensation. But, when I look down these numbers from the third quarter financial report, the interesting thing is that if you take away the money for flood fighting, for flood proofing, for AgriRecovery, for municipal financial assistance, for AgriInsurance, for property tax relief, the money which is actually there for individual compensation, reimbursement, is actually—of that five hundred and thirty-one—thirty two million dollars—is about \$28 million, which is the Lake Manitoba Financial Assistance Program at \$24.8 million and the Hoop and Holler compensation program at \$3.5 million.

So that, you know, as of December 31st, it would appear that the area where things had moved, you know, slowest was in terms of support, in terms of individual compensation. And it seems, you know, the numbers which stand out, you know, the most striking is that the full-year projection for Lake Manitoba Financial Assistance was \$236 million, and as of December 31st only \$24.8 million had—that had been spent. Now, it's my understanding from reports, I believe on March the 30th, which was the day before the end of the year, that up to that point the number had risen to about \$45 million, and the Premier (Mr. Selinger), I think, has used a number more recently of about \$55 million.

But it certainly was very striking that the flow of funds to the Lake Manitoba Financial Assistance Program was very slow. And, you know, some have even said that the government deliberately delayed this so that they could have a deficit which didn't look as bad at the end of the year.

Now, I—but I at least give you an opportunity to comment.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, the member for River Heights gives me a whole lot of Machiavellian kind of credit that I—I'm not sure I'm just smart enough to pull off credibly.

Mr. Chairperson, first of all, this whole file, I think, is too important; it means too much to Manitobans and victims of the flood to get caught up in a bunch of political wrangling as to where we would book numbers to be able to show our books in a different light. That would be wrong to begin with.

Secondly, I mean, a number of years ago, the member would know that we accepted and implemented the generally accepted accounting principles, GAAP, in this building, with our books. That would not allow us to do the Machiavellian kinds of things that the member is suggesting. (a) I wouldn't do it to begin with, (b) the principles, I don't think, would allow me to do that even if I wanted to.

The fact of the matter is the flood took place in 2011, programs are announced in 2011, claims were filed in 2011; this all needs to be booked in 2011. The \$936-million number, we believe is an accurate, reasonable projection of what our costs would be at the end of the fiscal year, '11-12. So, I don't want the member to think that we're moving the budget around under a—like a pod underneath a pea in that shell game that we accuse each other of every now and then.

I do take his point in terms of making sure that Manitobans who qualify for these programs, are in those programs, and are getting some action and receiving benefits that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and I announced last May. We're not—I don't want to be announcing and making commitments and having civil servants work long hours, spring, summer or fall and through the winter, and then not have Manitobans realize those benefits.

Having said that, I do want to point out to the member for River Heights, I think he's correct in pointing out the \$24.8 million under Lake Manitoba

Financial Assistance, the \$3.4 million under the Hoop and Holler Compensation Program. I would point out, as well, that about \$98 million of the \$103 million, in the category, other financial assistance, has gone to individuals as well. So that number is a little bit bigger than what the member has put on record.

That doesn't mean, by any stretch of the imagination, that we're finished with this. That means we continue to work hard to make sure that Manitobans realize these benefits. He, the member for River Heights, would note, yesterday, that my colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), announced—again, announced some further enhancements to staffing to make sure that we can follow up with as many Manitobans in as a timely a fashion as we can.

I do know, in my own constituency, we've had some—and I've heard from other MLAs whose constituencies have been impacted, that there are some very logistical, very practical problems that many inspectors have come up against. That water was very high for a long time, as the member knows. That water froze, as it tends to do over the course of the winter. There were some very logistical problems in terms of getting in and assessing what the damage to some of these places has been. I know that that's got to be frustrating if you live along Lake Manitoba or any of these impacted areas. I know that it's frustrating for producers trying to feed their cattle and move their cattle around.

I remember that quite vividly last summer and fall. It's got to be frustrating for somebody that has a cottage whose cottage has been in their family—I've talked to some—generations that cottage has been in the family, and they want to get hooked up with some of the hard-working civil servants that have been active on this file. So we try to do everything we can to get them hooked up and get an inspector in and try as much as we can to get some solid information for people who are impacted.

So I did note that the member from River Heights said that he'd got the impression that not much has flowed. I can—I hope that it's less of an impression now that we find out some of these things, and we're understanding that there are—that there has been significant dollars flowed, but there is significant work yet to be done.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The—I would be interested in getting more of a breakdown in the other financial

assistance. I find it not all that credible, quite frankly, that there's only \$5 million in municipal assistance flowed, which is what the numbers the minister would suggest. Certainly, from my discussions with people in municipalities, that there's much, much more than \$5 million in expenditures that have been reimbursed to municipalities. And it's possible that that was—only a tiny fraction of that was completed by the end of December, although my understanding is that by the end of the year, there had been quite a bit more flowing if that is indeed the case.

The—yes, I think that in terms of the Lake Manitoba Financial Assistance Program that, you know, from all the stories that—and the discussions that I've had with people around Lake Manitoba, that, you know, from a variety of reasons and what the indications I have, it's primarily from the leadership in the minister's positions that that's probably the worst-run program that I've ever seen in my many years of politics: the incredible delays.

I give you just one tiny example of many, many: a fellow who has—with—I think, with families, they have members that have four homes on Lake Manitoba that in—I think that they were inspected in some fashion by the government representatives in the fall. Two of the buildings were taken down and put into a landfill site, I think, about October. He didn't hear anything further, in spite of having submitted the claims, until just in the last week or so, and was told that they had lost the earlier assessment and would have to do it all over again.

Now, there—if that was an isolated instance, then, you know, one could perhaps explain it away. A reeve in southwestern Manitoba told me that, you know, when he started hearing of problems with this program, that he kind of wrote it off and said, you know, that's just people complaining. But then, when he, himself, started, you know, submitting reimbursement claims for his own—you know, I think, for his own farm, it turned out that he was given exactly the same problems as others had in terms of the way the program was being worked and administered, and that he just couldn't believe the kind of things that were happening.

\* (16:40)

Now, I am pleased that the government has finally put some more assessors and other people to help run that program more expeditiously, and, clearly, that should have been done last July instead



of now but the fact that it's happening certainly has to be a positive.

Now, the—one of the things, as the minister will know, I have been talking about the importance not just of draining but of water retention going back to 1999 and the critical importance of planning and budgeting for water retention efforts.

We managed to get some results of the water retention spending by the government and, basically, I think for the last 10 years or the last—the 10 years leading up to the flood, there was something like \$56 million spent on drainage and nothing on water retention.

So my question would be to the Finance Minister: What amount was allocated in this budget for efforts in water retention?

**Mr. Struthers:** First of all, I think we need to be careful on how we characterize the approach that our government took to responding to the 2011 flood. I think that the MLA for River Heights has good suggestions in terms of how we can make a program better, how we can improve the delivery of the commitments that we made to actually benefit victims of the flood.

But to say that it was the worst program ever or whatever the term was that the MLA used or to say, finally, put some resources in place, I think that's a little extreme.

We've never said that these programs are perfect. We've always said that we're open to suggestions on how to improve them. I don't want to offer this as an excuse, but the member will know that the times in which we lived when these commitments were made, we did not leave Manitobans stranded. We met—I met myself with a crowd at Langruth, a crowd at Siglunes, a crowd at St. Laurent, in my own constituency in Rorketon—constituency at the time.

We wanted to, very quickly, get into the hands of Manitobans programs that could benefit them, to the point where, in a number of cases we had advances, cash advances go to flood victims so that they didn't have to flight—fight a flood with empty pockets. We knew they were going to come across some expenses right off the hop, so we tried to make sure that we could help them out that way.

We put in place a commissioner, Ron Bell, somebody I know the member for River Heights is familiar with, a respected municipal leader, a farmer, someone who I've been—I've known Ron awhile.

I think he has a lot of good common sense, and we gave him the ability to do a couple of things. One is to rule on appeals, individual appeals, but also to keep an eye out to—as to what kind of improvements we would need to make. What needs are being left out of flood victims in Manitoba?

And so, when the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and I made the announcements that we did back last May, we made it very clear that these weren't etched in stone. They were—we were to be—we were going to be flexible so that we can respond to the needs of Manitobans.

Yesterday, in questioning, I indicated the first one was that blizzard that we had at the end of April, beginning of May. We came forward very quickly and, I think, got some good response from producers who lost cattle, who lost sheep and lamb and other livestock. But then we came forward with a commitment in the Shoal lakes, an area that a number of us had—have toured and talked to people. And we believe that program with the—complete with the buyout, went a long way to help folks in the Shoal lakes and give them some kind of peace of mind that they weren't out there fighting the flood on their own.

We followed up with the Hoop and Holler and with the Lake Manitoba assistance plan and eventually the Lake Dauphin plan that we announced. In each of those cases we wanted to do two things: we wanted to get the message very clearly to people that they weren't on their own, that there was help out there, and at the same time leave the door open to making improvements in those programs so they can be—more accurately reflects the needs of what Manitobans facing that flood came across.

So I would be—and we put in place, you know, people in MASC, for example, who have good experience with compensation programs. We put people in Agriculture and other departments in place and they burnt the midnight oil month after month to get these—to get people hooked up with these programs.

I understand and I take the point of the member for River Heights in terms of water management. That's why this government has worked closely with conservation districts over the 12-year history that we have. It's not good enough just to work with conservation districts. When they sit at the table with us, we have to listen to what they have to say to us. So, if there's projects that have to do with retention

then they get consideration, and they may not be the big, grand retention projects that members have talked about, but I don't think we should fall—we should sell short some of the progress that has been made in all of the conservation districts throughout rural Manitoba where they've taken on a water management approach, both in terms of drainage and in terms of retention, protection of marshland and those sorts of things. You know, we've—I know we've done some work at Netley-Libau in terms of protection there, and I think you'll see that kind of approach, you know, continue to have legs.

The—I will, though, say, and just in conclusion, that in terms of the water retention number, that the best place to get that would be through my colleague in Infrastructure and Transportation. He can—he could probably give you a much more up-to-date, specific number than what I can.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well, I will certainly ask your colleague in Infrastructure and Transportation.

Yes, I am just being frank with the minister in terms of, you know, my experience in talking with a variety of people. And I think that, you know, it's important that the minister is aware of the situation that one of the things, which it seems clear to me, is that regardless of where we are with existing programs, that there are some things which are sort of falling through the cracks at the moment, which bear having a look at from the minister's perspective.

You know, one of those would be the situation of people like Joe Johnson, not far from where you were in Langruth, and—but, I mean, he's a farmer. He, you know, essentially had no income from his land last year. His land this year is either under, you know, in cattails or it's too wet. And, you know, unless something happens, it's almost magical. It's unlikely that he will get a crop in and, you know, he's sitting there in a financially difficult position and he is not alone. I mean, I'm hearing this from others who are farmers and who are facing another year without, you know, income, but in—they still have to, you know, look after the land; they have to, you know, clear the cattails away and get it ready for next year.

So let me give the minister an opportunity to talk about, you know, his plan in terms of individuals like this.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Struthers:** And don't get me wrong; I appreciate the frankness. I mean, if we're going to actually

improve on programs, I think we do need to speak frankly. And I know that the member for River Heights, I think, does bring considerable experience to this, not the least of which is talking to some of the same people that I get to speak with.

He mentions Joe. Joe is—I got to—he was one of the ones who organized the meeting in Langruth that I was invited to come and speak to, and they were very clear on a couple of different things. First of all, they wanted to be reassured that they weren't going to be left alone in terms of compensation, fighting the immediate—the immediateness of the flood that they were dealing with. And they wanted to make sure that they made their point, that they wanted us to deal with the long-term impact in terms of providing an outlet. We had all this water moving into our watershed, from provinces and states surrounding us, particularly, in our case there on the western side of the province, from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and then up through—coming through the Assiniboine, and then up through the Souris River in North Dakota.

So we—what was happening was that the water was coming in quite nicely, and it was getting plugged up at Fairford. And so we undertook, and our Premier (Mr. Selinger), I think to his credit, undertook to make sure that we provided some relief—long-term relief at the northeast part of that watershed, so that water can flow out into Hudson Bay where it belongs.

I think I can relate it to the—just the question that the member asked before, I think we do need to continue working with Saskatchewan, Alberta, and North Dakota in terms of retention of water there too, and not the extreme kind of drainage that we see happening in some of those projects. We have to, I think, keep that on the table.

But folks like Joe, who not only attended at that meeting but participated in an ongoing committee that would meet regularly with ministers, I think offered a lot of very—advice and sometimes frank advice as well, which is good. But, when you think about the plan that we announced, it was a Building and Recovery Action Plan. I do point out that one of the words in there is "recovery." Of course, the challenge of that is trying to understand exactly what we need to do to recover.

I've talked to folks up in the Eddystone area who remember the flood of 1954, whose—who, in their estimation, it took multi-years to—for that land to then recover. Now, it—I think they'll also tell you that

the land—that the water sat on their land longer than what this water did, but that doesn't diminish the fact that that's not just a one-year event, that that could have multiple-year effects—impacts on the land, and, you know, maybe in relation to that, the ability for farmers and ranchers in the area to have a living.

So we've—I know the folks in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives have been working with producers in those areas to try to, you know, to try to arrange, in a short term, the feeding of cattle and those sorts of things, but I know they've been talking to people in the area about what it's going to take to recover.

Now I can talk generally with the member for River Heights on this, but I think, again, if—for some specific steps that are going to be taken, I think that's probably—he's probably better off talking to either Infrastructure and Transportation or maybe the Agriculture Minister in, I guess, the Estimates that follow these Estimates.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The other point—I mean, one of the points that I want to make would be that it would be better to get out in front of this than have it, sort of, dangling and dangling without decisions made about, you know, what sort of support is or is not going to be made so that people can decide. You have not far from Joe and Lydia Johnson, people like Darrel and Dee Dee Armstrong, who have put a very considerable investment over the years to develop the community in Big Point, and, in a sense, you know, they're saying, you know, is there going to be the kind of help which will allow us to go ahead and redevelop or shall we just throw up our hands and walk away from it. And, you know, you may end up with an expensive buyout when, in fact, the situation could've been that you could've rebuilt a community, which was an incredibly, you know, wonderful summer place for a lot of working Manitobans, and whether you know precisely what is needed to allow people like that to, you know, make that transition and rebuild. But it's certainly, you know, not, as it were, horsing around on making sure that there's a road in, but, you know, proceeding and making sure that there's a road in there that's passable because that's going to be needed to clean up, you know, regardless, right? Whether or not you rebuild or whether or not you just clean up the homes which are there, you need a road in.

Second would be that when you've got people who've, you know, invested in their lives in situations like this and the property has plummeted,

right? I mean, and notwithstanding what I remember hearing you saying at one of the meetings, that property values usually go up after a flood—and maybe they do five or 10 years later. But you've got people facing the real situation where the property values have plummeted and, you know, they are financially strapped and it may be that under some specific circumstances there is (a) after disasters, you know, things like the Marshall Plan, after the Second World War, where there was availability of loans to people to rebuild because a disaster had happened then, and, I mean, this is not the same, but to people there on the ground, it's a pretty big disaster to them and, you know, I think that, you know, what I'm providing to the minister is, you know, some advice in terms of getting ahead of these situations instead of, you know, letting them hang in there and dangle and people being frustrated in terms of, you know, where things are going.

Let me just—because there's not much time left, I've got a—another, you know, piece that I want to talk about and ask the minister about. In the minister's five-year economic plan, when we look at the core government, the plan is actually not to balance the core government expenditures until 2015-2016—this is page 10 of the budget papers. And one of the problems that the minister and his government has had, is that each year they've come in with an expenditure estimate for the year and each year the government has spent more than they estimated they would expend and, of course, it was a whole lot more this year. But, you know, if you're coming in and you've got forecasts of expenditures for 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and you follow the same sort of pattern as you've done in the past and overexpended, then, you know, there's going to be a problem. So I—let me ask the minister, what is the minister going to do to try and actually meet the expenditure targets, a goal which has been rather elusive for this government so far.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, first of all, I think I appreciate the advice on the flood, and I—we can even talk face to face on that if we're running out of time.

We are—we will be judged on a summary basis coming back into budget in 2014-15, and we intend to do that. We—the member will note that in the projections of expenditure, especially last year, our budget was tabled, I believe, in March of last year, which was well ahead of—well ahead of the flood. So I would challenge anybody to tell me and to come up with a better, more reasonable projection than what we have done in terms of the expenses that we faced.

If that's the—if somebody thinks that they can do a better job of that, I mean, I just don't believe that.

We had, in year 2, as much as we could and as reasonably as we could, did that projection. And I think the member understands—

**Mr. Chairperson:** No offense, but the hour being 5 o'clock, committee rise.

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff):** This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of Executive Council.

Would the staff of the First Minister and Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) please enter the Chamber.

We're on page 30 of the Estimates book. As previously agreed, questioning will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I just have a short series of questions for the Premier, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Premier, earlier in these Estimates, I believe you indicated—and I was not here for the answer—but I understand that you indicated to the Leader of the Official Opposition that Thomas Linner is an employee of the Executive Council. Is that correct?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Yes, that's what I indicated in the previous question from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the Premier for that response. Can he tell me, he probably told the Leader of the Official Opposition, but what position is Mr. Linner employed in in Executive Council?

**Mr. Selinger:** Yes, I believe I indicated that in my previous answer to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Right. I understand he indicated that to the Leader of the Official Opposition. I'm sorry. I was not here for questioning. I apologize.

Can you just restate what his position is?

**Mr. Selinger:** I believe I put it on the record that he was a policy analyst.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the Premier for his indulgence on that.

In regards to the conduct of staff in Executive Council, earlier this year Mr. Linner made the news

as having access to family court documents of a federal MP, the MP for Provencher.

I want to table for the Premier that access form Mr. Linner filled out to access the family records of Mr. Toews. And I want to ask the Premier if he can indicate whether an immediate supervisor of Mr. Linner has spoken to him or whether the Premier has spoken to him about the appropriateness of this conduct.

**Mr. Selinger:** I'd have to check the specifics on that, and I'd be happy to do so.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is it fair to say, then, that the Premier himself has not spoken to Mr. Linner about accessing these family court documents?

**Mr. Selinger:** I haven't spoken to him on this matter. I—he works for another person in my office.

As I understand it, at the time, I think he indicated he was doing this on his personal time on—and, therefore, it wasn't directly connected to any activity that I was involved in.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And regardless of—and I'll accept the Premier's statement on that.

Does he believe it's an appropriate conduct for somebody who's employed with Executive Council and who ostensibly answers to him whether or not that's appropriate conduct for an employee to be taking?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, you know, I don't have control over what somebody does on their personal time. This was not an activity related to his work here.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Does the Premier have any knowledge of whether or not anyone else involved with Executive Council or the NDP caucus accessed these family court documents of the Member of Parliament for Provencher?

**Mr. Selinger:** I don't have any specific information on that. If the member does, I'd be happy to hear about it.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is the Premier familiar with the name, Sarah Carson?

**Mr. Selinger:** No, I'm not.

**Mr. Goertzen:** In 2010-2011, Sarah Carson was an intern for the NDP caucus, or at least there was an

individual named Sarah Carson who was an intern for your caucus.

I'd also like to table another document. This is also an access document filled out by Sarah Carson accessing the personal family court documents of Mr. Toews. That is not—there's no date indicated on that. My understanding is that Mr. Toews was told that this access happened in April of 2011 at the time when Ms. Carson was an intern and during a federal election.

Can the Premier indicate whether that's the same individual who was employed as an intern in his caucus?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'd have to check on that. I have no information about that.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Would the Premier find it troubling that an intern in his office or within his caucus was accessing personal family records of a member of parliament during a federal election, and would he be interested in finding out who would have made that direction?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, I have no knowledge of the circumstances with respect to this document that the member has provided to me, whether the person did it on their own time, whether they were directed to do it by anybody. I have no knowledge of that, and, therefore, I can't really give him a comment.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Would he comment on the appropriateness of an intern doing that type of activity?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, I have no knowledge that this person did it as an intern.

**Mr. Goertzen:** They were an intern during the time that these files were accessed, according to the court, Mr. Premier. I would ask whether or not—how he feels about the fact that there are only two individuals who ever accessed these family court documents of the member for Provencher, and both of them are tied either to Executive Council or to your caucus.

Does he have any concern about the fact that the only two individuals who accessed these files have a connection to the provincial NDP party or caucus?

**Mr. Selinger:** And, again, there's a lot of assumptions being made in that in terms of what role they were playing and at whose time they were doing it on, and so I'd have to be very specific about—have

more information on the circumstances before I could comment on that.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think the Premier has before him two documents that clearly indicate that individuals who were employed either at Executive Council or employed through his caucus office had accessed these documents, and I'm surprised that the Premier doesn't have any sort of feeling whether or not he feels this is appropriate activity for individuals to be partaking in.

**Mr. Selinger:** I didn't detect a question there.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'll take it from the Premier's nonanswer that he does, in fact, feel that it's an appropriate activity.

I would ask the Premier about the general—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

**Mr. Selinger:** No, I just—the member drew a conclusion based—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable member for Steinbach had the floor. If the Premier wishes to raise a point of order, then he can interrupt the comments of the member opposite. Otherwise, he has to wait for his turn to respond.

The Chair recognizes the honourable member for Steinbach.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Thank you. I mean the point was, Mr. Chairperson, I heard one of the members opposite, I think it was the Minister of Immigration (Ms. Melnick), suggested this was innuendo. I provided two court documents of individuals who were employed either in Executive Council or with the NDP caucus. That's not innuendo. Those are—documents are legally filed within the court. I asked the Premier whether or not he was at all concerned that the only two people who ever accessed these files were tied to him and his party. He didn't say anything, so I guess we're all left to wonder, and I suppose the member for Provencher will be left to wonder whether or not the Premier has any sort of concern about it. I'm sure if he did have concern, he would have expressed it.

I want to ask the Premier about the general proposition of family court documents being open. I understand that in British Columbia they have a different system than in Manitoba where family court documents can only be accessed by a lawyer, either a party for the lawyers involved, or any other lawyer, a

person who is a party to the action, a person who has authorized in writing by a party for the action, or a person who is authorized by one of the lawyers who is involved with the action. What is it you feel generally about these types of restrictions and whether or not it's a positive thing?

**Mr. Selinger:** First of all, I just want to correct what I thought I saw the member from Steinbach doing in his last comment, which I didn't detect a question in it, but he drew a conclusion, not based on anything I said but on own inferences that he drew from the process that we're involved in. And, again, I've said that the member's trying to ask me whether people who have a job in the provincial government did something inappropriate. There's an implication there that they did it as a part of their job. I don't know that to be the case. I know in the one case, the Thomas Linner case, that he indicated that he did this on his own time and that it had nothing to do with his employment in the province.

I don't know the circumstances of this other individual, who is named here as Sarah Carson, and what role she was playing and on whose behalf, whether it was her own initiative or on behalf of anybody else, what role she played in that. So I'm not going to draw conclusions unless I have solid evidence to support that there was some link to the workplace that was involved in their behaviour. I do not have any evidence in that regard and neither does the member opposite from Steinbach, and so I don't think he should draw implications from something upon-based upon circumstantial evidence. There's no direct link to government based on them filling out a form and asking to see a document, which I understand is available on the public record.

**Mr. Goertzen:** It remains that there are only two individuals who ever accessed this document, and they both were in your employ. That seems a little bit strange, Mr. Premier, but I would ask you whether or not you're going to, then, undertake an investigation to determine why it is that these two individuals who were employed by you or your caucus were accessing the public divorce or the divorce records of Mr. Toews.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, again, I don't—you know, when we have a situation like this, and the member's trying to draw conclusions based on *[inaudible]* I don't know that we can make those leaps in logic until we have more information about the specifics of it. And my understanding is is that those records are available to anybody in the public that wishes to

have access to them, subject to them filling out a request form to do that. If the member thinks the law should be changed, he can certainly bring that forward as a bill or he can have a discussion with our Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) and discuss the merits of whether these documents should be open or closed, or if they are going to be open on a restricted basis, who they should be open to. I have no preconceived notions on that at this time, and I'd be open to a healthy discussion on that in terms of what serves the public interest.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I asked the minister—or, sorry, the Premier, specifically, whether or not he would be seeking out information about what the reason was for two individuals who were employed either in his caucus or in Executive Council for seeking out the divorce records of Mr. Toews.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, again, if the member's asking whether I should do that, I'll take that under advisement.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm—I am troubled, Mr. Chairperson, about the lack of regard that the Premier seems to have regarding the conduct of his own staff and his willingness to make light of this issue and to be—not take it particularly seriously. I think that that's troubling. I think it's disappointing. I think that others will find it disappointing. I will, in fact, when we go into Estimates of Justice in a short while, be asking the Attorney General regarding the public disclosure or public access of family documents and divorce records in particular. Perhaps he'll be able to have a discussion with his Attorney General prior to those questions, so we can get more fulsome answers.

I recognize that my time is short, so I'm going to cede the floor to others who have questions of the Premier.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Selinger:** Yes, again, I think the member has drawn conclusions that are not warranted by the discussion we've had today, and they're evaluative conclusions.

I've made it very clear that I do not have specific knowledge of the circumstances under which these people acted, other than to know that the individual called Thomas Linner indicated that he was doing this on his own time and it had no connection to his employment in the province of Manitoba, and so he was acting as a citizen at that stage. If he was acting

on behalf of any other interest, that was up to him to declare that.

So I don't think the member should draw any excessive conclusions from that or disappointment from that without all the facts being on the table.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** And to the Premier, could he tell us, has the government of Manitoba given any financial support, whether through advertising, loans, grants, sponsorship, to the True North Centre?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'd have to check. I'm not aware of any, but I'd have to check. We have an agreement with True North in terms of supporting resources for them to pay down their mortgage on the building; that was part of the arrangement to help bring the Jets back to Manitoba.

**Mr. Schuler:** And the agreement was?

**Mr. Selinger:** We indicated that we would provide some access to some gaming revenues for True North as part of the process of them being able to have an NHL team present in Manitoba.

**Mr. Schuler:** I take it, by access to gaming, we're talking about VLTs.

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, if the member wants specifics, I'll get it for him, but it's gaming machines, yes.

**Mr. Schuler:** Could the Premier tell us how many VLTs are currently at the True North Centre?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'd have to get that information for him.

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, thank you. Could the Premier tell us: the government of Manitoba, has it given financial support through advertising, loans, grants, or even sponsorships—and this is by the government of Manitoba—to the Canad Inns Stadium, Polo Park?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, I'd have to check the record on that. I think that Crown corporations often provide sponsorships to venues like the Canad Inns Stadium, as well as potentially to the new stadium as well. I think that's a long-standing practice. And, to the extent that the Crown corporations are owned on behalf of the people of Manitoba by the government, there is a form of support there.

**Mr. Schuler:** But, again, we're asking you specifically about the government of Manitoba here. Is the Premier aware of any of those kinds of financial supports to Canad Inns Stadium?

**Mr. Selinger:** I said earlier I'd have to take that question and seek information for the member. What I do know is that Crown corporations are often sponsors of placards and advertising at the Canad Inns Stadium, and that's part of their support for their professional football being in Manitoba. And, when you go to a game, you can see Manitoba Hydro up there; you can see some of the sponsorships that they provide.

**Mr. Schuler:** Could the Premier tell us: Has the government of Manitoba given any financial support, whether by advertising, loans, grants, or sponsorship, to the Investors field?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, there's an agreement that was reached to support building the new stadium at the University of Manitoba, and it involved some support through Loan Act authority through the university because of the facility being owned by a corporation that will allow public access and university to have access to it. And we did put some cash up front for the new stadium from the provincial level of government, and as did the City.

**Mr. Schuler:** The Premier mentioned Crown corporations. Is the Premier aware, how much did the Crown corporation—or how much are they giving financial support, whether advertising, loans, grants, or sponsorship, to the True North Centre? Would he have a figure for us on that?

**Mr. Selinger:** No, I do not have that figure in front of me.

**Mr. Schuler:** Is it possible to get that figure?

**Mr. Selinger:** I could seek out whether that information is available for the member, yes.

**Mr. Schuler:** Thank you very much. Could the Premier also tell us, is he aware of, or what would be the amount of financial support given through advertising, loans, grants or sponsorship by Crown corporations, say Canad Inns stadiums?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, I think I've attempted to answer that question the last two times by saying Crown corporations often provide corporate sponsorships to facilities like the Canad Inns Stadium. That's standard practice that goes back as long as I can remember, and they are regularly approached, Crown corporations, by professional sports in Manitoba—as well as amateur sports—for sponsorships for various activities that they conduct.

**Mr. Schuler:** Would the Premier have a cumulative number, or could he provide that to us?

**Mr. Selinger:** I think if the member wants a cumulative number, he'd have to be a little more specific. I think it's probably been going on since the earliest days of professional sport in Manitoba and when the Crown corporations were here and their contributions to the community as a government business enterprise.

**Mr. Schuler:** Thank you. What—we should have refined our question a little bit in the last three years. How much would the Crowns have given financial support to Canad Inns Stadium?

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, I'd have to get that information for the member.

There is a Standing Committee on Crown Corporations where the Crowns do present and he could directly attend those meetings, if he wished, and ask the Crowns directly, but if he's asking me to seek out the information now, he should make that clear and we'll see what we can find for him.

**Mr. Schuler:** And could the Premier tell us, how much would the Crown corporations have given in financial support, either through advertising, loans, grants or sponsorship to the Investors field?

Would he have a figure for us, how much that might be?

**Mr. Selinger:** I do not have that figure, but it wouldn't surprise me at all if they've been approached for support, and we'd have to see whether they've made any decisions in that regard.

**Mr. Schuler:** Moving on to a slightly different topic. We're very, very excited that there's going to be some major league soccer coming in years to come, and we understand the Investors field is one of the venues that—is the venue that they're going to be using here in the province, amongst other venues in the country.

There was some discussion about the Blue Bombers and the kind of field use, and I understand there was some consternation about whether or not the lines could be painted on or sewn on or what was going to happen.

Can the Premier tell us, has that issue been resolved?

**Mr. Selinger:** I don't know the details of the resolution, but I believe that the—everybody was comfortable with making the bid for the FIFA tournament to be in Manitoba, world women's soccer, and that arrangements have been made that

will allow the venue to be the new stadium at the university, the Investors field to be used for the soccer event, and that arrangements have been made with the Bombers that everybody is—feels that it will work in their interest.

**Mr. Schuler:** And I take it the Premier would make himself available if this issue were, in fact, not resolving itself? This is an important sports event to have in the province of Manitoba. I know there are a lot of young people who are very excited to go. In fact, I, too, will have to go and line up for tickets and see if I can buy some. I've already been instructed by members of my family that I am going to be buying tickets. Evidently, that's something we're going to be doing and we want to make sure that there are no controversies associated with it.

I know that FIFA World Cup had indicated they would have liked to have seen where the lines would have been painted on and, evidently, it can be washed off and then it could have been used for Bomber games, and the Bombers weren't that agreeable to it. FIFA world rules are such that they cannot play a FIFA game when there are multiple lines painted on it, and that—that's why, for instance, the University of Manitoba soccer pitch is not FIFA approved, because it is painted—it's actually not painted, it's sewn on with multiple lines that there can be four fields or two fields or one field and they will not—it would not be a FIFA approved field because of all the lines.

So I know there was some problems between the Bombers and the soccer associations.

\* (16:20)

And, again, could the Premier give us comfort that he will make sure that this issue, whatever it is, is resolved and doesn't stand in the way of Manitobans being able to enjoy some real world-class soccer. Could he just give us that assurance?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'm confident that not only did the organizations that got the FIFA tournament here, work out arrangements, in principle, ahead of time, so that they could make that offer and explain it adequately to the people that were deciding where the events would be held, but that they'll follow through on that and will work out arrangements that allow the FIFA tournament to occur successfully in what will be a first-class facility for this country. And, then, that facility will again be available for professional football, as well as amateur football and



community-use activities in that facility, as we go forward.

**Mr. Schuler:** The Premier, also, in the last election, on September 26, 2011, made a commitment on soccer fields. In fact, it goes on to say Manitoba's NDP is promising to help make the province one of the best places to play soccer. I don't know if I'm allowed to say the Premier's name, so it would be, the Premier said on Monday—or the Leader of the NDP said on Monday, that an NDP government would spend \$12.5 million to help build 13 new soccer fields across Winnipeg.

I was wondering if the Premier could tell us how those 13 new soccer fields are doing and have they already allocated where they might be building them.

**Mr. Selinger:** I appreciate the member from St. Paul's interest in this area of soccer because I know he's an avid parent of soccer players, and I've met his children as they've participated in various tournaments. And he's one of many parents that are involved in soccer in Manitoba.

And there's so many young people playing soccer, including a very high proportion of young women and girls. I think about 45 per cent, at least, of the soccer participants in Manitoba are—and women and young—and girls, and that's a great thing. It's a very dynamic sport.

With respect to that specific question, I'd obviously have to get an update for him on that.

But we think investment in soccer assets in Manitoba will generate good recreation opportunities for people of all backgrounds and all ages—of all genders and we think it's a great investment in the future of the province. We've worked closely with the amateur—or the soccer associations of Manitoba, and they're very supportive of it as well. And the facility—the indoor facility that we have at the University of Manitoba is first class. It's an excellent facility. It's making a real difference.

And, certainly, the outdoor facilities, where I've seen the member from St. Paul attend as a parent, for some of the beautiful outdoor artificial turf facilities we've got, are highly used. And because of the artificial turf and the lighting, they can be used for many, many hours of the day and just really provide a tremendous asset to people playing soccer in Winnipeg and their families.

So we've seen the success of what can happen as a result of these investments. And I know that we're

actively planning on how we can make the future investments.

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, and—I'm sure the Premier has no difficulty with the Manitoba Legislature keeping him to account of the commitments he made, so—and I appreciate that the Premier was so gung-ho about getting these facilities done.

Because, we should be very clear, these are not just for soccer. I mean, these are used by football. They're way easier on the knees and on the ankles, and anybody who's got children playing soccer knows these synthetic fields are a major, major help to youth sports. Field hockey uses them; lacrosse uses them; rugby uses them; soccer uses them; football uses them.

**An Honourable Member:** Ultimate Frisbee.

**Mr. Schuler:** Ultimate Frisbee—I thank you, Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen). The fastest growing sport.

In fact, the U of M complex, I understand, in the winter has, I think, four hours that are not being used on weekends; they go until 2 in morning and they're open again, I think, at 6 in the morning. And a lot of this ultimate Frisbee—and I've seen it, I don't understand at all, but it is a growing sport. And even baseball, and they use a whiffle ball, will actually use these fields because, again, for running and all that kind of stuff it—for practising—it reduces injuries.

Now, I just want to point out, in the press release that the Premier put out, he indicated that there would be two in east Winnipeg. I was wondering if he could indicate to us how these two in east Winnipeg are doing and has he, sort of, come up with locations for those two? Basically, how are they going? Because east Winnipeg is very excited to see these. How are they doing?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, I appreciate the member's enthusiasm for all manner of soccer facilities in Winnipeg and in Manitoba, generally, and I'll have to undertake to get him information of where that's at. It's very early in the process, I can tell him that for sure.

**Mr. Schuler:** While he's looking into that, there were two also committed for west Winnipeg, and I know—and it's not just for soccer. I think we should be very careful. We're not talking about soccer fields here. We're talking about synthetic fields that all sports users—U of M Soccer Complex is so highly successful because they didn't restrict themselves to

one sport. The University of Manitoba Bisons practise there and absolutely love it.

And I'm going to pronounce the name wrong, but there's a little knee thing that a lot of kids get, and it's called Jacob Schlauter [*phonetic*], and I know I've pronounced that wrong, but it's where the bone grows on the knee, and if you hit that—my son has it—if you hit it with even like a little bit of a metal, any—like you hit it direct on, it is excruciatingly painful. And my son tells me you go down on an artificial turf and you don't feel it. And whether that's for football, ultimate Frisbee, any sport, these fields are amazing.

So I was just wondering if the Premier could tell us, how are the two new, synthetic fields doing? How are the planning going for west Winnipeg?

**Mr. Selinger:** Then, again, I was hoping that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) would weigh in on the correct pronunciation of that part of the knee that the member from St. Paul mentioned so that we can get that—so that we—so we can write that down and check out what that's all about. And—but I look for the Leader of the Opposition to come into this discussion very soon, because I know he's a soccer player as well.

You know, it's early days. Better soccer facilities are, we think, a good investment. I do take the member from St. Paul's point that these facilities, these fields, these surfaces can have multiple uses for other sports. I think that's a really important point, whether it's field hockey, whether it's ultimate Frisbee, whether it's track and field, whether it's lacrosse, any sport that uses a, you know, a flat surface.

And, you know, it is true that a lot of these sports have a lot of contact involved in them, and the knees are among the most vulnerable of the joints with respect to those kinds of sports. And we've seen lots of injuries over the years. And so, when you can have a softer field, it's going to reduce the impact on the knees when injuries occur. And I—when I saw the indoor soccer facility at the University of Manitoba, I was extremely impressed with just the natural feel of it, and the flexibility, and the give in the surface, especially if you're wearing cleats.

And any of us that have ever played sports where you didn't have that kind of a surface, we've seen lots of knees go, and we've seen lots of injuries because of the twisting and turning that occurs when

you're on a really hard surface and you've got a cleat digging into it.

So I'm with the member from St. Paul. I think these are good investments and—but they are early days, and I'll have to get him information about the planning.

I know we have had some preliminary discussions about the location for the indoor soccer facility in the north quadrant of Winnipeg, and there are a variety of ideas there. And I think the member from St. Paul has actually approached me on some of the sites that he thought would be appropriate. And I wouldn't want him to think he has any special access on that regard, but—[*interjection*] Yes, well, there may be a site available close to The Forks, depending on how things go, but that's for—that's a discussion for another time, and perhaps another level of government, but we will work with him to see where we—how we develop these facilities as we go forward. And—but, again, I thank him for the interest.

**Mr. Schuler:** I thank the Premier for those comments, although he never quite addressed where the two might be in west Winnipeg. So we'll leave that one on the docket and go to the two in central Winnipeg.

Could he tell us where those two might be in the planning process, because—and I'll go to the next one. And there's also two being planned alongside the north Winnipeg complex—the new north Winnipeg complex. Could he tell us how those are going?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, the member has an enormous interest in soccer facilities, and I'm personally pleased that he's got those recreational activities available to him when he's not in the Legislature. I think that's a great use of time. I spent quite a bit of time on soccer fields myself at the formative stages of my children's growth, and it was a lot of fun and met a lot of good people there, a lot of good parents, and saw a lot of great amateur sport. And some of those athletes went on to higher levels of activity as well, and even those that—[*interjection*] Pardon me? I think the Leader of the Opposition wanted to get into the debate, and I want to encourage him to do that because I'm still waiting for the correct pronunciation of that part of the knee to be put on the floor here so we—

**An Honourable Member:** I'm trying to get Jon Gerrard in here for that one.

**Mr. Selinger:** Okay, so we can have that recorded.

But the north Winnipeg one, again, is at the very early stages of planning in terms of location. I can tell him that we'd like to pick a location that would offer as much access and use as possible, and we're looking at those factors as we go forward. But it's very early days still.

**Mr. Schuler:** Amongst all the fields that the Premier had committed to during the election, he also committed to a new indoor complex that would be in north—in Winnipeg's North End. In fact, you know what? I should actually read it verbatim off of the press release that the NDP put out so that we have it exactly on the record: One of the new indoor complexes would be in Winnipeg's North End, which would make this sport more accessible to inner city kids.

And this is what I was talking to the Premier about some time ago, and you know what? I'm going to try to find that knee thing for the Premier. I just texted my staff to see if they would actually look it up, so we have the right thing on the record.

My concern with the facility is and now that I have—and I did approach the Premier in the Rotunda at an event and I know he appreciates it when opposition MLAs sandbag him at these events with an issue that he hasn't even got his head wrapped around. So today we've got him talking about sports facilities which he committed to.

My concern is with some of the discussion that's being taken place, and I do not have an inside track like, for instance, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell). I can only go on what I'm hearing out in the community.

My concern to the Premier is this: that if it was intended to be for inner city youth, location is going to have to be very, very carefully chosen, and I know I said this to the Premier. And, by the way, I would absolutely understand if he doesn't remember half of what I told him because I did kind of corner him at a function in the Rotunda.

I just want to lay it out for one more time. The problem is a lot of the difficult areas are now up Main Street in the North End. It's—and I don't have the exact map with me right now. But, really, the downtown, the Main Street, the main core of the North End is Leila and McPhillips. That's—our hospital is there, our shopping is there, our sports is there. You know, all of our services are there.

But most important of all to the Premier is the fact that that's a bus hub and I have some maps and I—after this is over, I will be sending a letter to the Premier in which it shows that all the main buses go to Seven Oaks Shopping Centre—that's where the major transfer station is.

There is discussion that, of all things, that the Province is interested in putting this facility at Red River community college, which I don't think we're necessarily opposed to, but the thing is if it goes to Red River community college, then it is meant for college soccer. It's basically going to be accessible for suburban individuals who can drive their children, and it's not going to serve what the Premier had indicated in his press release, and that is, which would make the sport more accessible to inner city kids.

I would suggest to the Premier, through the Chair, that it be very important that bus routes be considered. In fact, there's the one bus and I think—I don't have my papers with me—I believe it's the Templeton bus route that stops about a hundred metres away from the Seven Oaks Soccer Complex. Most of the other buses—and I have the whole map system—I ran it off, are—they go to the Seven Oaks Shopping Centre. And that's where the transfer station is, and it's—because these kids, by and large, are not going to be driven by their parents. That's not going to happen.

I've been involved with inner city youth programs where we had to play out in Headingley at Cover All. If that isn't just—well, let's leave that one be.

You know what? You've got to find the kids. It's tough to get there. There's no busing there, whereas the Seven Oaks Soccer complex is very accessible. The kids can get there, and they can get there from the entire North End.

I understand that there was, at some point in time, the city was pushing the old—the fields right across from the casino on McPhillips. The field name escapes—*[interjection]*—the old Exhibition Grounds. The only problem there is, is that there's only one of the buses from the North End that actually goes past there. And there's some discussion of using the golf grounds next to Kildonan Park.

Again, none of them are a terrible location. The thing is, is that if it's really going to be targeted to children from the North End—and I would say to the Premier, I'd—I'm involved with volleyball, hockey,

soccer, basketball, handball, and it pains me—and I say this to the Premier from the bottom of my heart—it pains me to see a lot of these kids are not getting into it because of the travel that's involved and accessibility to facilities.

And I would say to the Premier, a great thing that the University of Winnipeg is building one of these field houses, because a lot of the inner city youth—and, basically, all the games, all their games can be scheduled. The inner city teams, those games can be scheduled there. We can drive to those fields. Those kids can't and, in the North End, you know what, we can drive to those fields, but their parents, if they have a car, are often working nights or not interested, or there's multiple reasons.

You know, I've seen kids walking huge distances to want to come and play and being very discouraged because no parent is there, no support. I mean, through the Chair to the Premier, how often have I kind of said to one of the kids, you know, you're a magnificent player? You know, stick with it, stay with it, knowing full well that they have walked a long distance just to get to a particular field. And you know what? We won't—we don't ask our kids to do that at -20, -30 and, yet, somehow, we expect inner city kids or North End kids to do that.

So that is my argument why that indoor soccer pitch—it is very important that it go somewhere at the main intersection, the main street, the downtown of the North End, and that is around Leila and Main Street. And that was the point I was trying to make. I know the Premier made a commitment to it, and he says very clearly in his press release, which would make the sport more accessible to inner city kids. I would ask him that that would be the filter that he would look through when the location—and we all know location is just the most divisive thing on any project. The rest of it usually pretty simple—it's location. Once you get over that one—you know, we won't even talk water slides here. I mean, it's location. That is always the debate. And, on this one, I, you know, if that was the filter that it was truly, you know, the children of the North End that were in consideration, I think that would benefit those children in a big way.

And I appreciate the Premier's comments on that, and then I would pass my time on to one of my colleagues.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, again, I can tell that the member from St. Paul's passionately involved in youth sports and, including soccer, seems to be one of his

particular passions. But at other seasons it sounds like volleyball. Did I hear basketball there too? *[interjection]* Okay. Those are all excellent activities, and I'm glad that we provide them. We have, actually, very good leagues for all of those activities in Winnipeg and in Manitoba, generally.

The location of the North End facility is—nobody's will be entirely happy. We want to try to have a location that will give a lot of use as well as accessibility to a wide range of people that are living in the North End or want to be in the North End for those kinds of activities. And so it's early days yet.

We'll see what's possible, and we'll take a look at options. Red River College has been one that's been mentioned. The member has mentioned Leila and McPhillips, up that way. The Old Ex has been mentioned as well. Some people would like to see it in the older part of the North End, closer to the Selkirk avenues, which might be a challenge in terms of physical space being available, because recreational space is in short supply there. It's absent moving the railway location yards, the CPR yards. But that's—that would take a little bit longer than we might be able to do in this term.

\* (16:40)

But, you know, there's a number of options there that would leverage as much use as possible. And so we'll take a look at that going forward. And, like I said, it's early days, but the idea of getting a facility somewhere in the North End—it's almost the case that anywhere in the North End would be more accessible than now because there is nothing there now on an indoor basis. So we're going to be better off.

But I'll take the member's comments under advisement. I think there's no question that he's keen on this, and so we'll take a look at what we can do as we go forward. And I appreciate his ongoing interest in this, and if he has any maps or other documentation he wants to provide me to sort of build awareness on what the options are, I'd be happy to receive that information in my office if you'd like to provide that so that I don't get caught in his office on YouTube or something and all the controversy that'll come out of that and all the innuendo that might come out of that, given what we've seen in the last couple of days. I'm very interested in the future siting locations for this facility, and the synthetic grass fields are—have proven to be very, very usable, and they've really multiplied almost by four the amount of time that can be spent on these facilities.

The one that we saw in—up on—in the Waverley area there probably in the area of the Leader of the Opposition in terms of the constituency is used from very early morning to very late at night because of the lighting and the accessibility and the parking and just all the features that were a part of it, and it was really quite remarkable how much activity we leveraged off those fields by having them synthetic and then putting the proper lighting with them as well. So, when people are doing those kinds of things, it only means that they're healthier and they're more active and there's a lot of good things that come out of good recreation facilities in the province.

So that's why we made the announcement in the election, and I'm glad the member supports it. I won't go so far as to say that I look forward to his vote on it in future budgets, but I know he'll be there at least—I know that he'll be there at least in spirit, if not in vote.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I do have a few questions for the Premier, if I could, and I know the Premier will start off with the one on the oil industry. The Premier knows the billions of investments that are going into southwest Manitoba right now. There's millions of spinoff dollars going to the province in these areas, and so the first one, I guess, would be the Coulter bridge on the Souris River and 251 Highway west of Waskada. There's a group of volunteers locally there with the RMs involved in trying to get a bridge rebuilt. We have met with the minister, had an assurance that that bridge will be built by November of 2013, along with the one at Hartney on Highway 21 a whole new road being there—built there, that's another whole scenario.

But the case of the one at Coulter, the oil industry will help with a certain amount of dollars. They'll put up enough dollars to build a bypass. We have no concern with the bridge being built. In fact, the local people want it built on, you know, on time on budget, but they want the government to take the time to build it properly. The minister's indicated it'll be a very sound bridge, RTAC-plus, for the needs of the heavy equipment in that area today and probably into the next decades.

So just to acknowledge that engineers that we've been through the department, the engineers have looked at the company that would come in with a detour around that bridge. There's a shoofly that they need there. It'll take some approaches coming off of 251 down into the area that would be a low level

crossing on that highway, which would be a benefit—a huge benefit to the local traffic as well as the oil industry and allows the wide equipment that's starting to move in the area and been moving for a while in regards to seeding equipment from farming as well. And so I just need to bring that to the Premier's attention and see if he could make sure that, when these people come to the government with an engineered plan that they're almost finished with, that—and all of the private money put in place to build a detour around it that his—he will direct his departments, as long as they followed Manitoba guidelines, to allow this to go ahead.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, again, the member from Arthur-Virden has been pretty consistent in pursuing this issue because I know it's of great importance to the people out in his area to have a functioning bridge in that area close to Waskada, and, you know, some of the earlier ideas the engineers inside the department of government services did not think were feasible or safe, and so they had to reject them just on the basis of standards for safety when you have bridges. So I'm sure that, if there's another proposal that comes forward, I think our engineers will give it a fair review and see what's possible. I—having had contact with the engineers quite a bit in the last year related to the flood, I've seen that they're a pretty conscientious bunch and a pretty knowledgeable bunch, and I'm sure they'll give a fair opinion from an engineering point of view.

And so that's what we would expect if the community has a good initiative, and it makes sense and it's cost beneficial and will solve the problem in the short term, then I'm sure it will be given fair review. If there's a problem with it, I think they'll be honest about that and tell you what they think the concerns are. But, in the meantime, the member, I think, from Arthur-Virden knows that they are pursuing a permanent solution there as rapidly as possible. It takes some work to scope it up and design it and ensure that it's in the capital budget, but they've committed to try and get that bridge back—a permanent bridge back in service as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, thanks. As I mentioned, the minister was promised it'll be built by November of '13, and so they appreciate that. This is about the shoofly around. There's no doubt that it'll be replaced and we don't have a concern with that. It's to alleviate the school bus traffic and the safety of the citizens in that area on the lighter vehicles that might be travelling as well and sort of separate them

from the bypass, the 24-mile detour around and allow some more of that traffic down that road.

So I appreciate the Premier's answer because they have indicated—his engineers right to the head, just for his information, have indicated that, if they come up with a viable plan that's supported by—that meets the standards as in the guidelines of Manitoba's engineering requirements, that they would allow it to go forward. So I appreciate that.

So I just wonder if the Premier would like to comment on that.

**Mr. Selinger:** I'm not trying to in any way mislead the member from Arthur-Virden. Our officials would look at the cost benefit of the expenditure for a short-term solution versus the resources needed to have the long-term solution as quickly as possible. So they'll give us an opinion of whether they think that public money should be spent on the short-term solution versus flat out pursuing the long-term solution as quickly as possible.

So I'm not going to prejudge that, but, you know, I know that folks out your way are seriously trying to get a solution, and it sounds like, from what you're saying, they're willing to put some of their own resources to that. I can assure the member, I think our officials that are responsible for those kinds of facilities like bridges will give it a fair hearing and they'll give an honest reaction to the people proposing it.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, I'm really glad that the Premier raised that because I hadn't mentioned that the resources are there on a—between the municipality and the private industry. They're not asking the government for any money, and I think that's what makes this particular request so unique, and that's why I ask that to please allow it to go forward when it comes forward to their engineers. And they certainly have said that, as long as it's built to Manitoba's standards, they would allow that.

**Mr. Selinger:** And I appreciate the member for that clarification. I wasn't entirely sure what the proposal was, but that, obviously, shows a heroic effort on the part of the municipalities and the private sector to get a bridge in place that they think is badly needed.

On that basis, I know our engineers will give it a fair hearing and see whether it makes sense and whether it meets standards and nobody's safety would be put at risk because, when you build any kind of infrastructure, you're culpable if you let something go ahead that might have a safety risk

attached to it, and I know how important that is. We want—there's a lot of economic activity going on down there. There's a lot of school buses moving down there, and, if we're going to have those kinds of transportation needs fulfilled in the short term, we want to do it with a full regard to safety.

**Mr. Maguire:** Thanks. I'm going to move on to a couple of communities in that area. I mean, you can't imagine what's going on in that area now. *The Manitoba Oil and Gas Review* magazine that just came out this spring, here, in the last few weeks, by Delta Communications is a tremendous bit of information in regards to what's actually happening in that area right now.

The towns of Deloraine, Melita are seeking new infrastructures, hotels, motels, infrastructure as Virden is from some of the new developments of private industry that wants to come into those areas. It's a great opportunity.

There's some mid-level government persons in there, I think, that are—I know they're trying to do their job, but it's inhibiting the amount of investments that can get on its way very quickly there right now, and it's probably inhibiting the oil companies from being able to move any faster than they want to move.

They will start right away with the restrictions coming off. I commend the government for shortening the time frame on the restrictions that they have as this year take place. Unfortunately, it's been dry in that area or close, you know, not enough at this—it's wet enough right now. It's not following seeding, but it's certainly dry enough that they can travel on those roads.

\*(16:50)

The other one that I have is particular of interest, Mr. Premier, is that we're going through the department of highways right now, with an overpass that's been in the books, in Virden at No. 1 Highway and King Street, where the lights are on No. 1 Highway in Virden, for—it's been on the books for about 15 years to put an overpass in Virden in that area. I've spoken to the deputy minister, and some of the staff persons in that area are saying—and right now that's pertinent because there's a multi-million dollar industry that wants—or a business that wants to relocate from its present location in town to the corner of 1 and King Street.

And it's basically, like they're basically saying, you can go ahead and build there, and we'll—if it's

expropriated over the next, you know, in the next five, 10, 15 years, we'll pay you for the value of the land at that time, but nothing for your building if you build there now. This individual would probably bring in a half a million to \$750,000 in PST through that business venture to the government on an annual basis, and he is asking that there be a—perhaps a million-dollar value put on his building if it was expropriated.

Obviously, the Premier knows this may not happen in his or my lifetime, and that's the impression I've got from some of his department officials. What I have—what I've asked the minister, and what I'm asking him to look at, is to go in and have that plan taken off the books, because his department is saying, we can't allow this to go ahead with that plan sitting there. The Town of Virden and the planning area have never okayed it. It's been sitting there for 15 years, I believe, and it certainly would be a benefit to the community.

The minister just indicated this morning that he's too busy to see them, and I understand that from Estimates and everything else that's going on. But his department is not co-operating in regards to even giving a meeting with these—with the mayor and the council and that community. And so it would be—and it's not just that particular location, because it's going to affect both sides of the highway, which is some of the—as you'll read in the article from *Manitoba Review*, that it is the most prime land in the Virden community right now that would be built on these areas, run overing—running over some of the present other businesses that are there as well.

And so I would ask him to look at that plan, and see if it can be removed, so that this industry can go forward. The alternative for this business is to move to Moosomin, Saskatchewan, and try to gain the action of the potash industry over there as well. And that's their option that they've said that they would do.

There's some urgency to this because he has sold his business, subject to being able to get this done for the 21st. He's already got a three-week extension to the 21st of May. So we got kind of a short window here to do something with this, and I'm asking the Premier if he would look into it.

**Mr. Selinger:** I find it—it's an intriguing problem, this notion of a long-term planning commitment to use a piece of land for a public works, and how that dampens the potential market value of that land. There's a concept in the literature called planning

blight. And I have a part of my community that was for well over 20 years planned as a rapid transit corridor, and so nothing could happen in that community in terms of property values and redevelopment because they always thought they were going to be eventually expropriated.

Recently, the plan changed, and they decided to put the corridor elsewhere, so that whole community that had been left out of everything for 35, 40 years has really suffered as a result of that. And it's just recently that there's been plans put in place to build housing there and redevelop that area. So I understand the phenomena that the member is relating to.

It's pretty clear that he'd have to meet with officials from highways, because it sounds like a highway public work that they're planning for the long term. It does sound—the idea of an overpass may not be something that's going to hit the priority list anytime soon, for all the obvious reasons of rebuilding bridges from the floods and other more basic public works that have to be done.

I don't know what kind of business the member's referring to. I would like to get a little clearer sense of what kind of business the member's proposing—the private entrepreneur's proposing to put there, so I get a clearer sense of what he's intending. I guess the first question I always ask: Is there not an alternative site in that area that would be available to that person, that would avoid this kind of a problem and this kind of potential devaluation of his property in the future, if and when he wanted to sell?

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, the irony of it is that he has purchased the land, done a subdivision on it. It's been allowed; it's gone all the way down this trail for about two years. And last week, or I guess it was week before last, he came up against someone in the department that said, oh, no, this plan's still here. We don't know how you ever got this far, but you can't go any further. And so it's a 14,000 square foot facility, warehouse, shop, sales. It is a private business. It's already in the community. It's just that this person is relocating, and with the expansion of the community and the region in that area, it's certainly a large—very detrimental to a local business being told that it has to do this.

And so I think that's the situation that we're faced with. And the individual would actually even go ahead and build on this, except he needs to go to the bank to borrow the money. And what bank will lend you the money if, in fact, there's no guarantee

that next week you won't come in as a government and expropriate it.

Now, I know you're not going to, because there'll never be an overpass built on that corner. If it was built in Virden in the future, it would be a mile west, probably at No. 1 and 83, which doesn't have any plans for an overpass right now. *[interjection]* Yes, and so—yes, good. Yes, thanks, Drew.

**Mr. Selinger:** What I'd like to offer the member from Arthur-Virden is—I've just consulted with our Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux) because there's a couple of issues here: there's a planning issue here as well as a highway issue. So I'd like to offer the Minister of Local Government's saying he's prepared to try and meet with officials of the town at his officials level and try to involve some people from the Department of Infrastructure and Highways to have a sit-down and see what's possible here. And so the Minister of Local Government's willing to work with you in the short term to try and get that meeting off the ground and see what can happen out there. *[interjection]* Right away, is what he's saying he's willing to do that.

**Mr. Maguire:** Thank you. I won't follow that any further. I appreciate that. That would be most—and if that could be done, then, in the next few days, that would be what they're looking for and really appreciate that.

The other one, of course, is I've raised to the Premier in mid-January was the Fred Neil situation with the dairy farmer, that's fallen through the cracks at Hartney, I guess, and he has—we've got—I appreciate the letter I received today from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) in regards to—I know the Premier received a copy of that, but he has received compensation from, you know, things like the farm—crop loss from crop insurance and different things like that. But it's—this particular individual has had to put up—he sold off enough quota of milk quota of his own dairy farm to the tune of \$240,000 of his own quota that he sold; he'll never be able to buy that back at that same price. It's about six kgs that he's sold—eight kgs now, six and two, that he has sold off to the tune of about \$240,000 to try and stay afloat himself.

He's out over half a million dollars in regards to feed and having to buy dairy cattle. He had to move these cattle off to five different locations and buy cattle to replace them out of Ontario, because they're just not available locally, at that—that many.

So it's a situation where this is a one-off. Even the dairy producers of Manitoba and, I know, your own dairy officials in the department, have indicated that this is the only dairy farm in Manitoba's history that's ever been forced to evacuate the family and the dairy cattle.

So I guess all I've asked is—of the Premier in mid-January, as well as staying in touch with the Agriculture Department, and I appreciate the deputy's work on this, because they have been working on it, I just wanted to bring it to the Premier's attention again and see if we can't find a way to fit this square peg in a round hole and try to help this guy stay as a—in the top 10 in production in—10 per cent of production in Manitoba with very few dairy farms in western Manitoba makes quite a difference to that location if we could just keep him going.

**Mr. Selinger:** When the member last raised it with me, I did undertake to raise it with the senior officials in Agriculture, and they are very aware of the circumstances, and I know they've tried to engage with the dairy farmer in question to see what's possible.

It is a difficult situation for sure. I don't know that there's a solution that does fit within a clear policy set of parameters right now, and so that's what makes it particularly difficult.

I'm not aware of all the specific details. I haven't had a chance to study it at that level. You—I'm sure the member from Arthur-Virden has a greater knowledge of the specifics than I do, but I did undertake to ask officials to look into it, and they have done that. They're very aware of the circumstances, and I don't know how—I encourage the member from Arthur-Virden to attend the Ag Estimates and have a further discussion with them there about it because they are right there in real time and they can give him more—a more detailed response to his concerns and what's possible and what's not possible.

But, yes, it is a unique situation from what I can pick up at this level without having had a chance to read the file or look at anything specific like that. But there also are some constraints on the availability of aid as a result of the flood and disaster assistance, and some of those constraints are—it's a federal-provincial program, as the member knows, and some of those constraints are not ones that we can unilaterally change.



**Mr. Maguire:** And just a final question, then, to the minister or to the Premier, as well. I know his—there was business loss insurance for this particular individual, and we are looking into the fact that, what is the insurance company culpable with or are they responsible for or not. And I appreciate the work the department's doing on that. They have got the information available, and the legal side of government is looking at those contracts right now for the Premier's information. And so, it may come out of there that there's more to be recovered in that mechanism, but, if not, we would—you know, my request is to try to find a way to help this one industry or this one player in an industry survive.

**Mr. Selinger:** I know our officials in Agriculture are very committed to finding solutions in a way that's fair to the taxpayers of Manitoba, and I'm very happy to hear from the member from Arthur-Virden that they're pursuing the business loss insurance and the details of that to see whether there's eligibility under that program. That would be a good solution. It's

always nice when insurance actually delivers a benefit when you need it, as opposed to just paying the premiums, then when you need it, finding some loophole that they're not eligible for. That's a—that's not the first time I've heard of that kind of experience when it comes to insurance. I'm sure the member of Arthur-Virden knows of other examples where the insurance wasn't there when you really needed it.

So I think that's a very worthwhile avenue to pursue. And then, over and above that, let's see if we can get a solution there and that would solve the problem for this particular dairy producer. But I appreciate the fact—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order. The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m. this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Maintenance Enforcement Program	
Bill 24—The Energy Savings Act		Driedger; Swan	893
Chomiak	883	<b>Speaker's Rulings</b>	
		Reid	894, 896
Bill 208—The Remembrance Day Awareness Act		<b>Members' Statements</b>	
and Amendments to The Public Schools Act		Sylvia Mitchell	
Graydon	883	Cullen	897
<b>Petitions</b>		University College of the North Symposium	
Personal Care Homes and Long-Term Care—		Whitehead	897
Steinbach		Siloam Mission	
Goertzen	883	Mitchelson	898
Cellular Phone Service in Southeastern		Flin Flon Choirs	
Manitoba		Pettersen	898
Graydon	884	Riverdale Community Centre	
<b>Oral Questions</b>		Rowat	899
Manitoba Liquor Control Commission			
McFadyen; Selinger	884		
Schuler; Struthers	886		
Taillieu; Howard	888		
Mitchelson; Struthers	889		
		<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
		<i>(Continued)</i>	
		<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>	
Crown Corporations		<b>Committee of Supply)</b>	
Goertzen; Struthers	887, 890	(Concurrent Sections)	
First Nation Communities		Conservation and Water Stewardship	900
Gerrard; Selinger	891	Finance	907
Newborn Screening Program		Executive Council	916
Wiebe; Oswald	893		

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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