

**Second 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
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

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

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

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. Speaker:** Introduction of bills. Seeing no bills, we'll move on to—

### PETITIONS

#### Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behaviour analysis, as—also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever wait-list which started with two children. The waiting program is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if they still exist.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current wait lists for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition's signed by D. Smith, N. Smith, C. Sul and many, many more Manitobans.

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

And I want to first welcome our guests to the Manitoba Legislature this afternoon, but I'm going to ask for your co-operation. There is to be no participation in any of the activities of the proceedings here this afternoon, and that includes applause. So I'm asking for your co-operation in that regard.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And this is the background for this petition as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a 'diagnosis' of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that have helped other children achieve huge gains.

The Province of Manitoba has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy.

These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as other Manitobans.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access or—to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the direct—the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition's signed by D. Ottavio, A. Gluhic and B. Keast and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnoses and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current wait-list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by S. Jones-Ryan, T. Best, G. McSherry and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by A. Keating, L. Perry, W. Wawrysh and many more fine Manitobans.

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

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to a necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention of children with autism.

\* (13:40)

(3) The provincial government's preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 by September 2013, despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of 'eliminating'—eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denial of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by G. Bedel, C. Gotch and B. Brand and many, many more fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnostic and access to necessary treatment

such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABS services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes importance of early intervention of—for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABS services have reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of lack available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to, age out of eligibility for ABS services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This petition is submitted on behalf of S. Edwards, S. Nicholson, K. Polley and many other fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in

excess of 20 children by September of 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them to access the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access or to eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their needs still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by G. Horst, B. Brand, S. Manley-Tannis and many more fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by

grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting lists for ABA school-age services and to fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This is signed by A. Keating, W. Hawrysh, C. Guenter and many, many other parents.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever, with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No children should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this is signed by S. Jones-Ryan, T. Best, G. McSherry and many, many other Manitobans.

\* (13:50)

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services had its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denial of treatments are unacceptable. No child should be denied access or eliminated from eligibility for ABS-ABA services if their needs still exist.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the

current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This petition is signed by S. Bulmer, G. Gacke, L. Hilton and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

And (5) waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by S. Bulmer, G. Gacke and L. Hilton and many, many others.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

Signed by E. Pain, D. Marion, M. Twiss and many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to—

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Christina and Deb Sudoma, who are the guests of the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady).

Also in the public gallery, we have with us today from the Transcona food bank Bob Buchanan and Midge and Don Barry, who are the guests of the honourable member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun).

And also in the public gallery, we have from Glenboro School 25 grades 5 and 6 students under

the direction of Ms. Marilyn Cullen. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen).

And also seated in the public gallery, we have from Morden Collegiate 40 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Royce Hollier. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen).

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

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PST Increase Vote on Increase

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** There doesn't seem to be any stopping the NDP runaway tax train, Mr. Speaker. They're just not listening, and they really should.

Award-winning CEO of Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce Mr. David Angus pans the government's plan for tearing up the taxpayer protection act. He says, quote, it's not the way government should treat its citizens, so we're asking him to halt the process and go to the people.

Colin Craig from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation calls it, quote, cowardly; I think the NDP knows that Manitobans would turn down their plan. Well, so do we, Mr. Speaker.

And the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Janine Carmichael, says 86 per cent of Manitoba's small business owners don't support raising the PST.

So will the one-track Premier stop the runaway train for a minute and let Manitobans have a chance to vote on his PST hike proposal?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I can only quote the Leader of the Opposition when he was involved when the bill was introduced, and he said the following: Granted there are restrictions in this legislation the members have talked about, that they suggest are unreasonable or that would handcuff future legislators. I do not believe that this is true—this is the Leader of the Opposition—I do not believe this is true, he says. I believe the legislation can be, by any subsequent Legislature, withdrawn or repealed. So I do not believe that the hands-being-tied argument is one that has any validity at all—any validity at all. Thank you.



**Mr. Pallister:** And, of course, the Premier proposes to put the handcuffs on Manitobans so they won't be able to vote on the tax increase, Mr. Speaker.

Social activists like Mr. Sid Frankel, David Northcott from Winnipeg Harvest, Harry Wolbert are all saying that the PST hike will hurt vulnerable Manitobans most of all, Mr. Speaker.

And they, like most Manitobans, are disappointed with the Premier for breaking his promises on the PST tax increase. He said when he was asked about it that it was nonsense, and that's hard to believe it was just a year and a half ago.

Now, we understand that NDP promises made are promises broken. They promised to balance the books. It's a betrayal. They promised to protect the poor and end poverty. It's a double-cross. And then they promise a hundred per cent care for flood victims, and it's just nothing but disrespect.

Will the government take the first step in restoring some of its fallen integrity and let Manitobans decide for themselves on whether they want a PST hike?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition was in the Legislature and imposed PST on people, he imposed it on items such as children's clothing; we have removed children's clothing from the PST.

He imposed it on feminine hygiene products; we have removed feminine hygiene products from the PST.

He imposed it on school supplies; we have removed school supplies from the G—from the PST.

He imposed it on baby supplies; we have removed it from baby supplies under the PST.

And it also covered bicycle helmets, and we have removed it as of May 1st on bicycle helmets.

\* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, the member, when he was in the government as a senior Cabinet minister, had no compunction whatsoever on imposing the PST on essential items for families. We have removed it on essential items for families. That is the difference.

**Mr. Pallister:** And the Premier's favourite movie is Back to the Future, and I like Michael J. Fox too, but I think Manitobans understand they need a leader who looks to the future, not always to the past. Every province has lowered taxes in the last 15 years,

Mr. Speaker, but this government has lowered them less than virtually every other province has, and that's the issue facing Manitobans.

The spendP's 192 spinners are working hard to earn their \$15 million, Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks. The rationale has changed almost daily as to why the PST hike should come into place: global economic uncertainty one day, massive federal cutbacks, imaginary the next, and then flood costs for a flood that never came.

But the reality is hospitals, schools, splash pads and everything else are the responsibilities, the core responsibilities, of this government and they promised not to raise taxes just months ago.

They've used every excuse except the truth—every excuse. They want more money to fatten up bureaucracy by self-promotional advertisements and pay themselves a vote tax.

Will the Premier—will he finally admit the truth, he believes that Manitoba taxpayers' money is better positioned with him than it is with them?

**Mr. Selinger:** It is because we looked to the future that we took the PST that was imposed by the Leader of the Opposition on 'manifo' families—we took it off of children's clothing, we took it off of books, we took it off of baby supplies, we took it off of groceries, Mr. Speaker, and we have kept it off home heating and kept it at a much lower rate.

Mr. Speaker, it is because we are looking to the future that when we saw the bill come in for an additional billion dollars of protection for people in the Assiniboine valley, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, all up through Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin that we knew we had to protect them in the same way that we protected them in the Red River Valley and Winnipeg.

When the Leader of the Opposition said we should halt those projects, we proceeded to provide that protection, and it has protected Manitoba families in ways—right now they would be flooding, without moving forward. When the Leader of the Opposition said, halt that protection, we moved forward.

We will also protect the people in the Assiniboine valley, Mr. Speaker, and we will do it so all Manitobans are protected, and the members opposite will vote against that.

**Member for Kirkfield Park  
Constituency Representation**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier seems to forget that he promised all Manitobans that he would not raise taxes in the last election. This has become an issue of integrity by this government.

Mr. Speaker, last week on Thursday morning, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) said in this House, not once but twice, and I quote, "I don't represent taxpayers; I represent my neighbours."

Can the member for Kirkfield Park please explain to her constituents, who all pay taxes: Why doesn't she feel responsible for representing taxpayers in her constituency?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite continue to misrepresent the facts.

The member for Kirkfield Park committed to keeping the Grace Hospital open, when the members opposite were threatening to close it. The member for Kirkfield Park supports a budget that has 3,163 more nurses working in Manitoba, when the members opposite laid off and fired a thousand nurses. That is a very material difference, Mr. Speaker.

The member for Kirkfield Park, like all members on this side of the House, are hiring more teachers and reducing class size for kindergarten-to-grade-3 children, when they fired 700 teachers, Mr. Speaker. The difference is profound.

They said they wouldn't privatize the telephone system and they went ahead and privatized it, and now we have the third highest rates in the country.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Well, this Premier has no credibility. He promised in the last election not to raise taxes, and he is doing just the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, it is astonishing to hear a member of a government stand in this Legislature and actually say, and I quote, I don't represent taxpayers. Obviously, she is not fighting for them when her government sticks them all with higher taxes.

So I'd like to ask the member for Kirkfield Park to tell her constituents: Why is she not standing up for them as taxpayers?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know full well that this budget increased the personal deductions for individuals. It increased the personal deduction for spouses. It increased the

personal deduction for dependants. It made Manitoba the largest tax-free zone in the country for small business.

And the member opposite knows full well that when we talk to our citizens, they are neighbours, they are nurses, they are teachers, they are correction workers, they are police officers, they are small business people. They are people that offer services to the community, and we have ensured that their taxes, along with all of the costs they pay for home electricity, Manitoba auto insurance and home heating, are the lowest in the country.

That is the promise we made; that is the promise we kept, and the members opposite continue to distort the facts.

**Mrs. Driedger:** The promise this Premier made was not to raise taxes in the last election, Mr. Speaker. He forgets that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this NDP government has no respect for taxpayers. We have seen it when they promised not to raise taxes in the last election, then they turned around and they stiffed Manitoba taxpayers. And this NDP government lied to Manitobans in the last election and the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) is part of that government.

So I would like to ask her to tell her constituents, the taxpayers of Kirkfield Park, why she deserves to be their MLA when she won't stand up for them against this government and fight back against higher taxes when they promise not to raise them.

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, as you look across the country, Manitoba's 'affordability' advantage for families continues, actually, to improve. For a family of five at \$70,000, the affordability advantage in Manitoba moved to No. 1 position in the country. Why is that? Because governments all across the country are finding ways to preserve essential services.

And when the member opposite asks who she— who our members represent, we represent senior citizens, we represent young families who need daycare, we represent business people that are trying to make a living in this province, we represent teachers, we represent nurses. We represent people that are making a—lives for themselves in Manitoba, and we are going to be with them every single day as the members opposite continue to misrepresent the facts, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I know honourable members have heard me say this a few times, but I'm going to repeat it again. We have a lot of guests that are with us here in the gallery this afternoon, perhaps, some of them, for the first time, and we'd want them to have a good impression of their visit to the Manitoba Legislature. So I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members, please keep the level down a little bit so our guests can both hear the questions and the answers posed here in the Assembly this afternoon.

Now, the honourable member for Spruce Woods has the floor.

### **Assiniboia Downs Government Relations**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** Mr. Speaker, the facts are this Premier broke his promise to taxpayers in Manitoba.

The NDP have now appeared that they are considering—have been considering taking over the operations of Assiniboia Downs for quite a number of years, this according to affidavits filed in court. The NDP are currently tearing up signed contracts they have with Assiniboia Downs. They're in the process of changing funding legislation, Mr. Speaker. And through all of this, the NDP have refused to enter into respectful dialogue with Assiniboia Downs.

I ask the NDP why they have been so disrespectful to the people and the non-profit organization at Assiniboia Downs.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to again remind members opposite that despite all the conspiracy theories, despite them reading into the record of this Legislature I think what could best be described as, you know, frivolous legal accusations, the facts are as follows.

The changes in terms of Assiniboine downs and funding will result in Assiniboine downs still having 140 machines. They will receive the same rate as every other commercial site holder in the province. They will continue to receive a rebate on the primumutuel levy, Mr. Speaker, with the exception of one portion, 15 per cent, which will be going to harness racing.

\* (14:10)

I don't know what members opposite have against harness racing. I do know that they don't support allocating \$5 million from horses to hospitals, Mr. Speaker, but maybe they should put on the record why they're so opposed to supporting harness—

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

**Mr. Cullen:** Most of this money is going into lawyers to cover up the lawsuits they [*inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker, this is about treating Manitobans with respect. Currently, NDP want to get their hands on as much money as they can, and as a result they're willing to renege on signed contracts. They're moving forward to change legislation to extract even more gaming revenue. Our fear is this may lead to the demise of horse racing in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP trying to close down yet another industry here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Ashton:** Again, Mr. Speaker, members opposite can engage in whatever conspiracy theories they want, but the facts are as follows. Since we came to government, we've provided support of over \$75 million to the horse racing industry. We're going to continue providing that.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that they want a two-tier system for VLTs just like they do for health care, but there will not be a two-tier system for Assiniboine downs. And they will still receive the same return that every other commercial site holder has who is in the province, with the exception they will not be capped at 40 machines; they'll have 140 machines.

We're continuing to support horse racing, Mr. Speaker, but we're taking \$5 million. We're putting it into health care. That makes sense to most Manitobans, perhaps not to members opposite.

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, here are the facts.

This government—this NDP government is in the middle of a \$350-million lawsuit. We've got the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) in conflict of interest allegations. We've got the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) in conflict of interest allegations. We get a Minister responsible for Lotteries tearing up the signed contract. We've got three ministers with their hands on this file, and we're not sure what the future holds for horse racing in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: How many ministers does it take to kill an industry here in Manitoba?

**Mr. Ashton:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I think, first of all, again, the record speaks for itself. We're continuing to provide support to Assiniboine downs.

And, Mr. Speaker, I—you know, again members opposite get up and they can talk about the many baseless allegations they've brought forward, the conspiracy theories. Anyone can file a lawsuit in this province for 350 million or billion or 2 billion or 3 billion. The fact is those are baseless allegations.

The fact is we're continuing to support horse racing in the province, not at the same level as before, but that's because we're transferring \$5 million from horses to hospitals.

I don't know why members opposite don't get it, Mr. Speaker. We're still going to have horse racing support. We're also going to have more support for our hospitals.

#### **Tax Increases Impact on Mining Industry**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** In a paper released by the University of Calgary, it states, and I quote, Manitoba mining is the most heavily taxed among all provinces.

My question is: Why is this NDP government destroying the strong mining environment that used to exist in Manitoba?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I'm very pleased that we've made significant progress on the Vale file and that Vale is promising—and to keep Birchwood—the Birchwood tunnel open this year, and there's life in the smelter despite what members opposite said.

In addition, the largest mine in Manitoba history, the Lalor mine, is under construction, Mr. Speaker. That's three quarters of a billion dollars, and it will—because it's a new mining status, it will have the holiday status that new mines have and have had in Manitoba, which makes it a very attractive place to invest.

**Mr. Schuler:** The University of Calgary, School of Public Policy paper states, and I quote, the provincial sales tax is again largely responsible for this.

Why is this NDP government destroying the once-strong mining environment with their tax policy?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Yes, is that the same university that Tom Flanagan works at, Mr. Speaker? Because it sounds a lot like the Tea Party rhetoric that I've heard from the member some time.

We've eliminated the capital tax, Mr. Speaker. We've completely eliminated the small business tax in this Manitoba—in this province. We have the largest tax-free zone in the country. And even their friends at the Fraser Institute, in oil mining—in oil, said that we have the No. 1 regime with respect to oil and petroleum this year again in Manitoba.

And that's one of the reasons why we continue our competitive—that's why Rolls-Royce is here, that's why Boeing is here, Mr. Speaker, that's why large companies come here. That's why Mitsubishi came here to design the electric bus. That's why I was at Valeant today to look at their expansion plans, perhaps in Steinbach.

And maybe members should look around the—

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

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, perhaps the Minister responsible for Energy should go to [www.universityofcalgary.ca](http://www.universityofcalgary.ca), follow the links and find the study, Mr. Speaker. It's public information. Or does he need me to hold his hand for that as well?

The University of Calgary School of Public Policy paper does not include the most recent NDP PST hike.

How does this NDP government think that a further tax on mining is supposed to help a already struggling mining sector? Or does the NDP simply not care?

**Mr. Chomiak:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I—we do not need to take advice from Tom Flanagan and types like that. Manitoba is a bit different, firstly.

Secondly, the largest mine in Manitoba history is under construction. That's the Lalor mine. That's three quarters of a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite, I know they don't travel north of the Perimeter Highway, but if they should travel north of the Perimeter Highway they might see that development.

They might see partnership with First Nations that they've been attacking every day in this House; the member stood up and attacked partnerships with

First Nations. I don't know what they've got against that, but that's our fastest growing demographic. That's going to build the future of Manitoba.

I'm proud of what we're doing with First Nations, both in mining and with hydro, Mr. Speaker. I wish members opposite would get on board and not take the Tea Party attitude that they've taken to development in Manitoba.

#### **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Access to Treatment**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, Angela and Byron Loeppky are in the gallery today with their daughter Hannah. Hannah has autism and received applied behavioural analysis treatment at an early age where it is most successful and has enjoyed the success of that treatment.

Mr. Speaker, since ABA treatment has proven successful to—in the treatment of autism, does the minister agree that all children with autism should have an option to receive this treatment at an early age?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I want to thank the member for the question.

I want to welcome, also, the families who are here today to join us for question period. I've had the good fortune of sitting with many parents and families with children with disabilities and, in fact, parents of adults—adult children with disabilities. And I know that those parents are powerful advocates and that advocacy has moved us forward in many, many respects.

Our investments across government for supports for children with autism, whether that be in the education system, whether that be in the child-care system or within disABILITY Services, are over \$30 million a year, Mr. Speaker. And that investment has grown over the years because it's so important.

Support to the ABA program that the member opposite asks about is some of the highest in Canada at \$70,000 per child per year. It's a very popular program, and we continue to work with clinicians and educators and families about how we can make sure that those resources are going to children who have the most need and who can benefit the most, like the individual that the member was citing.

**Mr. Graydon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, Hannah was lucky. She received the ABA treatment at an early age and it has proven to be successful. However,

many Manitoban children and their families aren't so lucky; they've been on a waiting list for years and have not been treated.

Mr. Speaker, since the minister obviously agrees that children with autism benefit from the ABA treatment at an early age, what is her plan to provide this option to all children like Hannah?

**Ms. Howard:** We know, certainly, that across Canada—and we see it in Manitoba—the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is growing. It's something that there is more and more awareness of, the clinicians and pediatricians and doctors and others have a growing awareness.

And so we've seen that diagnosis grow, and we know that when we look around at other provinces that provide ABA-like services that all of those provinces are experiencing challenges because that program is so popular that demand outstrips capacity. They experience challenges recruiting clinicians, and in all of those provinces they're dealing with wait-lists of varying amounts.

What we are trying to do is work with clinicians, work with educators, work with families to make sure that we are getting our resources to children who have the most need. We have seen some success. We've been able to expand the spaces in the ABA program—

\* (14:20)

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

**Mr. Graydon:** Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously it hasn't been working, and the students are aging out of this treatment before they can receive it, and the government isn't doing enough for these children.

Will the minister commit to eliminating the vote tax, which the NDP has chosen to finance their political party, and direct that money towards reducing the wait-list for children that want to receive the ABA treatment so that they will have the same opportunity that Hannah has to enjoy it?

**Ms. Howard:** Well, I will tell the members opposite what we won't do, and what we won't do is take their advice and reduce the support for autism support by 1 per cent. That would amount to a \$300,000 cut to those supports. What that would mean for the ABA wait-list, Mr. Speaker, is that four of those kids who are getting service today would be gone tomorrow.

This year we were able to add two autism specialists outside the city of Winnipeg to provide

service to rural children. Those people are civil servants, Mr. Speaker. Those people would not be hired under a government led by the opposition.

#### **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Access to Treatment**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, for the children living with autism spectrum disorder, the research suggests that early intervention is critical in developing language and social behaviour. The benefits of applied behaviour analysis therapy, or ABA, are well documented.

During the 2011 election campaign, the NDP promised to finally address the growing wait-list for ABA services and promised to improve transition services. Wait-list numbers are growing, and more children than ever are aging out of eligibility for the ABA program.

Why did this minister introduce the Thrive! report with great fanfare before the election only to ignore its recommendations and have it sit on a shelf collecting dust once they were elected?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** Certainly, looking at the document that the member has referenced, the Thrive! plan, one of the commitments in there is to expand service to rural Manitoba, and we've done that, and that money is in this budget to support that.

We've hired two autism specialists outside the city of Winnipeg to provide that support to rural families. And I know that it is challenging, certainly, within the city, for parents to gain access to services. It's challenging to navigate those services. Those are things that we're working on. We know how magnified those challenges are outside of Winnipeg. When I talk to parents who live in rural Manitoba, and members opposite will know this well, they don't have access to the same level of service. That's why we thought it was important to invest in hiring those two civil servants.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Speaker, more than 80 Manitoba families are currently waiting to access ABC—or ABA treatment. Unfortunately, many of these families will never be able to access care. They are facing the harsh reality of this government's inaction. Nine children have been denied access to ABA therapies forever, and 20 more who will age out come September. We have heard that the members of the Thrive! committee have been told there is no money for autism care, no direction, no funding and no targets for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please respond to the over 50 parents, advocates and individuals from the Manitoba Families for Effective Autism Treatment who want to know today why the minister has broken her government's election promise?

**Ms. Howard:** Our commitment to work with families, to work with educators, to work with clinicians, remains firm. Our commitment to make sure that we can provide those resources, those services, to the children for whom it will make the greatest deal of difference at the point in their life when it will make that difference, that commitment is firm.

Mr. Speaker, there is a challenge in doing that. There's a challenge in recruiting clinicians. There's a challenge in making sure we have a program that gets the kinds of results that I know families want to see.

We will make sure that that funding is in place, despite the advice from the Leader of the Opposition to reduce that funding. We will make sure that that funding is in place throughout the system to support those families and those kids.

#### **Children With Autism Resources for Families**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** The only challenge I see here is this minister fulfilling her promise that she [*inaudible*]

In 2011, the NDP government said, and I quote, work will begin to provide more information to families about autism and its effects on children. It is incredibly disheartening to see that the NDP government has not even made a comprehensive list of resources available to families.

More than two years have passed and the Manitoba families continue to receive information from the American Academy of Pediatrics with a stapled note asking families to disregard several pages as information pertains only to American clients. And I'll table the report, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, how can this government 'prioritize' allocating dollars to government advertising rather than allocating those resources to autism services and care? It seems incomprehensible.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I know that providing information to families, providing supports to them so that they can better navigate the system, that's very important. I am informed that the St. Amant

Centre is right now working with families to deliver information, to deliver resources, to look at delivering information and training across Manitoba using new technologies in order to do that. So that work is ongoing, Mr. Speaker.

But I would say, as I listened to the members stand up one after another and introduce their petitions today, I hope—I appreciate those petitions. I hope their leader will listen to them, because every one of those petitions asks for increased expenditure, not cuts as he has promised.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

### Legislative Session Government Timeline

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, much of the business of this Legislature won't be completed by this Thursday, June the 13th, at the end of the regular sitting period.

The government has been calling the session later and later each year, so late—this year April the 16th—that it risks having to call emergency sessions or to have the Legislature carried over to the fall for appropriate attention. The current rules were created with the expectation that the legislative session would start earlier to ensure adequate time for the full consideration of the legislative agenda.

I ask the Premier: Will he assure Manitobans that he will start the spring session next year in February or at the latest in early March?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question.

This was the government that brought in a requirement to deliver a budget before April 28th, not previously required of any government in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, unlike members opposite, we're prepared to be here every single day to work through the legislative agenda. It was only members opposite that had been halting the business of the government. There are bills in front of the Legislature that we are ready to debate today. We saw yesterday in the Legislature that they did everything they could to thwart the business of the House. They've been doing that for several weeks now.

And, again, we found—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** I'm sure all honourable members would want me to hear the questions posed and the answers to those questions.

If there was a breach of the rules, I'm sure you'd want me to rule on that breach of those rules, and so I'm asking for the co-operation of all honourable members. Please give me the opportunity to hear both the question posed and the answer to that question, and I am having difficulty hearing the answer to the question posed by the honourable member for River Heights.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

**Mr. Selinger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and as I was saying, we remain committed to being here to do the work of the Legislature, and if the members want to stop halting the business of the Legislature that is their prerogative.

But we come every day with new bills that will improve the lives of Manitobans, prevent bullying in our public schools, improve safety in our communities, improve services in health care, improve services in education, and we look forward to the opportunity to—

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

\* (14:30)

### Emergency Session

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, just think how many bills this government could have got passed if they'd started in February and many of them passed even before the budget.

Mr. Speaker, under the rules of this Legislature, there are provisions for recalling the Legislature under emergency or extraordinary circumstances. And this year we understand that the government has got itself into a rather extraordinary situation, and it's anticipated that there'll be an emergency session called for next week.

I ask the Premier: Which bills will he be designating as emergency bills to be completed during the emergency session expected to start next week?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, this was the first government that called fall sessions every single year since we have been in office. The Leader of the Opposition and the members of the Conservative government, when they were in office, decided to skip an entire fall session.

Mr. Speaker, just for the record, the Public Accounts Committee met 21 times in the decade from 1989 to 1999. During our time in office, it has met over 70 times. And every standing committee—every standing committee of the Legislature—has been more active, and we remain interested in being more active.

Every bill we have in the House we're prepared to be here to work through, to resolve, to listen to members of the public on and to put into law to improve the lives of Manitobans. All of our bills are priority bills, Mr. Speaker.

### Committee Presentations

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have more time to talk about important issues like autism, but one of the issues that I want to raise with the Premier is this.

As one who was involved in the negotiations in 2002 which led to the current rules, I'd like to remind the Premier that the changes were put in place in part to demonstrate greater respect to the public. Having chaotic evenings and all-night committee meetings is not optimum. It's also neither respectful nor realistic to expect all presenters at committee to keep attending every meeting until they finally receive a chance to present.

I ask the Premier: Will he implement changes when there are large numbers of presenters to schedule a proportion of the presenters for each committee meeting?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, it was the member from River Heights who just came over to our side of the House and thanked our House leader for the letter we put on the record.

We are very interested in doing the business of the House. We've made constructive offers to have sittings of the Legislature that are—have time limits on them in terms of how late they go in the evening. We've made a constructive offer to hold additional hearings on Saturday when people aren't working if they wish to come and speak.

And members opposite know this is the only Legislature in Canada that has reading—has opportunities for public involvement and public presentations on second reading of a bill. That tradition is one we respect, and we will look forward to new ways to implement that, Mr. Speaker.

And I can only encourage the member who raises the question today to enter into that

constructive debate about how we can complete all the business of the House, Mr. Speaker, because we believe all the business put in front of the House is important business and should be brought to a conclusion so we can move Manitoba forward.

### Bill 18

#### Update

**Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James):** I've received a number of letters from concerned constituents who support Bill 18 and our government's plan to make our schools safer. And the school division in my area, the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, has been a leader in preventing bullying and providing safe and caring learning environments for all students.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education to update the House on her work to pass Bill 18 and continue with her action plan to prevent bullying in our schools.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education):** I'm pleased to have a question from the MLA for St. James, who was with me when we kicked off antibullying week with the Red Cross in one of her schools in her riding.

I have heard from many educators, many parents, many young people and many religious leaders in this province that Bill 18 is an important tool for educators in regards to fighting cyberbullying and also a very important tool in regards to providing safe and caring learning environments for all of our students.

I look forward to this bill going to committee. I think it's important that we hear all of the speakers. *[interjection]* I think it's important that we continue to—well, I'm perfectly prepared to hear—listen to all 200 presenters and I certainly hope you are too. I'm here to do the work of the Legislature so that we can pass this legislation and have it in place by September, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Access to Treatment

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** The NDP broke their promise and betrayed Manitobans before the last election campaign when they said that they were not going to hike the PST. Again, they broke another promise and betrayed children and families needing ABA services.



Lanah Hadla is one of those children requiring ABA services who will fall through the cracks and not receive the early intervention that she deserves.

I'd like to ask this NDP government: Will they today consider not taking the vote tax and allowing Lanah to have the much-needed services that she deserves?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I think what I would say to the member opposite is that under this government, since 2008, we have seen a 40 per cent increase in support for this program—for ABA programming, and we continue to work with clinicians and we continue to work with educators on ways to make that program more accessible to more parents, to more families. We think that's important. We continue to believe it's important to get those resources to the children who most need it, Mr. Speaker.

But what we will not do, we will not take the advice of members opposite and reduce our commitment to children with autism by \$300,000. That would mean that four of those kids who currently are getting ABA program will be kicked out of that program. That's the plan of the members opposite; it's not our plan.

#### **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Access to Treatment**

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** In 2011, the NDP released a document called Thrive!, a commitment to autistic children in Manitoba. Unfortunately, the commitment from the NDP has not translated into better care for autistic children.

There are more than 80 autistic children in Manitoba who are still waiting to have access to autistic—autism treatments, including ABA therapy, one of the most effective interventions.

Will the minister of child and youth opportunities tell this House why children with autism have no opportunity to access adequate treatment for autism in Manitoba?

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I want to let the member for La Verendrye know that part of the Thrive! document commits to expanding service to rural Manitoba. He represents rural Manitoba and so I know he'll be interested in this. This year, in this budget, we provided funding to two additional autism outreach workers who are providing service outside the city of Winnipeg.

And the member for La Verendrye may want to now take the opportunity to stand up publicly and disavow the position of his party which would have been not to hire those people, which would have been to put in place a chill that would have meant that those children outside the city of Winnipeg would not have access to that service.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

#### **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I am joined today by Manitobans who disagree with the government's current management of treatment for persons with autism spectrum disorder, or autism. They have been able to share with many of us on this side of the House their perspectives with us on their family life and the needs and wants of their children.

Currently Manitoba there is a waiting list for applied behaviour analysis therapy, which is the choice of most parents of children with autism. ABA is the only scientifically proven treatment and receives the bulk of dollars available to support autism programming from the Province of Manitoba.

Way back in the '90s, under Gary Filmon, we started a pilot project for autism—ABA programming, Mr. Speaker. We were very proud of that initiative; we were leaders in the country. What we see now is a government releasing a report in 2011 to—just prior to the election, and with nothing happening from this government since that time. We are seeing wait-lists increase, we are seeing families who cannot access services for their children. These are families that, when they have a child with autism who's been diagnosed with autism, their whole life surrounds the care and support of that family—of that child. Currently, many children are aging out of access for treatment because of wait-lists in Manitoba. No child in Manitoba should be put on a wait-list and then denied services.

\* (14:40)

As of the incidents of autism in child—as the incidents of autism in children increase, the current program for providing services to them will ultimately leave more children without the help they need. Down the road, we are liable to see more school-age children and young adults in need of more support because they were not helped through

early intervention. We see few programs and supports available.

We have an American publication that is being—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member's time has considerably past.

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to allow the—quickly allow the member for river—Riding Mountain to complete her member statement?  
[Agreed]

**Mrs. Rowat:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have an American document that is being shared with families as a resource tool. We have a government that's spending \$750 million on advertising through Manitoba Hydro. What are their priorities, Mr. Speaker? What matters most to Manitoba families? It obviously isn't the care and support that these people are looking for for their children.

Thank you.

#### **Christina Sudoma**

**Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park):** Mr. Speaker, in my time as an MLA I've encountered many amazing young people in Kirkfield Park.

One of these dedicated young people is Christina Sudoma, who is in the gallery today with her mother. Christina has spent the past several years working hard to raise funds to help pets in need. Christina was only five when she first came into the pet rescue scene. Her big brother was volunteering at D'Arcy's ARC, and she wanted to help too. She sold paintings and drawings to neighbours and raised \$89 for the shelter.

Since then, she's expanded her work. A creative and talented crafter, she sells paintings, picture frames, painted stones, magnets and more at adoption fairs, fundraisers and awareness events. Through her hard work, Christina's Creations has raised well over \$2,000 to date.

She is becoming very well known in the pet rescue scene, having raised funds to help groups that seek to help unwanted, abandoned or lost pets, such as Winnipeg Lost Dog Alert, Manitoba Underdogs, the Sagkeeng Spay-Neuter Initiative Program, Hull's Haven Border Collie Rescue and Angel's Haven. Last year, this motivated nine-year-old earned the

Winnipeg Humane Society's first dog champion of the year award.

Of course, supportive families and communities are also key to young people's success. Christina's family has been helping her with her project since the beginning, and others have helped by donating signs, business cards and crafting materials.

As a dog lover myself, I understand how much we want to help pets who need us. Her dedication to giving of herself and to helping others is an inspiration.

Thank you, Christina, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment**

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** As mentioned by my colleague, it is extremely important for children to receive an early diagnosis and to start treatment for autism spectrum disorder or ASD.

In fact, there are really only two types of treatment available for ASD, applied behavioural analysis, ABA, and the development, individual differences, relationship-based model, DIR, also known as the floor model. However, ABA is the only scientifically proven treatment and receives the bulk of funding available to support autism programming from the Province.

This model of treatment uses behavioural science and techniques in a planned and systematic way to assess, teach and improve socially significant behaviours to help an individual with autism to live a full and fully functional life.

Mr. Speaker, the St. Amant is an important institution and tool for families who love—whose loved ones need treatment with a growing program for preschool and school-age children with autism.

Their program is tailored to each child and who are supervised by qualified behavioural analysis familiar with current research in the field. The work that they do at St. Amant is truly remarkable, and I know many Manitobans, including my constituent Kristyn Marshall's son, Madden da Mata, have hugely benefited from their help and support.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that there is a growing waiting list to receive these essential treatments and services, and there are many children who aren't as lucky as Madden. This means that the government is clearly not living up to their five-year

commitment which they have dubbed Thrive! This commitment has had the aim of providing four essential steps in combatting autism in our province. These include early intervention, timely diagnosis, timely access to treatment with the goal of no wait-lists, and up to six years for ABA services and providing opportunities for adults with autism to learn how to live independently.

Mr. Speaker, these young children and adults need the help—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. We're considerably past the time allowed for the member's statement.

**An Honourable Member:** Leave, for a little bit more—

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to allow the honourable member for La Verendrye to quickly complete his member's statement? *[Agreed]*

The honourable member for La Verendrye, to quickly conclude.

**Mr. Smook:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

These young children and adults need the help now, not later. Early prevention is the key in providing treatment for these children, which will have life-changing impacts on their lives. There are currently too many children being put on waiting lists which could last up to two years, and, consequently, too many of them are going to age out of access to treatment. This is unacceptable and goes against this government's own initiatives. We must reverse the situation now, not later.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Transcona Food Bank**

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Speaker, in each of our communities, there are people who go above and beyond for the betterment of society.

Today, I would like to recognize all those, past and present, who have dedicated their time and efforts to volunteering with the Transcona Food Bank. Their service helps families in our community live happy and healthy lives.

In 1988, Mave Dickson, an active member of the Transcona Memorial United Church, wanted to make a difference in her community. She initiated the Transcona Food Bank in her church basement. Having celebrated 25 years, the volunteer-run organization is still owned and operated by the

Transcona Memorial United Church on Yale Avenue West. Over the years, the organization has built strong and lasting relationships with schools, churches, businesses and families throughout northeast Winnipeg. These relationships have resulted in a more connected and engaged community.

The dedication of Transcona Food Bank's outstanding volunteers is proof that Manitobans believe all people deserve a high quality of life. These volunteers provide a warm and welcoming environment where families or individuals can gather to receive support and nutritious food when times are tough.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to realize their potential, and so the Manitoba government sponsors 11 food security-related projects throughout Winnipeg. There is more to do, and I hope the compassion of the Transcona Food Bank volunteers will serve as an inspiration for us all. Together, we can work toward a better future for all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, today we are joined by several executive members of the Transcona Food Bank. They are Mave Dickson, Reverend Carol Fletcher, Bob and Louise Buchanan, as well as Midge and Don Barry. I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in thanking and congratulating their efforts to this organization. Thank you for your service to the families of our communities.

### **Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, applied behavioural analysis, or ABA therapy, is one method of treatment for children with autism.

Autism spectrum disorders, or ASD, refers to a group of developmental disorders that affect a person's verbal and non-verbal communications and social interaction. Autism rates are on the rise, with one in 110 children being affected with autism, compared to one in 5,000 in only 1975, Mr. Speaker.

ABA is an effective treatment and an important treatment that parents and children can choose to receive and children often see great levels of excess with this treatment. There is currently a wait-list for this treatment that is harming Manitoba families and children with autism. For the first time ever, children are aging out of eligibility for ABA therapy, which must be under way before the age of 5—a disgraceful situation, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP government has to make choices and they have the choice as to what programs to fund, how to spend money and what taxes to bring in. This government has chosen to take money, not to fund vital treatment for autism, but to fund political operations. Rather than giving all children the best possible chance to succeed, the government would rather see themselves try and win an election.

It is shameful, Mr. Speaker. There are people in this province who need help and this government won't help them. They will raise the PST to help fund their broken promises. They will institute a vote tax to make their campaigning easier. They will break every promise they make to every parent, every child and every taxpayer in this province.

This government has had a choice to help these children. They have the choice to make ABA treatment available to all children and families that require it, and they haven't. They have promised to make these services available to all children and they haven't. This government makes promises that nobody can believe. Their choices affect everyone.

\* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the families for being in the gallery today, and particularly—Bert and Marie Peaslee, former neighbours, for bringing their grandsons, Danny and Bert—and Drake, pardon me—Danny and Drake Peaslee here today as well.

And I want to thank all of these folks for allowing me to speak on their behalf. This government needs to pay attention and make better choices, and they need to stand up for these families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** That concludes members' statements. We'll move on to grievances.

### GRIEVANCES

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member for Riding Mountain, on a grievance?

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** Yes, I have a grievance, Mr. Speaker.

Today in the House, we've heard from different members from this side of the House who have shared their concerns on behalf of their constituents with regard to this government's inability to provide supports for families with autism children. We've asked this government to respond to their promise they made in 2011, and they failed to do so.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I rise and put a few words on the record on behalf of the parents that are here today and many who wish they could be here today.

I want to recognize Bert, Marie, Danny and Drake Peaslee. They come from Souris. That's my home community, and I've known them for many years, and those are great community people. They're very involved. I know Marie has been involved in band and different types of organizations within the school. Bert is a volunteer with the Elks. My husband is a member of that. They sell hams together and they do so many things that are so important to the community. Bert and Marie actually are raising their grandsons. They raised—and their daughter as well. But Danny and Drake are with them today, and I want to recognize the significant contribution that this family is making, not only to—or to Souris, Manitoba, but to the province as a whole.

And I think that we, as members within this Legislature, owe them a great gratitude for all that they've done. Bert and Marie have also taken on the role of raising three of their grandchildren and Darby, who's finished school and is now into the tattoo business, as Marie was telling me earlier today, and Danny and Drake. And they have raised children—raised their grandchildren who are dealing with autism within their family. So not only are they committed to doing what they need to do as a family to ensure that it—they're receiving the cares and the supports they need, they continue to be active in the community.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

People with ASD may be affected in different ways, and the effects may range from mild to severe. The prevalence of autism has increased tenfold in 40 years. Autism now affects one in 88 children—and one in 54 boys, one in 252 girls—and there is no mechanism of medical detection or cure for autism.

And I want to thank Guy Mercier, who's in the gallery today, who helped us co-ordinate this awareness day today, to help us put on the record the significance and the importance of us sharing with Manitobans the importance of this program and to raise awareness with the minister in this government that they need to do more, that they cannot make promises and two years passed and not expect to be fulfilling them into the future, Mr. Speaker.

The situation in Manitoba's deplorable, and I want to take this opportunity to put on the record the

stories of a few Manitoba families who are suffering as a result of the government's neglect of those who need help the most.

One of the citizens is Lanah Hadla—the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) raised a question on her behalf earlier—who has been told she will be ineligible for any ABA therapy because she is aging out of the program. I recently met with Lanah's father, Rani, whose commitment to his daughter is unwavering, but he's getting nowhere with this government. The only resource given to Mr. Hadla, after finding out his daughter had autism, was about—was about autism provided by Manitoba Health from the American Academy of Pediatrics. So, the resource tool that Mr. Hadla was provided was an American document with a little piece of paper on the inside of the page saying, but don't refer to page 21, 22, 43 and 47 because that's for the American clients only.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see \$750 million going to Manitoba Hydro's advertising campaign, and we see families who are trying to identify the tools and supports available to their children using an American document. We can't even create a resource document for families who are dealing with autism.

On—imagine a parent's outrage with the government, and this parent's outrage, specifically, since he—his 5-year-old daughter has received no supports. He—his daughter is on every single wait-list imaginable. Lanah will be aged out without any supports. And as a Canadian, as a Manitoban, I am so discouraged by this minister and this government for leading Manitobans on in 2011 and then just filing the report and not doing anything with it. The only correspondence from the government is a letter Mr. Hadla received several months ago outlining that the government, and I quote, understands the importance of providing timely access to services such as ABA programming. Again, just words, Mr. Speaker.

If the government truly understood the importance of providing such access, they would do something about it. Perhaps the minister responsible can urge the Premier (Mr. Selinger) to redirect the vote tax towards funding autism treatment. This government has a responsibility to Lanah and Hani Hadla and all of the other families in similar situations to do better. The government must do better for the benefit of Manitoba families. That's what matters most to Manitoba families, is action, not words.

The government's handling of autism represents a failure in every way possible. The government's commitment, and I quote Thrive!, is to work with community partners to improve access to timely diagnosis assessment and early intervention therapies and appropriate educational programming throughout Manitoba. I would ask members on the other side of the House, how's that working? How's it going? How are Manitobans supposed to receive early intervention if they're sitting on a wait-list and they don't even know where they are on the wait-list, or which wait-list?

The lack of funding and limited space in this program is a particularly big problem, as children are often not diagnosed with autism until sometime after 2 years of age. For the treatment to have most effect, it should be well underway by the age of 4 or 5. Currently, many children are aging out of access to treatment because of wait-lists in Manitoba. This is a situation that must be addressed. Recent studies have shown that less-intensive treatment is still needed for those children in school. For children who've remained on the wait-list for ABA preschool until they age out, they do not receive any other ABA services in school, and this will be the case for Lanah Hadla.

Once children have received ABA preschool programming, enter the public school system, they are only able to receive supports until grade 5. At that time, they are expected to be absorbed into the regular system. After graduation from high school, studies have shown that kids with autism face more difficulties as they transition into adulthood. There's a need for better job training services offered in public schools for special education students. And we identified that when the government brought in special needs legislation. We told them, there has to be dollars attached to this initiative because kids will fall through the cracks. And this is what we're seeing today.

As the incidence of autism in children increases, the current program for providing services to them will ultimately leave more children with the help they need. Down the road, we are liable to see more school-aged children and young adults in need of more support because they were not helped through early intervention.

For a government that claims they are providing services for what matters most to Manitoba families, it is clear to the PC caucus that this NDP government is doing little to help Manitobans that have children

with autism. Manitoba deserves better. Manitoba families deserve better. Children with autism deserve better. And I challenge this government to do better and not just say it with words. Let's see some action.

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** Grievances? Any further grievances? Seeing none—

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady). The title of the resolution is Provincial Initiatives to Support Children and Youth.

\* (15:00)

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** It's been announced that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park, the title of which will be Provincial Initiatives to Support Children and Youth.

**Ms. Howard:** Would you please call for debate on second readings for Bill 2, 8, 10, 16, 15, 17, 20, 33 and 18.

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** Debate on second readings this afternoon shall proceed in the following order: bills 2, 8, 10, 16, 15, 17, 20, 33 and 18. Did everyone get that?

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 2—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Respect for the Safety of Emergency and Enforcement Personnel)

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** All right, we're now moving to debate on second reading for Bill 2, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Respect for the Safety of Emergency and Enforcement Personnel). The bill is open.

Recognizing the honourable member for Arthur-Virden.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, just on a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** Honourable member from Arthur-Virden, on a point of order.

**Mr. Maguire:** Just in regards to my private members' statement, I'd like the co-operation of the House, if I could, to correct the name that I used in my private members' statement. It was Danny Peaslee; I used the name Darby. That's his sister. There's quite a difference in their sports.

**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** I'm sure the brother and sister will appreciate that.

Is there leave from the House to make the correction as suggested by the member for Arthur-Virden to his member's statement delivered earlier? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted. Thank you for raising that.

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**The Acting Speaker (Rob Altemeyer):** Now moving to debate on second reading for Bill 2, recognizing the honourable member for Lakeside.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Actually, I've been waiting since December the 4th of last year to speak on this great bill that has been brought forward by the government. They said earlier that they couldn't bring a budget in until April of—28th of this year, so we find it quite interesting they decided to wait until now to call Bill 2, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

And it's interesting, too, the fact that yesterday I asked the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton) about a simple issue about dust control. That issue in regards to dust control was a very serious question. In fact, all Manitobans should be concerned about safety, and this bill deals with safety. In fact, with the lack of dust control, my question to the minister was that what is the government's plan in order to provide safety for those school students—fire services, paramedic services, 'ambulant' services. What, in fact, was going to be this government's plan?

And he stood up and started on a rant that, well, if we got into Estimates, we'd be able to do that. Well, we give him lots of opportunity. We have the ability to call the House anytime we want—January, February, March. In fact, the Liberal Party stood up today and said, what about calling session earlier. What did the government say? Well, we don't want

to present a budget until April 28th, so we are actually way ahead of plan. But, obviously, this government don't have a plan. It don't have the wherewithal to want to call bills.

So we welcome this opportunity to speak on Bill 2 that was tabled, as I said, earlier, December the 4th at 1:30 in the afternoon. So we sat a whopping 10 days last session. It was quite a marathon. We were able to hear the government come forward with their Throne Speech on how they want to lead Manitoba in the future, how they want to show Manitobans, how they want to make those commitments to them that they want to be able to deliver.

What we found very clearly was—is that they don't want to fulfill any of those commitments. In fact, the government in—before the last election in 2011, came forward and said their priority was not to raise taxes. But 'inhead', what did they do? This last budget they decided to wait till the last minute to call us back into session, decided to renege on that commitment. In fact, they said it was nonsense they were going to raise taxes. But, in fact, what we found was that they did want to renege on that, unfortunately, and we asked them to call a referendum. We asked them to call a 'rendum.' It's very simple. All they do is go to the folks; they said there's not enough time. Well, if they would have called us back earlier they would have had ample time. There would have been lots of time in order for this government to have a referendum if, truly, they wanted to hear from Manitobans.

And coming back to the dust control, I know that the minister has made some exceptions in regards to dust control. In fact, one of the changes they did accept the recommendation from the RM of Bifrost for that community that creates so many jobs up in the Vidir area whereby there's some 17,000 trucks coming and going in and out of that business community which creates a large amount of dust. So they 'dav' taken the opportunity to correct that, and I commend the minister and the government for doing that.

However, there's a lot of gravel roads. There's a lot of gravel roads in the province of Manitoba, many of which are used to transport heavy trucks, heavy gravel; there's going to be lots of dust. And there's lots of students that live on those roads whereby families will be put at risk, Manitobans will be put at risk, and we simply asked the government yesterday what their priority was for safety for those

students and those fire services, ambulance services, what plan this government had in regard to making sure that the safety, in fact, was still there.

Now, I do want to talk about Bill 2 in regards to the proposed legislation. In fact, Manitobans are no strangers to seeing accidents on the side of the road. They are a part of life, as we all know, unfortunately. While most accidents are preventable, it does no one any good to question the reasons for an accident while a injured person lays waiting for help.

You know, at this time of life, a group of fine Manitobans show up and take over the scene of an accident. Those people are police officers, paramedics, firefighters. Our Province could possibly run without these essential personnel. They're absolutely vital if we are to guarantee Manitoba's safe and secure communities. In fact, I did work with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) in regards to licence plate recognition for firefighters and I appreciate the Minister of Justice, the Minister for MPI, to bring forward that licence plate. That did recognize firefighters and the reason why, and I made it very clear when I brought forward the legislation, and that was to identify, in particular, rural Manitobans whereby we all know that fire services, folks that attend an accident, especially in rural Manitoba, they come with their own vehicles. They're on the way to or from one of their businesses or picking up parts in the city or running errands, and they'll be on the scene of an accident. And so this is a small way in order for them to be recognized as emergency personnel.

Now, I've also been contacted by paramedics, and I know that the government's looking at that; at least I have an understanding that they are. They, too, have a role to play in accidents as they move forward from one area to another and in between shifts. And we know that they have an essential service that they can provide to a number of folks in regards to accidents when they're on the highway going to or from work. So we certainly would encourage the government to have a look at that.

We have all seen emergencies pulled over on the side of the road and, no doubt, as a result of these types of accidents, emergency services have been injured or even killed or distracted by pass-by motorists, which we know, many a time, all of us are guilty of taking our eyes off the road for that slack moment. And whenever that moment comes, we can't react in enough time in order to possibly miss one of those emergency personnel. In fact, we know

that those folks that are out there attending to an accident have one thing on their mind and one thing only: that's the safety of the person that's injured, the person that is out attending to that victim through no fault or, hopefully, no fault of their own. We know that accidents happen. In fact, the minister said emergency workers must be able to do their jobs without fear of being hit by a speeding vehicle, and we certainly agree with that. However, we cannot help but wonder why such a bill has taken so long to be brought forward. Ontario, British Columbia enacted legislation to this effect in 2009. Alberta enacted it in 2006 and Saskatchewan enacted it in 2004. It is a shame this legislation has taken so long to come to Manitoba. It is just another example of how behind Manitoba has become in—compared to our neighbours, constantly following and never leading.

\* (15:10)

In fact, the government had the opportunity to introduce this type of legislation three years ago, in 2010 when it introduced Bill 8, which required vehicles to take precautions when they approach certain vehicles, including tow trucks, roadside assistant vehicles and vehicles used by government enforcement officers. The bill could have easily included the provisions Bill 2 includes. These protections for emergency personnel could have been brought forward much earlier than they were but, for whatever reason, the government chose not.

This bill was, indeed, long in coming, but nonetheless it has good intention, to protect emergency service workers. However, there are several ways it could be improved. The bill has currently written out two different speeds to which drivers must slow down—40 kilometres if their location where a regular speed limit is limited between 40 and 79 kilometres; and 60 kilometres if the speed is between 80 kilometres or more. By setting out two different speeds, drivers may face confusion. It would probably be better in both terms and safety and comprehension to set out a single speed to which drivers must slow down. It is already a well-established rule in Manitoba that if a motorist is passing roadside workers or roadside construction projects, that the motorist must slow down to 60, assuming they are driving faster than that. It would be easy for drivers to remember that this applies to emergency service personnel as well.

It would not be better to require a slower speed in the name of safety rather than having two speeds

based on a speed zone where the driver is in. It's about making sure that we remember what is important, and that's repetitiveness, and we know that the 60 kilometres is very important in roadside construction, so it makes sense that it would be the same in regards to other legislation that we bring forward. Consistency is important, and it's important for all Manitobans to ensure that and do, in fact, follow the law and they're very familiar with it, and we want to make sure that there is no confusion in that regard.

Our emergency services personnel in Manitoba are the top of their profession. However, constant training is necessary for them to keep up their skills. Training is paramount in maintaining safety. Municipal firefighters, as I talked about earlier, are often volunteer, not full-time firefighters. One of the bill's intentions is to permit a firefighter at a scene to direct traffic in the absence of a police officer, at the direction of a police officer. However, it is important to note that before volunteer firefighters are asked to do this, they receive some sort of training in directing traffic.

In the summer of 2010 edition of the Municipal Leader, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities said, and I quote: "It has become the norm for municipal firefighters to be expected to do traffic control at accident scenes, yet they are not always properly trained." End of quote.

It is vitally important that all firefighters receive the necessary training to direct traffic properly. The bill does not address the imposition of penalties for drivers who do not slow down at areas where emergency personnel are present. While we would like to count on all drivers to obey the law, and most do, we also know that there are some who do not, and those are the ones we have to be out and watch for.

The minister has said that penalties would be addressed after a public awareness campaign has been launched. However, it would be good to know which penalties will be imposed before the campaign begins. Penalties need to be tough enough for those who speed past emergency personnel or put them in danger by their driving. We would like to know what penalties are going to be imposed and, in fact, Mr. Speaker, when we started doing some consulting on our own in regards to this legislation, I know there's not a lineup of presenters in this particular piece of legislation. However, it's important to note that we need to work with organizations like the Manitoba



Trucking Association, like CAA and other organizations in regards to ensuring the fact that, in fact, we do have the paramount training, the paramount consultation process that we need to ensure that all Manitobans will be well aware of what is going on.

As we know, the House will rise on Thursday. This bill in all likelihood will not be called until session resumes at the call of the government, whether that be Monday, Tuesday, next week, next fall. So, obviously, since December of 2012 when this bill was tabled, it goes off the radar screen; it gets put on the back burner, so to speak. So we need to re-establish what legislation is going to be talked about, what bills are going to be presented, and I certainly know that we on this side of the House at least want to ensure that all Manitobans are consulted, having that opportunity in order to appear before a committee, if they so desire. And we've talked about this many, many times, and, in fact, the member from Steinbach has asked the government time and time again about what the government's plans are when it comes to calling committee.

And we know from other bills, bills where we've had a number of presenters where we've seen that the public has lined up to comment on particular pieces of legislation, and we know very clearly that many of them think whenever a bill is called that when there's a number of presenters—in fact, I go back to Bill 17. I know very clearly the first night, we had roughly around 350, 360 names already on that list of people that wanted to present to committee.

Well, one of the members happened to be from my area; he was No. 222. And sure enough, the very first night his name was called, he was not prepared. He was caught off guard, so to speak.

So, whenever we look at making sure we have consultation in place, we do our homework. We make sure that, in fact, we're ready to go because we don't really know under the way the government calls members to present to committee when that will be. Will it be the first night, second night? One would assume that No. 222 would be probably night five, night six.

We have asked the government to respect families, to respect individuals, to respect those that want to be able to be heard within the province of Manitoba that whereby we limit the number of presenters to, say, midnight—to, say, perhaps, the first 30 on the list. That they be notified in enough time in order to ensure that their voice will be heard, not

dropped from the list and moved to the bottom; that's not what they want. They didn't sign up to just have their name on the list; they obviously wanted to be heard. And, unfortunately, without true guidelines, we're going to miss a number of those presentations. Without the opportunity to ensure that those Manitobans will be heard, we need to ensure the fact that those Manitobans will be heard.

So my advice, my advice alone with a number of other members on this side of the House, has made it very clear to the government we would prefer, on behalf of Manitobans, that the first 30 be called so they can plan accordingly, adjust their lives accordingly, as we know June is a busy month. June is a busy month and that's why we like to be called back into the session earlier. I prefer February; January's good for me; any time's good for me. But rushing through session is unacceptable.

So, whenever we talk to those Manitobans we can say to them with confidence that the first 30 will be called on day one. And the next 30 would be called on day two and so on and so on. Thereby, all Manitobans will have that true opportunity for their voice to be heard.

Now, in regards to who's going to be at committee, I want to come back again to Bill 17. When we have a number of presenters, I think it's imperative that all members on that committee be respectful of those presenters. In fact, I know on Bill 17, the wee hours of the morning, some of our members on the other side of the House turned their chairs, put their backs to the customer—to the presenters, had a little doze off, played with their BlackBerrys—unacceptable.

\* (15:20)

Whether it's 2 in the morning, 5 in the morning, 11 at night, 7 o'clock at night their voice needs to be heard. We need to be paying attention, and if they don't want to do that—if they don't want to do that—then they need to be accountable. They need to make sure that whenever the next presenter comes in that they're ready. They're alert. Ask for a break. Say to the Chair, I would like to be able to bring it together to be able to roll in what really is important. In fact, you know, if we increase the numbers on Bill 2, then great. I think that's really what we need to do, because we don't know. We don't know. We don't know whether the bill's going to be called tonight, tomorrow, Monday, Tuesday. In order for that to happen, we're going to have to be ready. And we—in fact, we know that the member from Steinbach has

unlimited speaking on certain bills, so it might be called on Monday, might be called Tuesday—that's if we call session back. So we don't know.

So, again, coming back to my original point that I was trying to get, Mr. Speaker, in regards to Bill 2, when we do go to that committee it's so important—so important—that Manitobans have that opportunity for their voice to be heard.

So I know that talking to some of my firefighters that in rural Manitoba tend a number of accidents that this bill is so important—so important. They are concerned—they are concerned—in regards to the speed limit, as I talked about earlier. They are concerned that if they decide to make a presentation that their, in fact, in voice will be heard by all Manitobans and all parties of the House. And I know the Liberal Party has also made it very clear they're concerned about what Manitobans are going to be doing in regards to Bill 2.

I know that we are preparing amendments on this particular piece of legislation, and I know the government's not real fond of amendments to their legislation. In fact, we're not planning on hoisting motion on this particular bill. We think it's a good bill. We think it's one that they should have called earlier. In fact, that was—would have been the prime opportunity if we would have done it in January or February. Obviously, missing in action from that side of the House. I know I was here. I was ready to go. I'd been in the building several times waiting for the government to call. In fact, I know that I kept saying to my colleagues, you know, when are they going to show up? When are they going to show up? I just can't wait to be able to get into the House.

This bill was tabled on December the 4th. Surely, it's an important bill. Surely, the goodness that whenever you bring forward legislation such as Bill 2 that it's imperative that really if you're concerned about the safety of Manitobans you would say, let's get in there. Let's get this done. Let's don't use the budget as excuse because we got a lot of legislation. In fact, we've seen now a total of 47 bills—47 bills—brought forward, and you would think that Bill 2 would have been one of the priorities for this government. It would have been a priority for them to say, look, let's get those Tories in here. Let's find out what Manitobans want. Let's find out what that speed limit should be whether it be 40, whether it be 60, whether it be 80. Let's go the other norm. I don't think not, but I think 60 is a good number.

But I also think we should have the opportunity to debate in this House. I want to make sure that all Manitobans have an opportunity to debate, and I know members opposite will be happy to get up and debate this bill. I look forward to hearing what they have to say in regards to Bill 2. *[interjection]* I know the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan) said she can't wait. And I just love she said that I never get a question, I never get a question, but I really want to hear what she has to say in regards to Bill 2. I don't think it'll be a lot. In fact, I'll be surprised, I'll stand up, and I'll apologize that the member for—the Minister of Education did in fact have a lot to say on Bill 2. We'll see after I sit down whether she'll be the next member up to speak. I don't think so, but we'll see. We'll give her that opportunity, because I think it's important that she does have the opportunity, or maybe she just been muzzled. I don't know. I hope not.

But I can tell you this—that as we move forward on this piece of legislation in regards to Bill 2 that whenever we're talking about any safety managers that that consultation in fact be followed. And I know I've said this time and time again that—who have we consulted with? You know, I come back to the Manitoba Trucking Association, who has been in consultation with the minister on a number of bills and the minister hasn't a hundred per cent listened to him or the organization in regards to that. In fact, also with CAA, who is a very important organization representing hundreds of thousands of Manitobans—I'm looking forward to their comments on Bill 2. In fact, I know that in regards to safety, they've been paramount. In fact, they were the leaders going back to the legislation in 2010 on tow trucks—that legislation that was brought forward at that time—and they supported it a hundred per cent. They thought this was great because of the fact that it was about safety.

And whenever we don't do our homework in regards to bills and legislation—that's truly what happened in regards to Bill 2. The government missed the opportunity in 2010 in order to do that. They have seen the light; they brought that forward now in a new bill, and we certainly are pleased to be able to debate that in the House today.

We look forward to the point when it's going to be enacted, whenever that may be. It may be September, it may be October, it may be next week—who knows? Government's in control of the House. They're the ones that control the agenda, they're the ones that decide when we're going to come back.

They decide when we're going to adjourn, other than the dates that are set in legislation, which we know, as I've said before, which is this Thursday.

Unfortunately, I am regretful that they didn't call this bill earlier, but I will accept the fact that the government does have the right to prioritize the legislation that they want to move forward. And this is one of those pieces of legislation that we're looking forward to continuing debate on and move forward on and look forward to more consultation in regards to what the public has to say.

And I know that there's other members of the House that certainly want to put a few things on the record in regards to Bill 2, so we look forward to that. And I ask the Minister of Education—if she's ready to go, I'll certainly sit down and give her that opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education):** Well, I'm pleased that the MLA for Lakeside set aside some of his precious time for me to say a few words about Bill 2. I'd just like to inform members opposite that, of course, I'm in favour of this legislation and I think we should move it to committee. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, that was the fastest speech that I've heard the minister give; it must be a record. And, anyway, she was very clear on where she stood, which is good.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a word, because I didn't have a chance earlier to recognize the large number of people who came here today to urge better support for children and adults with autism. Clearly, attending to the needs of the children of our province must be a top priority, and money invested in trying to help children with autism can go a long way in terms of not only helping the children and giving them the optimum chance that they have of doing well, but, in fact, it—the investment early on saves a lot of money down the road, because if these children are not helped early on, then we risk the children running into problems and having greater difficulties down the road. So it is an urgent situation and I want to say that I was just pleased to see so many people out in support of this important effort, and hopefully the government will decide that it's going to pay attention to the urgent needs which are clearly there.

Second, I want to—again, because I didn't have a chance to recognize this yesterday—to recognize the many, many students from Pembina Trails School

Division who came here urging the government to act on making sure that all homes in Manitoba have access to clean running water. This is a need which I have been talking about for quite some time. This is a need that I have been urging the government to attend to for a long time.

\* (15:30)

Indeed, some time ago—I would think it would've been probably in 2011—I was—or maybe 2012—was with Bob Rae, who had made a major effort in Ontario to advance access to clean running water for people in northern Ontario. And, clearly, there is a provincial role here, and it's time that the government accepted that provincial role and made sure that we didn't have people in our province who are living in Third and Fourth—and fifth—World conditions, Mr. Speaker, because that's not acceptable.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about this bill. As the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) has already pointed out, you know, it's rather unusual to be debating Bill 2 at this stage in the Legislature, which is three days from the end of when the normal sitting is. You know, there was a time when we sat a little longer than under the present Premier (Mr. Selinger) in the fall. And Bill 2 and sometimes bills 3, 4 and 5, would have got passed in the fall because we had enough time to do that in the fall. And we were able to pass and consider appropriately and properly, bills like this, which are important for the people of Manitoba.

And so, for those who wonder, you know, why this is taken so long, the answer is pretty clear; that the management of this session is not as good as it has been in the past, and that this really could have been passed before we completed the session in December, last fall, instead of having to wait the time that it has now.

Now with that—those points made, I want to say that I support this legislation. I think it's important to recognize the important role that firefighters have played in responding to emergencies. An even greater role now that they're taking on roles that oftentimes paramedics have done alone in the past. And so, firefighters are really playing increasingly important and vital roles in our province.

And for many years, firefighters have been involved in directing traffic around emergencies, usually before the police arrive, and sometimes when there's shortages, to make sure that this situation is kept a safe situation, not only for those involved with

the emergency, but for any people who are passing by.

And so I want to say congratulations and thank you to the firefighters for all the work they have done in this area and in others in our province, to thank them and to see that we're going to get the recognition for their role here, which could have come some time ago, but at least it is here now, and hopefully this bill will pass soon. At this session, we don't know whether it will be soon or in the fall, but it will be passed, I'm sure, because it appears to have support from all sides of this legislative Chamber.

I want to talk a little bit about the speeds. I mean, I think that there is a reason within a big city like Winnipeg, to have the lower speed of 40 kilometres an hour, and certainly that would be, in my view, appropriate, rather than a uniform speed of 60 kilometres everywhere in the province. So I'm not entirely in agreement with the member for Lakeside in his position that it be one speed everywhere in the province.

You know, indeed, in Winnipeg there's a lot of streets where the speed limit is 50 kilometres an hour and you wouldn't want to have a speed limit of 60 kilometres in that area where there's an accident. That would be increasing the speed limit and going the wrong way. So I think that there's probably room here for a little bit of compromise in terms of how this is approached. But, I'm not opposed to the government's suggestion that there be areas where there be 40 kilometres an hour.

I do think that the—that there's going to be a transition period and that it becomes important that the government looks, not just at some advertising and education of the public and awareness, as they seem to be, but there also be developed some temporary signage that can put up, that can clearly spell out what—the site of an emergency. That speed limits should be slowed down to 60 kilometers an hour or 40 kilometers an hour or whatever, and that this is the law in Manitoba.

And that such signage would be important, not only in having people slow down, but in terms of an ongoing process of education because, Mr. Speaker, that ongoing process of education is not only, you know, important for all us, but one has to remember that we have drivers on the road who come from other provinces or other states and they don't, the minute they come into Manitoba, automatically learn and know exactly what the rules are here.

So we need to make sure that there are such temporary signs that can be put up. And this would be particularly important when there's emergencies along major routes like 75 or 57 coming from the States, or the Trans-Canada Highway or Highway 16, where we've got a lot of interprovincial traffic.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, we would like more tourists coming to Manitoba. We want to be a tourist-friendly place, and, you know, having nice, friendly signs which help people to understand what the laws are here, are, I think, a good idea.

So, with that sort of transition in place and with some ongoing educational approach, you know, I think that this transition can be managed well and that we can have, you know, a step in the direction of a safer province in terms of our roads, and that is the reason that I'm supporting this bill and will continue.

I look forward to hearing what people have to say at the committee stage and, you know, look forward to looking at and considering whatever amendments the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) is going to bring forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I rise to speak to Bill 2, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, in respect for the safety of emergency and enforcement personnel. And, indeed, it is something that many people, I think, thought already existed in Manitoba.

I've spoken in this House prior about being a professional driver and driving a semi around North America and in western provinces. And it's well-known in those provinces, Mr. Speaker, when you come upon an accident scene, that you must slow down otherwise you might be ticketed or—by the emergency personnel that are there.

So that's something that's common place and, in fact, it—for a long time, Mr. Speaker, it's caused much confusion from people travelling into Manitoba and, indeed, people that are used to travelling in other provinces. Because when you do come up on an accident scene in Manitoba you think, well, I have to slow down in other provinces to 60 or 80 or whatever the settings are there, that they're usually all well displayed as you come up on an accident and I must have to slow down here. But apparently until now this didn't exist, that you were supposed to slow down but to no particular speed.

So there was a lot of unknowns there, Mr. Speaker, and something that I think we need to

protect our emergency personnel, indeed, as you come up on accidents. Now, when you see the RCMP has an accident scene or, indeed, that they have someone pulled over, they do indeed come into the lane quite a bit with their cruiser so as to slow down traffic. And, as we've moved along here in the years, they seem to be coming further and further into the lane to make sure that people notice them and make sure that they do slow down and have to move around the cruiser, so that the member is safe and, indeed, the accident scene or the car that they've pulled over is indeed safe.

And, indeed, we have seen accidents occur there where people have not pulled over far enough and slowed down, they've hit the police cruiser into the car ahead. And, of course, that's something that can be quite devastating.

\*(15:40)

So, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we see some of these things put into place and that the public is well aware of them, because that's a part that really needs to be addressed in here, is the education of the public in this regard so that they are well aware of their responsibilities should they come upon emergency personnel at an accident scene, so that they are well aware that they have to slow down, that they have to pay attention to what's happening there. And so that part of this is something that is spoken about in here. It's talked about, that there is a bit of education needed, but, indeed, it needs to be expanded there, and how is that going to take place.

Certainly, in driver training for new drivers, that's an area that will have to be addressed. I imagine it's something that MPI would probably look at in terms of driver safety and educating drivers, but in terms of this particular bill, who is particularly going to be responsible for that education? I don't know that that's quite clear, and, well, we're just going to educate everyone somehow, Mr. Speaker, but.

So that's something that we do need to speak about a little bit more is how is that all going to roll out for the drivers that are out there now, for the drivers that are coming into Manitoba, and, indeed, when you are at an accident scene, what type of signage is going to be necessary for those individuals to carry at the scene so that people are warned what speed they're going to have to slow down to, and that is something with the different speeds here that is going to be a bit of a confusion for people. Well, I did slow down, Mr. Speaker, you know, that's—I am

told I had to do that. Well, I didn't slow down enough, apparently, so I still got a ticket, but—so, we'll see some confusion there as we move ahead here, I think.

And, of course, training is something not only for the travelling public but also for the firefighters that this bill speaks of because, of course, the emergency personnel in terms of the police, the peace officers, and the RCMP are well aware of how to manage an accident scene, and they do a great job of that and they always—it's always different, of course, what they come upon. They never are sure what they're going to have happen when they come upon an accident scene, but they are well-educated and trained in that responsibility, what they need to do in order to secure the scene, and in order to make sure people are safe and that more emergency personnel are on the way, if necessary.

But that is something, when we look at the firefighters and paramedics—indeed, it does speak about firefighters here but not about the paramedics. And I assume, when we're looking at that, that a paramedic would have the same responsibility as a firefighter in the province, but it doesn't say so in this legislation, so that may be something we need to look at because, indeed, a paramedic may be the first one on the scene, and the training for those individuals on how to secure the accident scene, how to ensure that people at the scene are safe and the travelling public is warned in terms of approaching the scene, that is all something that I'm sure we will have to spend a great deal of time on making sure that the protocols are in place so everybody goes through the same process when you first come upon a scene.

So the education part here, I think, is something that really isn't even spoken about. Maybe it's just understood, but it is not something that is just that simple. It is something that is outside the parameters of emergency personnel that are not used to it—the firefighters and the paramedics. So it is something that they're going to have to spend some time on in addition to the training that they need to keep up every year—the, you know, first aid, the emergency response, the CPR—all that type of training in addition to those things that they already have to do, this will be something—securing an accident scene—that they will have to, I'm sure, have additional training indeed.

And, when you do come upon an accident scene, Mr. Speaker, that may not be the first thing you're

thinking about, but I'm sure that they will have plans in place so that there will be a planning guide on what you're going to do when you first approach the scene. Of course, it all depends on what you're going to see there. Which is the first case? Is it securing the scene or is it ensuring that people are dealt with or a combination of both? Because you often, I think, when you come upon these accident scenes, things happen very quickly and the responses need to be very quickly, but measured, in making sure that there is no danger to the emergency personnel, that there is no danger to the travelling public, and, indeed, that we can make the best outcome for everybody involved, because sometimes the accidents are, of course, quite devastating to the people involved, and while we see that all over Manitoba and elsewhere, it is something that sometimes we—we're dealing with some very tragic circumstances in these scenes. And, of course, it's well known that traffic flow changes when you come upon an accident scene. There's been many, many studies about the impact that an accident will have on traffic flow and what's going to happen in terms of slowing down that traffic. If you've ever been on a freeway in larger parts of the country, around Toronto, where traffic suddenly grinds to a halt, it's often the case of an accident up ahead and sometimes several miles, and of course, the inquisitive nature that we have, as we travel along, people want to look at the accident scene to see what's happened, and that all slows everything down and perhaps you're not paying attention to the traffic ahead of you or all the way along.

I guess another question that we have to deal with here is we have some penalties that, you know, we've sort of talked about, but not really. I assume it's going to be penalties similar to what we have for other speed limits and that type of thing, but perhaps there may be additional penalties around an accident scene in this regard, and that's something I'm sure we'll probably see in some regulations down the road. Don't know what that's going to be, so we'll have to see what happens. And a bigger question, though, is probably going to be how does this become enforced.

So, if you have a firefighter securing the scene as the first one there or a paramedic—I assume that the paramedic here—I'm using them both here—but they are not mentioned in the act. If they are securing the scene, then how do you enforce people speeding by? The person that's securing the scene is—does not have time to take licence plates; they won't be enforcing that side of it. So, then, when an RCMP or

a peace officer or a police officer comes upon the scene, what is their first role? Is it to help secure the scene, to help ensure that emergency personnel are there, that the adequate personnel are there, or is to enforce the traffic? Do we have one police officer there helping the firefighters and the paramedics secure the scene and make sure people are healthy, another cruising around in another vehicle, making sure that people are slowing down? So, I, you know, I mean, how many people are we going to have there? And then that means more police officers, I assume, because—and is this the highest and best use of their time? Not always, but—so you're going to have a couple people, couple police officers travelling around, making sure that the speed limits are enforced here around the accident scene. Meanwhile, there's other things, of course, going on in the legal areas that they need to work with as well.

So which of these becomes a priority? It's all a question of that, of course, of prioritizing, and is this more of a priority than somebody that's racing, or is it—this more of a priority that someone that's perhaps engaged in some other illegal activity? Those are all decisions that the law-enforcement community is going to have to make. When—where do you allocate resources, and we're always told by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) that sometimes those resources are scarce, so those decisions have to be made. Is this where we put those scarce resources, if, indeed, they are scarce at that particular time? Is that the highest and best use? And that's all part of the planning, or do we move into the next stage here and does the firefighter or paramedic, are they now eligible to issue tickets? I know a ticket is not the correct legal jargon, but it's what the public is used to, and when you issue that ticket, how do you issue it? Do you have to chase that person down? You're not going to chase them down in an ambulance, and these things may sound kind of silly, Mr. Speaker, but, indeed, they're not addressed in the act, so we don't know how that's going to transpire.

So, you know, it—it's something that we've seen in other provinces and, like I said, other people from other provinces and, indeed, myself, that travel in those other provinces and other states, have experienced this type of thing happening, and we know that we have to slow down to respect the first responders, and we're quite shocked that we didn't already have it here. Surprising that Manitoba has taken so long to protect their first responders in this regard, and a bit surprised in my regard that it only addresses a peace officer or the firefighter but, you

know, is it better that it we maybe should call them first responders, or should we call them—should we add paramedics? Are we, indeed, going to have other types of first responders in Manitoba, so that we don't limit it to that particular thing? Those are all things that maybe are kind of left out of the act, here, Mr. Speaker.

\* (15:50)

So, those are things that are—I think, are a bit of a surprise, that there wasn't, with all the time that this government has had to work on this particular bill—you know, in the time that other provinces have had this—and they've had it enacted, and we've seen the good things and the bad things, that maybe those things weren't thought of and—they're not in there, so I guess they weren't thought of. But maybe they're not necessary in this government's eyes.

So very, very intriguing to see how it will all come to pass. But, of course, we've had some time to look at this bill; December was when it was introduced. Mmm, interesting that it took this long. Maybe not a priority of this government to protect peace officers and firefighters and other first responders. But, you know, it's there now, so this is what we have to deal with.

Some questions have been raised by other members about the disparity in the particular speeds, that now people are going to be 'compused' on when they need to go down to 60 kilometres, when they need to go down to 40 kilometres. If you're in the city of Winnipeg, is it 40 kilometres or is it only 'forny' kilometres in certain areas, because there's some areas of the city that have a higher speed limit than others. And so, which one do you have to go down?

So I can imagine there will be some challenges to tickets that are issued in this, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, the—I'm sure it will—we will—it'll have a learning curve, like many of the other bills that come along, and we never know where it's all going to come out. It may come to some amendments as we go through committee. I'm sure we'll get some good responses from people in committee, I hope—people that are going to look at this and say, well, this maybe doesn't make sense, or we need to make some additions here and this might be a good addition that we have there. So we'll see how it all works. But, indeed, it took a long time and it's going to take not too much longer, I hope, to see that we're going to be able to protect our emergency personnel.

But which ones are we going to have to add to it? Indeed, when a bill delineates particular individuals such as the peace officer and the firefighter, those are the only ones that are then allowed to direct traffic in this particular circumstance. Does that mean if I am travelling as an individual and I am the first one to come upon an accident scene that I am breaking the law if I try to slow traffic down or direct it around? There is nothing in here for somebody else, an individual that is a private individual that is trying to help the situation until the emergency personnel get there. And, indeed, we don't want to put ourselves or the other travelling public at risk.

But I have certainly come up on accident scenes that we've had to warn the public about. I know in one particular instance in the middle of winter, several years ago, I was travelling back to Brandon—as I still do a lot here now. It was some black ice and I could see something up ahead. I was not quite sure what it was, and I came upon a half-ton truck that was on its side with its bottom facing the oncoming traffic.

So, all that I could see was the dark part of the vehicle. There was no reflective circa—surface there, there was no lights on any more. Everything was off on this truck. So the full bottom of the truck was facing the oncoming traffic and because I was able to discern something up there, I was able to tell that there was something there. But there was nothing reflecting back to the public, so we had to pull over with flashers on, trying to slow the oncoming traffic because you couldn't see anything, Mr. Speaker, with the black ice and the snowstorm that was happening. It could have been a very danger—well, it was a very dangerous experience, and had I not been paying attention at that particular time, incur—indeed, it could have been quite deadly because the individual that was in that particular accident was unconscious at the time, so they were not out on the highway trying to slow traffic down. It had just happened very suddenly, and I was the first one to come upon there.

So what were my responsibilities in that? We did manage to slow traffic down until the first responders were able to come. They were already—did not have to make the cellphone call to get them, they were on the way. But, in the meantime, there is that interim time that you do have a responsibility, I believe, in order to try to slow other people coming down into that situation so that they're not put in danger, so the individual that was still in the truck

was not put in any further danger than they already were.

So those types of things aren't spelled out in this act and maybe those are things that the government expects we're going to have as part of common sense but common sense is not something that's easy to teach, Mr. Speaker. It's not something that's easily learned and it often comes from experience, so no designation in there for educating the public in that regard. But, you know, those are all things that we need to look at, I think, when we look at this particular bill.

So, you know, a public awareness campaign will have to be launched I'm sure by somebody, not sure who it's going to be, maybe it'll be MIT, maybe it'll be Department of Justice, maybe it'll be MPI or maybe a combination of all of them. And those are all things on how you address it to people, and how you get their attention to this is going to be challenge, I think, Mr. Speaker.

There will always be people that will say, you know, I didn't know that this existed so I should be innocent. And, in fact, let me think now, I think there were ministers on the other side of the floor that used that excuse on Manitoba Elections Act. Wasn't that a problem? They said, you know what, I didn't know that this legislation that we brought in, apparently this government brought in, I didn't know that legislation existed, so I didn't know that I broke it. I'm—it was inadvertent, Mr. Speaker.

Is that a defence that Manitobans will be able to use in the defence of this? It was inadvertent. I didn't know that it existed. Certainly, it's an example that we seen across the floor, that members of this government and indeed ministers have used successfully, I must add, in their defence of breaking the law in Manitoba.

And, so, again, apparently we weren't able to educate government ministers on particular legislation so it is a challenge. It is a challenge on how you educate your people on legislation and I do believe that it will be a challenge on 'educashing' people on this type of particular legislation, even though it does seem to be just common sense and it is in existence in many other areas of the country. You would think that this is something that would have long since been put into place in Manitoba but, again, that's not the case here, Mr. Speaker.

So it'll be interesting to see what happens when this one goes to committee. I don't know that there's

anyone registered to speak on it, but we'll see how that process all works and what time of the night that particular committee's going to meet, because it would—I think, be—you know, behoove the government to set up the committee so that the public can come and address them, and the public can come and deal with the committees on an opportune time, not the middle of the night, so that, indeed, the public can be part of democracy in action here, Mr. Speaker.

It's something that we've seen this government try to curtail time and again. You know, they don't want the public to vote on tax increases now; they want to take away that democratic right. And it would be, I think, quite disturbing, Mr. Speaker, if we saw the government trying to put—run committees all the way through the night and infringe on Manitobans' democracies—democratic rights, in that regard. It's certainly something we want to see, more Manitobans engaged in democracy, as opposed to making sure that they can't be engaged in democracy.

So I would encourage Manitobans to register for speaking to committee and speaking to bills and I do hope that they are able to show up at a reasonable time, as opposed to halfway through the night so that they're able to make their voice heard to this government because it's a very important time, I think, in Manitoba.

We've seen recently—the government had talked about using money from MPI to fund infrastructure and there was a big outcry from the public. Just like a few years ago, the government had talked about using money from MPI to fund universities and, again, there was a big outcry from the public. And in both times, the government backed down, they listened to the public, and I think it's great that the government does listen to the public and stop those things that don't make sense. They should have been obvious to the government. I think that money from Manitoba Public Insurance should not go to fund universities and that Manitoba—money from Manitoba Public Insurance should not go to fund infrastructure because that's the responsibilities of both the Department of Advanced Education and MIT; those are, indeed, in those mission statements. Should've been common sense but, again, a difficult thing to teach, Mr. Speaker.

\* (16:00)

So the government did listen in that regard and in recently here, as I said, with MPI with funding infrastructure they—the Minister of Justice did listen



to the public, obviously, and decided not to go that way although we look back on how they responded to criticisms of using that type of money for infrastructure, and we were told that, well, there will be a business case. MPI is going to put a business case together, and there'll be full analysis of the situation and will be brought forward to the board of Manitoba Public Insurance and the board will decide.

In fact, at the Crown Corporations Committee for MPI, when I asked that question on what the process was going to be, I was told that the board would be making this decision on whether MPI would be funding infrastructure, and, apparently, that is no longer their decision because the minister has told them it's not. Interesting how those responsibilities change in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

So I think I am encouraged by some of the things I see in this particular bill. It is fairly brief and, perhaps, in some regards, too brief because there's things that are not dealt with in here that the public will have questions about. So how are those questions going to be dealt with? Will they be in the regulations? And are those things, when we put them in regulations, Mr. Speaker—the Legislature doesn't always get to deal with them and the public doesn't always get to deal with them so I think that is a danger, in this regard, that there are things that probably should be in this bill that would be better dealt in here in legislation than in regulation.

But that is a decision this government is making and we will see where that decision goes. We will see, I guess, where this bill ends up and what types of things might be added to it, if anything. Is the government open to suggestions? Those things we don't know about yet, and I hope they are because they did flip-flop on the MPI funding infrastructure, and I encourage the government to flip-flop on the PST increase. I think that would be a fabulous thing if they did that, if they would listen to Manitobans and indeed not increase the PST, but that is their decision, Mr. Speaker, and they will have to live with it, I guess.

This is a particular thing here that we see that the government's democracy in action and sometimes that democracy—hmm, we question about whether it is true democracy here, Mr. Speaker, in some of the things we've seen happen here. Is the government trying to squash it or just sort of run roughshod over it? So, indeed, we're going to be interesting sometime I imagine to go to committee. Those things

have not been determined yet on when that's going to happen and who's going to be on that committee, whether they will indeed pay attention to the people that come and present to the committee.

Indeed there—I have not been here long but I have presented at committees and I have also, in the short time that I have here, been on a couple of committees, and I am concerned when the committee members don't pay attention to the people that take the time out of their busy schedules to come to the committee and make a presentation, something that they're often not used to doing, and they have their 10 minutes and they're very intimidated. This is a structure that you come into this structure here, Mr. Speaker; it's a beautiful building but it is a very intimidating building, and you come into a committee room with all these people sitting there looking at you, and you have to make this presentation and, indeed, something that most people are not comfortable with.

So I think it behooves all members that are present on those committees to make people feel as comfortable as they can and listen to them and, indeed, give it some sober thought in terms of the opinions that are at those committees so that we make sure that Manitobans are listened to. They've been trying to get this government to listen to them by protests outside the Legislature. Sometimes the government shows up when it's something they're interested in. Sometimes they go out the back door, and that's very sad to see because that is basic raw democracy, Mr. Speaker, where people take the time out of their busy day to come and protest on the Legislature. I think it behooves the government to listen to Manitobans, and I would indeed encourage them to do so.

So this is something that we will be encouraging the government to listen to Manitobans on. We've had some opinions expressed in the House here already on things that should change in it, and perhaps there may be some amendments that might come forward on this. It's yet to be seen how the government would deal with those particular amendments, but, you know, I think sometimes the government has to listen to other people.

Very encouraged that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) has said, listen to Manitobans in doing away with MPI funding infrastructure. And I would be tremendously encouraged if the government would listen to the Manitobans—to Manitobans and do away with the PST increase, because that is

indeed what Manitobans are asking to be done. They're asking the government to live within their means, and there's been rumours in the media about a fiscal cliff coming up. But, you know, if you're able to work within your budget, then you don't have those fiscal cliff problems, and I know that's a challenge for this government. Working within a budget is something they've failed to do several times. But, if you worked within their budget, there wouldn't be any talk of a fiscal cliff.

If Manitobans could depend on what you said, then there wouldn't be those issues, and if Manitobans could believe the things they were told, then, indeed, we'd have better faith in the government and believe that they would indeed follow through on what they plan.

So this is something that—Mr. Speaker, that, as I said, I had expected we already had in Manitoba, because I already experienced it in other provinces and states. But now that it's here, it's something that I think we need to see certain parts of moved along and certain amendments to other areas, and make sure that Manitobans and first responders are protected in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, I always take it as a pleasure to get up and speak to important pieces of legislation.

This one in particular, I would like to first of all start off my comments by thanking the full-time and volunteer firefighters, first responders, paramedics. All of those who—when all of us rush out of a burning building or a serious situation, they are the ones that rush in to make sure that everybody is either out of the building or safe, and make sure that their communities are safe.

And I would like to thank the full-time and volunteer firefighters, first responders and paramedics from the rural municipality of Springfield, the rural municipality of East St. Paul and the rural municipality of West St. Paul. I salute them and I congratulate them on the work they do. I would like to wish them a good and safe summer season. When most people think of summer as being a time of holidays and of getting away from stress and getting away from all those things that preoccupy us and fill our time, I believe it is the first responders—that is probably one of their busier seasons. And I know it certainly is for the three rural municipalities that I represent.

I'd like to point out to this Legislature that we have PTH 15, Highway 59, the Perimeter Highway, Main Street, Henderson Highway, to name a few. All major roads that feed individuals and families into cottage country, to the beaches, to places where they would like to go and take some time to relax and reflect on life. And sometimes things happen on those roads that require the assistance of first responders, of the fire department and the paramedics.

And I hasten to add, I also would like to include in here our nation's finest, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, that also patrol the streets and they're often the first ones on the scene if there is a serious accident. And they are there to make sure that everybody is safe as they drive by. To each and every one of them, I wish them also a good summer.

And often I have the opportunity to speak to some of this nation's finest, the RCMP, and there they are at an incident and it's very hot, the sun is beating, it's humid, and they're standing there with their vests on. And I just—I think, you know, how unfortunate they have to stand there in this heat, but they do it and they do it willingly. It's their job; it's, they feel, what they should be doing. So it's something that I think is just an amazing calling; it's not for everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have to confess that I probably am not one of those cut out to be an individual to rush into a burning building. I don't know; I would follow my base instinct and rush out. So I don't think I would make the best firefighter.

\*(16:10)

There are others who do a wonderful job, and to each and every one of them on behalf of the Manitoba Legislature, I would like to thank them and congratulate them. And we know that they are going to be out there to protect, to serve and make sure that individuals pulling their campers and trailers and boats and taking their lunches and their suppers and their barbecues out to cottage country and have a great time. And we do so knowing that if something happens, we are protected. So to all of them, I'd like to say thank you.

The piece of legislation, Bill 2, that is in front of us today, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Respect for the Safety of Emergency and Enforcement Personnel), you would think that in today's society as how far we've come as far as transportation goes, that we wouldn't need legislation

like that. You would think we wouldn't need to have to legislate. The fact that if you see lights on, if you see that there's an incident, if you see any kind of an emergency vehicle that seems to be involved in an incident, that you would automatically apply your brakes, slow down and be wary, be cautious of those individuals that are out there to protect, to help and often to save individuals who are in distress. Instead, there seems to be those who feel they have to hit the gas pedal instead of hitting the brake.

And this bill is something that attempts to address that serious situation. I'm often perturbed when I see how reckless individuals feel that they have the right to drive in situations. Just the other day, there was a wonderful parade. It's called the candy parade in Oakbank, and I—unfortunately, many in this Chamber couldn't be there, and I would recommend highly that you come and attend. And, Mr. Speaker, I would even invite you next year. I would share my vehicle with you, but I have to say that I had a better offer this year in my vehicle in the candy parade in Oakbank. It was my daughter and two of her friends, and, you know, I walked alongside the car and they were in the car. And you know, they stole the show and that's just what happens.

But at the candy parade, we drive down Main Street through Oakbank, and somebody turned onto—basically, it's the road going through town—and decided they were going to drive against the parade, speeding, of all things. And I was on the opposite side of the road when I saw the car go by, and an individual actually took it upon himself to flag down the car and explain to them—like, do you understand there's, you know, two, three thousand children on the roadway? What are you thinking? And told them to slow down.

These are the kinds of things that law enforcement, that first responders put up with on a daily basis, and it is just a disgrace that we have to somehow try and legislate intelligence. That somehow we have to legislate what should be normal, something that should be a given, that you don't speed past a serious incident.

Well, I saw it on Saturday and it was very unfortunate. The good news is nobody was hurt, nobody was injured. The parade went on and there were just wonderful moments. I'd like to tell this House it's a great parade. I had the opportunity to meet a lot of individuals, and, you know, situations like this, it's meant for children; it's meant for

families. And the Springfield fire department and paramedics were part of it at the end. They always hold up the end of the parade with their sirens going, and it's just a really exciting time. And I thank them for what they do.

So this piece of legislation, we know, has a few areas, and it's been remarked on by other members. The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), who very eloquently put some comments on the record. So did the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), and I won't go through each and every one of them and rehash those issues. There is room for improvement. However, what troubles us most about this legislation is not the fact that it was presented to this House; the fact that it was presented December 4th, 2012, and then was ignored by the government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we are waiting for members opposite to get up and speak to the legislation.

Now the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), the Minister responsible for Education got up, and that's probably one of the shortest speeches in this House. In fact, she gave a shorter speech to this piece of legislation than she gave answers during question period. That's how short it was and, you know, we should have proper debate from members opposite considering there are 36 of them who are allowed to speak to this, and they should be getting up and speak.

But it's too bad that this bill was brought so late into the session. It should have been called sooner. It's an important piece of legislation. It's important to be up and debating this, and I would encourage members opposite to take the opportunity, to put some words on the record. Perhaps they would like to thank their local law enforcement officials. Perhaps they'd like to thank their first responders, the fire department of their community, as I have, because, you know, often these individuals don't get recognition. They are not given the kind of recognition that they should be getting. And I would encourage members opposite—I would encourage every member of the NDP to take the opportunity to get up and put some comments on the record. I believe that that would be healthy. It would be healthy for debate in this Chamber.

I know that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak)—I'm sure he is more than eager to talk about those first responders who respond to all the sportsplexes in his community. I know he's not there often at those sportsplexes, but at least he could thank the first responders who do show up there.

In fact, he could mention about the Seven Oaks hospital, which I have gotten to know much better in the last few weeks, having spent there 'til 1:30 in the morning with a family member who hurt his foot. So, you know, perhaps the member for Kildonan would like to get up and put some comments on the record. I think that would be healthy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think in the hands across the aisle, in an attempt to allow members of the opposition of the NDP to get up, I will take this opportunity to once more thank all of those who do go out of their way to protect us, put their lives in danger. And this legislation is one of those things that tries to give them some protection, and we appreciate this piece of legislation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain):** I, too, would like to put a few words on the record with regard to Bill 2. And, as was said earlier, it's—we've been following this bill and we knew it was introduced—we know that it was introduced on December 4th, 2012, and very concerned that it has taken this long to get it into second reading, Mr. Speaker.

I know the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen), the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) are and were volunteer firefighters in their communities in their areas, as is my husband Brad a volunteer firefighter. And so I can say with good confidence that it is a very serious job. And it is one that worries me every time the pager goes off, that Brad is off to deal with an emergency. And you just pray that it's—there's no loss of life, but often, more often than not, there's obviously some trauma.

And being an individual who represents a large riding and lives three hours from Winnipeg, I spend a lot of time on the highway and we do see a lot of accidents in our travels. And we, you know, have to keep in mind that we have to be alert at all times, because travelling lots you do become complacent behind the wheel at times, and I believe it's really important that we respect the road and we respect the people on it.

This bill speaks to the safety of emergency and enforcement personnel and that's rather timely, too, because a year and a bit ago, my husband was called on—out on a call on Highway No. 10. And it was at a time—I think it was around 2 in the morning—and I hate those calls. Not because it wakes me up from sleep, but because that's about the time when we

know a lot of my children and other children from Souris may be coming back from Brandon, you know. So, when that pager goes off and it indicates that there's been a collision, which there was that night, two vehicles and extraction required. There was lots of fog. And there were several people in the vehicles. All that type of information weighs really heavy on your heart. And so I did not sleep until Brad came home.

But what that situation does in relation to this bill is—the fog was so intense on Highway 10 that the two vehicles collided without braking. So, if the two vehicles collided head on, and the three people in the vehicles, three of them—one in one vehicle, two in the other—died instantly.

\*(16:20)

But then the issue became how do you control traffic in a fog. So they get on scene, and one of the firefighters had to direct traffic. And this is like already 3, 4, 5 in the morning. They're trying to deal with the accident, and people are being very disrespectful to the firefighters who are working directing traffic because they want to get somewhere. They don't realize that three young lives were lost. But people are very concerned; they want to get from point A to point B.

So I think this legislation will assist. And, as I said, it would have been nice if it would have been moved forward in 2012 because I think some of this would have been useful for the Souris firefighters who were trying to deal with traffic control while dealing with extrication of three individuals.

I know that the individuals that were killed in that accident were young; they were 18, 19 years old, and I think the other was in their 20s. And I know how my husband felt, worried about the fog, worried about additional—an additional incident occurring with people directing traffic; worried that somebody would come around the person that was trying to control the traffic and come up on them as they were taking these young people, these, out of their vehicles.

And what Brad said was most significant about that was that they didn't have anywhere to put these individuals when they took them out of their vehicle. So Souris fire department now has a policy where they carry blankets so that, when these young people were taken from the vehicle, they were actually laying—they were—they will lay on blankets instead of on the pavement, which really bothered my husband.

So I think that whenever you can provide supports internally, like the fire department has done in providing care for these young people who have lost their lives, or whether it be government who's providing safety measures to ensure that the people that are providing that care and support for individuals, is always a good thing.

But I believe that we need to see this implemented sooner rather than later. And I believe that we need to look at the confusion of the different speeds. And I agree with the comments that have been made with regard to the various speed limits, because I think what people want to know is they have to slow down, they have to go within a speed limit and I believe that what we need to look at is a uniform speed limit that will ensure that people are not confused about how fast they can go while passing by an accident.

In the summer of 2010, municipal leaders, through AMM, said it has become the norm for municipal firefighters to be expected to do traffic control at accident scenes. And I agree that that—and I've just shared a story with that—yet they are not always properly trained. And I believe that, if you provide them with the tools, they will get the job done.

Firefighters take a lot of training; they have to spend a lot of time on developing their skills, whether it be on water rescue or on ice rescue. And, you know, unfortunately I believe that Brad has had to rely on those skills in all of those areas.

And I believe that, if you can provide tools to help them keep safe, because there are family members who are going to be waiting at home for a call from the husband to assure them that they are safe, but also to assure you that all can be done has been done for the individuals at the scene.

So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say Bill 2 has a lot of good ideas, probably could be amended in some regard to the confusion with speed limits. But I believe that it's long overdue and I believe this is a bill that needed to be moved forward a year ago.

And on behalf of the Souris firefighters and many of the firefighting clubs or organizations in my constituency and across the province—would respect and support this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to put some words on the record on Bill 2. And I can only echo what a lot of my colleagues have said today, that this bill is very late in coming to the Legislature. This bill could have been here in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010. There's been plenty of opportunity to bring this forward to address the issues that are being addressed in this bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've had some experience on the highway, both as a driver and owner of a trucking business, an owner of a towing business, and I can tell you it's not a good feeling to be called out to an accident with your tow truck. It's not a good feeling to find out when you get there that there's a vehicle in the ditch and it's upside down. There's water in the ditch; I can't get the doors open; and you have to get that vehicle out of there as quickly as you can. Firefighters may not be there. The ambulance people may not be there. The police officers may not be there when you get there. You have to rely on whoever is there to try and slow up traffic. Luckily, on tow trucks, I will say that you have a flashing lights and some of the equipment that's necessary to slow down vehicles, but, at the same time, depending on the road conditions, depending on the weather conditions, these lights may not be visible for more than a hundred yards in a snowstorm, for example.

And so the urgency of getting these vehicles back onto the road or getting so that you can get to the people on the inside is paramount, and if we are looking at just police officers being able to direct traffic, I think we're short-changing the public in Manitoba and we're putting a big onus on the firefighters who, I know, have a lot of training. They have a lot of training for rescue work, but, at the same time, directing traffic is probably not one of the things that they're trained for. They may not be able to get there. The police officers should have the option of having someone that's there put on a jacket, give him a light, if it happens to be dark, but give him the power to direct the traffic until there are back-up people get there to do that.

But, at the same time, Mr. Speaker, what we need to look at as well, we know that accidents are going to happen. Accidents happen for a number of reasons. They happen because someone is driving and they're tired. They happen because the road conditions are bad. And I hate to bring this up at this time, but it's probably the biggest reasons for accidents in rural Manitoba today, is that the roads are deplorable. The roads are deplorable in rural

Manitoba. Many of the PR roads are gravel roads, and they're poorly maintained. And, in many cases, half an inch of rain causes the roads to deteriorate to where you do need to have equipment to pull the vehicles out, or the loads that go over those roads end up making such ruts that cars cannot get through.

And, if the cars don't know that there's a problem—if they don't know that there's a problem, all of a sudden what you have is a car barreling down this road, hits these ruts, and inevitably is flipped, hopefully, that there's no water in a ditch. Hopefully, the occupants have their seat belts on, and they're secured and that no one is hurt. But, at the same time, approaching traffic or traffic that's following these individuals are driving to the speed of the conditions at that time, and all of a sudden you have this happen in front of you. The first thing you want to do is get stopped, get out, and see what you can do to help these individuals that are in the vehicles.

But, Mr. Speaker, that could be the worst thing that you do because, as you get stopped, you're now getting more congestion, more congestion on a road that's not fit to travel. It's not fit to travel because of the lack of maintenance, and I have to say that it seems like that's a habit now with this government, is that they do not do maintenance on rural Manitoba roads, more particularly, the gravel roads. But they don't—they do not do the shoulders either on a lot of paved roads. And where you have these pavements breaking off, breaking off, breaking off, and the shoulder moving away, moving lower and lower, and, all of a sudden, you swerve to miss a deer and drop a wheel over the edge of the road, and you're gone. You're into an accident. In 'bany' places, you don't have to worry about congestion or someone coming down the roads, because the roads are not travelled that much.

\* (16:30)

So we end up creating an—or, there are issues that have been created by the lack of maintenance, by the lack of the government caring about the people that do live out there, that do have to travel on these roads day and night. And many of the people that travel at night, I might point out, are home care workers. These home-care workers travel in all kinds of weather to supply a service that's much needed in rural Manitoba, and we certainly appreciate what they do. But we don't show our appreciation by supplying a road that's fit to drive on in all-weather roads. That is deplorable.

Our seniors that are—and all of our ratepayers, constituents that are being serviced by the home care workers deserve to have roads that you can drive on that would be, at least, only—the only issue would be, perhaps, is if there was a terrible snowstorm that they couldn't see where they were going. But the way it is now, if they swerve to miss a deer or an animal, whatever's on the road, they're in the ditch and probably upside down. And, if it wouldn't be for the seatbelts, probably be fatal accidents happening.

When we see that the timing of bringing this in has been so, so late that we're behind other provinces—so, we talk about the New West Partnership, where Manitoba should become part of the New West Partnership; it should become part of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. And the reason that you would want to do that, one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker—there's many, many economic reasons for that—but one of the reasons that would be very, very important would be if we rationalized and made the rules and regulations in all provinces for this type of thing the same, so that you would know that, if you're approaching an accident in Alberta, you slow down to 40 kilometres. If you have an accident in Saskatchewan or you would come on an accident in Saskatchewan, you slow down to 40 kilometres. If you come upon an accident in Manitoba, you don't know what you're going to slow down to. And in—really, in reality, there's no such thing as a penalty for not slowing down.

We don't know what the penalty is. There's nothing in this bill that would indicate that there's a penalty, and there should be a severe penalty. If you're approaching an accident and you're not slowing down for it, regardless if there's an RCMP officer directing traffic, regardless if there's a fireman to let—that's directing traffic, regardless if it's just an ordinary individual that has stopped to help directing traffic, we don't know what the penalty is for driving by them. That should be standardized. Standardized penalties for across western Canada just make sense. That would be one of the benefits of the New West Partnership.

The New West Partnership would be one avenue of standardizing all of these things that we have, and so this is just causing a lot more, lot more problems. I've heard my colleague talk about black ice, and there's not that many people that are familiar with black ice. And the fact is, you're driving to road conditions, and many of us in rural—many of us rural MLAs drive in different road conditions every day, and I'm sure that the member for Dauphin would

understand that if he was driving back to Dauphin instead of taking a plane all the time. He would understand what the road conditions are and the fact that there are bridges out there with one lane and—but he would be familiar with black ice. At least I think he should be familiar with black ice and understanding that you—you're driving and you hit this black ice and there's no warning. There is no warning. You're moving in a lot of different directions very quickly. But the car behind you is going to hit that same black ice, and the car behind that is going to hit the same black ice. And so then you can quite easily end up in a huge, huge pileup. But, when you do that, each individual is going to try and first look after whoever's in their car, look after their situation, and then they're going to try and help others. But, at the same time, the vehicles that are coming into this particular accident aren't going to be able to brake either. If they can see that there's an accident farther down the road and you know that the speed limit in an accident area is 40k, you're going to slow down to that. And you probably won't end up with any more damage or hurting the people that are there.

One of the other issues is that—and I heard my colleague talking about the Hydro workers and the training that they have. We have heard just recently that there was a car just north of Winnipeg that rolled and hit a hydro pole and the occupants were killed. Sometimes the hydro pole will stand, but sometimes it doesn't stand and the power lines come down. We—our firefighters aren't trained to deal with these power lines; they have to stand back. They don't know when—whether they're still energized or whether they've kicked out a breaker somewhere. But what we do know is that, if you're not slowing down around these, you're going to endanger any of the people that are standing there waiting for Hydro workers to come. Or the Hydro workers are intent on doing their job. They're not watching for traffic; they're intent on dealing with the individuals who are trapped either in the vehicles or on the ground. And, Mr. Speaker, they haven't got time and aren't interested in your car barreling down at them at 100 or 120k. We need to have something in this bill that says it'll either be 60k, it'll be 40k, that you need to slow down to, and that there needs to be a penalty that will enforce that.

There is no penalty at this point in the bill, and I've went through it very carefully. I don't see anything about precautions, the maximum speed or penalty or whether there's two lanes or one lane.

Traffic can easily, on a two-lane or four-lane highway, can easily block the whole highway, or the tow truck may have to block two of the lanes just to get the right angle to get the other vehicle up on its wheels, or the—or they—the paramedics may be using the Jaws of Life. They are not looking at the traffic that's coming at them.

We've seen emergency vehicles pulled over on the side of the road and attending an accident and people blowing by them. Now, if you drive by a school bus, there's a penalty for that, and there's a severe penalty for that if you drive by a school bus with its lights flashing. But right now you can drive by an ambulance with its lights flashing. You can buy a—drive by a fire truck with its lights flashing, and you don't have to slow down, according to this.

But I guess, I have to regress. I have to wonder why it has taken such a long time for Manitoba to address this situation when we know that Ontario and British Columbia enacted their legislation in 2009. Alberta enacted it in 2006, and Saskatchewan, bless them, enacted it in 2004. And yet we don't want to join the western partnership at all. The New West Partnership is something that we don't want to join, and I don't understand why. They've been outthinking us all the way along in this situation.

The government had an opportunity to introduce this type of legislation three years ago in 2010 when they introduced Bill 8 that required vehicles to take precautions when they approached certain vehicles, including tow trucks. And the reason that that bill came in was because there was a young lady here in the city that was operating a tow truck that was killed. That's why the bill came forward at that time. But they didn't introduce it at that time, knowing full well that in '09 and '06 and '04 our neighbouring provinces had already done that. It would make sense to standardize whatever they have done, and I'm sure that their bill is more comprehensive than what's being presented today. And I'm almost wondering if there isn't necessary to have amendments to this bill to bring us into line with our neighbouring provinces.

\* (16:40)

The bill was, indeed, long in coming, but, nonetheless, it has a good intention and to protect emergency service workers. And, Mr. Speaker, there's several ways that it could be improved and I've covered most of these, and I'm sure that my colleagues have other ones that could be brought forward to help make this bill a more comprehensive

bill. But, at the same time, the speed limit needs to be addressed, whether it's 40 or 60.

It's already well-established rule in Manitoba that if a motorist is passing a roadside worker in a construction zone—and in some of the cases is actually a trap—that's what was set up earlier by this government—but, in the meantime, motorists must slow down to 60 kilometres, assuming that they're driving faster than that. It would be easy for drivers to remember that 60 kilometres at an accident would be adequate or 40 kilometres an hour would be adequate. Our emergency service personnel in Manitoba are at the top of the profession. They have some of the best—the best training—and the training is paramount in maintaining safety. Municipal firefighters are often volunteers and not full-time firefighters, but they do take a lot—a lot—of time out of their personal time and sacrifice a lot of their leisure time, their family time to attend to accidents.

And I can attest to the firefighters in my riding: the firefighters in Altona, the firefighters in Letellier, the firefighters in Morris, the firefighters in Emerson and Dominion City, in St. Malo, St. Pierre. They're all on highways and these individuals are on call 24-7. They all have jobs, the same as most people. They're not retired, and so they have to make arrangements for their—where they work in order to get away to attend a fire or attend an accident. Highway 75, there's a lot of calls out there, and it's all volunteer. These individuals take the time out of their jobs or out of their family time to go and take that extra training that's necessary. And I'm not sure that directing traffic is one of the trainings that they take, but, at the same time, the rest of the training they do has saved many, many lives.

What it doesn't—what this bill doesn't address is the imposition of penalties for drivers who don't slow down. There's no penalty, so why do we even talk about the speed, then, if there's no penalty, if there's no way to enforce it? It would be good to know which penalties will be imposed before a campaign begins, like, I would suggest that instead of waiting till after the bill passes and then impose a penalty, let's discuss the penalties in here. We're not opposed to penalties in this bill at all. It's one thing to impose new laws to slow traffic down, but no fines to punish them to break the law is—has—it doesn't work now. People are breaking laws. So, if there are penalties, perhaps it'll give them an opportunity to have a second thought on that.

The government also needs us to propose and impose stricter penalties, but one of the things that they need to do as well is they need to address the underlying issue of many of the reasons for the accidents. And many of the reasons, as I pointed out before and I'll point them out to the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), because he's had that opportunity to fix a lot of the roads in southern Manitoba. He had that opportunity for a number of years and just neglected them. He neglected them; that's all I can say that he has neglected the roads in southern Manitoba to the state where they are today.

And some of the employees, I might say, have—they have caused some issues as well. I can say that Highway 242, for example, highway department was out burning on the side of the road and went away and left a fire unattended, and so now what we have is a huge detour on municipal roads, because the bridge burned. This isn't the first time it's happened, but—and it probably won't be the last. But what we do know is that if they don't burn, they will use dynamite to blow them up, just to inconvenience people. And I'm not so—but they do have a lot of roads that, Mr. Speaker, have bridges out that cause problems.

And I'm getting hooked right now, Mr. Speaker, so, well, with those few words that I've been able to put on the record, I want to thank the members in my community and throughout my community that do volunteer for the firefighters that do volunteer. I have paramedics that live in my community as well that when they're not working as a paramedic are on the fire truck. They're there to make sure or at least to provide an extra service. and they're doing that volunteers. It makes a big difference to the people who are unfortunate enough to have an accident.

So, with those few words, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to recognizing the honourable Government House Leader and other members that may wish to speak to this, I want to advise the House that I've received a notice from the Leader of the Official Opposition and he has delegated his unlimited speaking time on Bill 2, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Respect for the Safety of Emergency and Enforcement Personnel), to the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

The honourable Government House Leader.



**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker—thank you. Thank you. Speaking to this bill, I speak, of course, as—

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to—I should obviously, then, recognize the honourable Minister of Family Services and Labour, if she's speaking to this Bill 2.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't require unlimited time to make my point.

I want to just thank the members who have spoken to this bill.

I speak, of course, as the minister responsible for workplace safety and health, and this bill is part of ongoing efforts from our government to make sure that workplaces are safer for the workers who go to work every day. I think we heard from several members of this House the urgency with which they see this issue, and we've heard some very personal experiences of people who are in their own families that do this kind of work and the kind of hazards that they experience.

And I take to heart some of the criticism from the members opposite that they wish this bill had come forward sooner. Certainly, they have the power to introduce private members' legislation. I don't recall a private members' bill on this issue ever coming forward. But, you know, we can't look backwards; we have to look forwards. And we do have an opportunity, of course, today to treat what the members opposite have said is an urgent public safety issue with the urgency that it deserves, and so I would ask—I don't want to take up too much time—but I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you canvass the House to see if there is leave to continue sitting and not see the clock until this bill is passed to committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to not see the clock at 5 o'clock so that debate can continue on Bill 2?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. I hear no, so leave has been denied.

The honourable member for Steinbach, on Bill 2.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, I tell you I think we have a new definition of urgency in the House. The Government House Leader now defines urgent as letting a bill languish, letting a bill

sit undebated, uncalled for months. For more than six months this bill has sat there—

**An Honourable Member:** Last year.

**Mr. Goertzen:** —since last year. It was a different year that this bill was introduced, Mr. Speaker. I can hardly believe that the Government House Leader, with a straight face, can get up in this House and talk about urgency, talk about how something is quick. Now we've seen what the priorities of the government are.

I've heard the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in the past talk about how you can determine what the urgency of a government is by what they prioritize. But what have they prioritized over the last number of months? A tax grab, that's the only thing that they've been interested in debating is a tax grab. Now yesterday I implored them. I implored them to consider calling other bills, to consider calling different things, not to be so focused on taking money from Manitobans. Yesterday I begged them, Mr. Speaker, to look at something else other than trying to take more money from Manitobans, and they wouldn't do it. You know, they just wouldn't consider it.

For more than a month they are so focused on trying to get more money from Manitobans, and I want to concur with the comments from my colleagues on this side about the incredible work that emergency personnel do. I heard the comments from the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), who talked about how emergency personnel, they run to dangerous situations when the rest of us are running away, and it takes a special kind of person to do that and they need a special kind of protection. We don't disagree with that. You know, we're absolutely in favour of ensuring that whatever we can do to protect these brave men and women, who are out there protecting us, Mr. Speaker, that that happens.

\* (16:50)

**An Honourable Member:** Pass the bill.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Now I hear the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick), she shouts from her seat, and I haven't heard her speak to this bill. But she—how—she shouts from her seat: Pass the bill. Well, I wonder if she went to her Cabinet and to her caucus in the last six months, and said, you know, it's already March, you know, maybe we should bring the Legislature back, because there's a bill that's important, Bill 2, and maybe she identified others. I wonder if she went into her Cabinet and into her caucus and said there

was some urgency then. Did she express that then, and I'll ask any of the ministers opposite. Ministers can stand up and defend the member for Riel and say, oh, sure, she said that there was an urgency. Well, there was no urgency for her in late February when this House was dark, when the chains were on the doors, because the Premier (Mr. Selinger) wouldn't let us sit, Mr. Speaker. There was no urgency in March. There wasn't any urgency in early April.

It's outrageous that this is a government who can say that any of their bills are a priority. And I heard the Premier during question period, stand up today and said, all of the bills that we have are a priority. That's what he said in question period. And I'm glad that the members opposite agree. But where was that urgency? Where was that priority earlier this year, in February or in March? There was no urgency then.

You know, I suspect that the emergency personnel, they would have liked to have seen protection then, but did any of the members go to the media? We did; we did as a party. We said, this House should be sitting. We put our words on the record and said, this House should have been sitting in February, in March. Oh, but not the lazy members of the government opposite. Oh, no, they couldn't be bothered to drag themselves out of bed and come to the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and debate important legislation. You know, we couldn't rustle them out of bed, you know. Come and do the work of the people. Come and do this emergency legislation. Come and look at—you know, there's the disability bill, an important bill I'm sure for many Manitobans. We'd like to see that debated as well. But, no, you know, it sat in its cellophane wrap, I suppose, on the desk. It wasn't there to be debated over the last number of weeks, wasn't called forward for debate.

Oh, no—no—no, we saw through the government's own actions, through their own actions, Mr. Speaker, what was a priority: How do we go to Manitobans and get more money? How do we go to Manitobans and take more of their tax dollars? So I look forward to them going out to emergency personnel and trying to spin to them that this was an emergency for them, that this was a priority bill. We know what their priority has been: taking the money from those emergency personnel.

They spent more time trying to get a bill passed that would take money from emergency personnel and every other Manitoban than trying to get a bill passed that would protect those emergency

personnel. They were more concerned about getting money from the very people who were there to save our lives than they were to try to protect those people who would save our lives. That was their priority. That's what their interest was, Mr. Speaker, when they were sleeping in bed, you know, in February, when they were slumbering during March when they didn't want to work.

I think only—I'll give credit to the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux). He was the only person working. He was blowing up bridges out there, Mr. Speaker. He had his dynamite and his lighting—you know, he was out there, I guess, doing something. It wasn't anything very productive, but, I guess, he was doing something.

But, no, Mr. Speaker, I—the important part of this is this is a government that reveals its priorities, not through its words, because they speak a good game. You know, they talk a good game. They'll talk about priorities and what's important to them. And I think they used a slogan, doing what's best for Manitoba families or something like that. But all they talked about was the tax increase for the last month; only thing that interested them, nothing else was a concern for them.

You know, did they go to the emergency personnel, to our fine police officers, the firefighters, those who are first responders, and say to them, well, we have two choices, we can continually call the tax bill to try to take money from you, or we can call this bill that might protect you when you're out doing your job, and ask them, which do you think is more important?

Maybe that's a question I'll ask at committee whenever this bill gets to committee. You know, maybe I'll say to the—if there's any presenters from the emergency personnel—I'll say, so what would you have considered to be a 'brigger'—bigger priority? Getting money out of your pockets or having this bill passed? Because, when it was actually time for the government to show what its priorities were, there was only one: getting more money, trying to take more cash, Mr. Speaker. You know, that's what this government decided that they wanted to do. You know, and I wonder if the Health Minister, who would be working with some of these first responders and emergency personnel, would have said to them, you know, I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to go to Cabinet and fight for you. I'm going to try to get this bill called. I'm going to try to get it prioritized. You know, surely we can set aside

one day to not to try to get money out of the pockets of these emergency personnel. We can set aside one day to do something to protect them.

But, no, this comes back to a fundamental issue and a fundamental problem we have with how this Legislature works. We cannot continue to have a legislative system that begins at spring session in the middle of April. That simply is not responsible. It's not responsible for Manitobans, it's not responsible for MLAs of this House, all MLAs of this House, and, whether there was controversial legislation or not, it is not responsible to come back that late in the spring and then try to pass 40 to 45 pieces of legislation. The public sometimes comes to us and they say, well, how—you know, when did this bill pass? We didn't realize that there was a mandatory this or a mandatory that. Well, they don't have time often to find out about it, because we're asked to rush through bills.

Now I've heard the minister of—the Government House Leader say in the public record, and I wouldn't want to put things on the public record that are intended to be private; that's not how I operate. But there is—*[interjection]* That's exactly right—there is, I heard her say, that, in fact, it's the opposition who determines when the House closes down, and, you know, we will determine, to some extent, how the proceedings go here.

But she knows full well—she knows full well—that what the government is trying to do, and the game that they're trying to play, is to wait as long as possible to bring the House back in the spring and then hope that other sort of family pressures or different pressures will result in this House closing down. It's an obvious game. Everybody understands the game. I'm glad to see editorials that expressed what this game is by the government and, ultimately, it doesn't serve any of us well.

It doesn't serve them well as a government. It doesn't serve us well as an opposition, but, putting aside partisanship, it doesn't serve the Legislature well. It's not something that's good for the democratic system. Whether or not there are difficult bills to pass or easy bills to pass, it doesn't matter. It's not good for a democratic system to not have a reasonable debate.

And so the minister herself recognizes there's a problem that a bill like this doesn't get called for second reading for six months. And the problem is partially because of the priorities of this government, but it's also because this government didn't bring this House back in a reasonable time, that they weren't willing to come back in a reasonable time. And I can tell them that if they persist in having the legislative session like this, that starts so late, they're going to run into this problem year after year until they, ultimately, are no longer in government. They're going to continue to run in this problem if they continue to bring us back so late in the legislative session.

And so that is my—I won't say warning, that's too strong of a word—but that is my caution to the government, that this is not going to be a one-time thing, where legislation is delayed or that we sit longer into the summer if they continue to call this House back so late, because Manitobans deserve to have a respectful time to have legislation debated. They deserve to be able to hear legislation. They shouldn't be ambushed into coming to committee at the difficult times of the night. It's not the way you deal with a bill. It's not the way you deal with the Legislature, but, ultimately, we as an opposition will have to try to set the example for this government. We will try to show them how to do something respectfully, and we believe this is important legislation. We shame the government for not prioritizing this legislation sooner, for not making it a priority, for not ensuring that it didn't come here before, but we are willing to see this bill go to committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further debate on Bill 2? Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Question before the House is Bill 2, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Respect for the Safety of Emergency and Enforcement Personnel).

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

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