

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 27, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: We'll move on to petitions.

**Amendment to The St. Charles
Country Club Incorporation Act—
Proxy Voting by Club Members**

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

And this is—the background for this petition is as follows:

That the St. Charles Country Club was incorporated by An Act to incorporate St. Charles Country Club, SM 1905, 70, and was continued by The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Act, RSM 1980, 168—or 1990, excuse me, correction—1990, 168.

It is desirable that The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Act be amended to allow club members to vote by proxy for the election of governors and in respect of other matters requiring the membership approval under the act.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To approve the amendments to The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Act to allow for proxy voting by the club members.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 136—*[interjection]* I'd like to ask the honourable member for Emerson, please, if he could read the bottom of the petition as well into the record.

Mr. Graydon: Thank you for the—reminding me, Mr. Speaker.

Respectively submitted on behalf of the St. Charles Country Club by its duly authorized officers this 28th day of April, 2014, signed by M. Gray and M. Lee.

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

**Provincial Sales Tax Increase—
Reversal and Referendum Rights**

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

(2) Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

(3) The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the provincial government broke the law by failing to address the referendum requirement before imposing the PST tax increase on Manitoba families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on increases to the PST.

This petition is signed by C. Ricard, D. Bieber, N. Holmes and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the

PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

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

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is submitted on behalf of S. Cameron, A. Bruce, K. Philyn and many other fine Manitobans.

Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Neurofibromatosis, NF, is a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerves anywhere in the body.

NF also causes complications such as disfigurement, bone deformities, learning disabilities, epilepsy and cancer.

NF is a neurological disorder affecting one in every 3,000 births.

NF affects more than 10,000 Canadians, making it more prevalent than cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Huntington's disease combined.

The Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group, MBNF, is a support group that provides much needed support to individuals and their families who are living with NF.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To proclaim that the month of May of each year is to be known throughout Manitoba as neurofibromatosis, NF, awareness month.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by I. Lamerz, L. Demers, C. Robson and many more concerned Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: There any further petitions?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, committee reports.

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development Second Report

Ms. Nancy Allan (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on May 26, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act/Loi sur la stratégie en matière d'habitation coopérative*
- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Connecting Schools to the Internet)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (branchement à Internet)*
- **Bill (No. 58)** – *The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act/Loi sur le Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology*
- **Bill (No. 63)** – *The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et abolissant le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire*

Committee Membership

- *Ms. ALLAN (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. ALLUM*
- *Hon. Mr. BJORNSON*
- *Mr. CALDWELL*
- *Mr. EWASKO*
- *Mrs. MITCHELSON*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*

- Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mr. WISHART

Your Committee elected Mr. CALDWELL as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings:

- Mrs. ROWAT for Mrs. STEFANSON
- Hon. Mr. KOSTYSHYN for Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act/Loi sur la stratégie en matière d'habitation coopérative*:

Ken Guilford, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Connecting Schools to the Internet)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (branchement à Internet)*:

Ken Guilford, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 58)** – *The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act/Loi sur le Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology*:

Ken Guilford, Private Citizen

Craig Stahlke, Pembina Trails School Division

Your Committee heard the following eight presentations on **Bill (No. 63)** – *The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et abolissant le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire*:

Hugh Grant, University of Winnipeg Faculty Association

Ken Guilford, Private Citizen

Eric Johnstone, University of Winnipeg

Thomas Kucera and Linda Guse (by leave), University of Manitoba Faculty

Bilan Arte, Canadian Federation of Students Manitoba

Zach Fleisher, Private Citizen

Rorie McLeod, University of Winnipeg Students' Associations

Lauren MacLean, Red River College Students' Association

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 58)** – *The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act/Loi sur le Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology*:

Paul Holden, Winnipeg Technical College

Your Committee received the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 63)** – *The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et abolissant le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire*:

David T. Barnard, Council of Presidents of Universities in Manitoba

Laura Rempel, University of Manitoba Graduate Student Association

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act/Loi sur la stratégie en matière d'habitation coopérative*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill with the following amendments:

THAT Clause 4 of the Bill be amended by replacing everything after the principle "Consultation" with the following:

Cooperative Advantage: To promote cooperative housing, it is necessary to profile the advantages of the member and community benefits specific to housing cooperatives, a distinct type of housing.

Diversification: To stimulate the cooperative housing sector, it is necessary to diversify the sector to include a variety of financial and organizational models for cooperative housing, such as

(a) residential housing provided by housing cooperatives on a not for profit basis;

(b) residential housing provided by housing cooperatives on a for profit basis, including on the basis of full, limited or shared equity member participation; and

(c) residential housing provided by housing cooperatives with multiple classes of membership shares and a diverse membership base.

Innovation: To sustain the cooperative housing sector, it is necessary to increase public awareness of

(a) the variety of financial and organizational models for cooperative housing; and

(b) innovative uses of cooperative housing to fulfill housing needs, such as the need for workforce, student or urban housing.

THAT Clause 8 of the Bill be amended by adding "and that it includes information about various types of cooperative housing and information about how to establish and govern housing cooperatives" after "website".

- **Bill (No. 37)** – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Connecting Schools to the Internet)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (branchement à Internet)

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 58)** – The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act/Loi sur le Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 63)** – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et abolissant le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Ms. Allan: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports?

**Standing Committee on
Intergovernmental Affairs
First Report**

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Inter-governmental—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on May 26, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 55)** – The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (réduction de l'exposition aux pesticides)

Committee Membership

- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. FRIESEN
- Mr. GAUDREAU
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mr. MARTIN
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Mr. SARAN
- Ms. WIGHT

Your Committee elected Mr. GAUDREAU as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. MARCELINO as the Vice-Chairperson.

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following 24 presentations on **Bill (No. 55)** – The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (réduction de l'exposition aux pesticides):

Gideon Forman, Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment
Justin Duncan, Ecojustice
Mariah Mailman, CMCM - Concerned Mothers Coalition of Manitoba
Melissa Atkins, Private Citizen
Adrienne Percy, Private Citizen

Brian Chorney, Manitoba Canola Growers Association

Jane Seniw, Private Citizen

Grant Shewfeld, Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association

Josh Brandon, Private Citizen

Steve Rauh, Private Citizen

Amanda Kinden, Green Action Centre

Michelle McNeill, Private Citizen

Samantha Braun, Private Citizen

Sig Laser, Private Citizen

Melinda German, Manitoba Beef Producers

James Battershill, Keystone Agricultural Producers

Ken Guilford, Private Citizen

Delaney Ross-Burtmack, Canadian Association of AGRI Retailers

David Hinton, Landscape Manitoba

Melanie Sourisseau, Private Citizen

Erin Crawford, Canadian Cancer Society, Manitoba Office

Ken Wiebe, Private Citizen

Natalie Reimer Anderson, Private Citizen

Danielle Sanderson, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following 11 written submissions on **Bill (No. 55) – The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (réduction de l'exposition aux pesticides)**:

Doug Dobrowolski, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Lise Smith, Private Citizen

Frank B. Reddick, Turf Logic Inc.

Kathleen Cooper, Canadian Environmental Law Association

Elizabeth Chrumka, Canadian Organic Growers

Mary Robinson, Council of Canadians-Winnipeg Chapter

Tim Gray, Environmental Defence

Doris Grinspun, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario

Jodie Harpe-Lesperance, Private Citizen

Kristina N. Hunter, The Cosmetic Pesticides Working Group of the Manitoba Round Table on Sustainable Development

Anne Lindsey, Private Citizen

Bill Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 55) – The Environment Amendment Act (Reducing Pesticide Exposure)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (réduction de l'exposition aux pesticides)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Gaudreau: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports? Seeing none, tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests I'd like to introduce this afternoon.

In the public gallery we have with us today Carrie and Gwen Watkins from Saskatchewan, who are the guests of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen).

And also in the gallery today we have with us from Interlake Tourism Association Jacques Bourgeois, president; and Gail J. McDonald, manager, who are the guests of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

And also in the public gallery where we have with us today from Cecil Rhodes School, we have 60 grade 6 students under the direction of Danielle Eppert, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today from Greenland School, we have 15 grade 6 and 7 students under the direction of Jason Goossen, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture, Sport and Consumer Protection.

* (13:40)

And also in the public gallery today we have with us from Horizons Learning Centre, we have 12 students under the direction of Mr. Nico Van Kats. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Teachers' Society Education Minister's Meeting

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, last week the Education Minister had a wonderful opportunity to speak to some of Manitoba's leading educators, the people we entrust with the guidance and mentorship of our children, of our young people, and a wonderful opportunity to inspire them, to outline the government's vision, to instill confidence in these people that they were being supported and encouraged in their important responsibilities.

And he did none of these things, and instead he chose to regale them with a fable, a twisted fairy tale, a story about a scary wolf at the door, and the wolf was me. It was me, Mr. Speaker. That was what he told the teachers of Manitoba.

So why is it—why is it—that the Education Minister would choose to put his own narrow, extremely narrow, partisan interests ahead of the best interests of Manitoba's young people? Why?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I'm honoured to get up and speak to the question from the Leader of the Opposition.

I did have the great honour to address the Manitoba Teachers' Society last week, who, by the way, Mr. Speaker, did spend quite a few minutes honouring the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) for her fabulous work on Bill 18.

Mr. Speaker, when I was at the Manitoba Teachers' Society, I simply articulated for the members of that very strong and useful association two alternatives in the world: one on this side of the House that continues to invest in schools, hire teachers, build new gyms, build new science labs, and a different vision on the other side of the House, which is simply to cut, cut, cut and leave students hanging out—

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

Mr. Pallister: Well, it seems to me that that fable has the wolf doing a lot of huffing and puffing, and I notice the minister doing the same thing right now.

The fairy tale that he perpetrated on the people there is one that he continues to repeat, as do his colleagues, and it is nothing more than a fairy tale. I mean, what's next? What's next? The troll under the bridge or Jack and the Beanstalk? I'm equipped to play the giant in that, but that doesn't deal with the problems the education system faces. It doesn't deal with the challenges our educators face in the real world.

And the fact of the matter is that during my past experience in my life I've demonstrated, as has this party, our support for public education in a real way. While, of course, an NDP administration one province over was decimating education and cutting it by 10 per cent under the NDP government in Ontario, here we were actually strengthening the budget in education in our province and keeping teachers at work, a wonderful record.

So I have to ask—I guess I have to ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger) if he'll answer this question: Does he plan on continuing to place his own partisan interests and his own career ahead of the best interests of Manitoba's young people, of our students?

Mr. Allum: As you know, I'm a Ph.D. in history, and it makes me worried when I hear such revisionist history coming from across the floor.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that when the Leader of the Opposition stands behind a record, it—what he means is that he stands behind a record that cut funding to education by 2 per cent in 1993-94, that cut education by 2.6 per cent in '94 and '95, who froze funding to education in '95-96, who cut education in '97-'96-97 by 2 per cent and then froze it again next year. If that's the record that he wants to stand on, I suggest that he might want to rethink his position.

On this side of the House we invest in education. On that side—

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

Mr. Pallister: And on that side of the House they break every promise they make, Mr. Speaker. That's the problem.

Perhaps the Ph.D. is in the history of fairy tales, because that's what he told the teachers last week and that's what his Premier and his colleagues continue to do when it comes to not only education but Hydro employees or nurses or civil servants.

Their whole game plan, of course—and it was outlined to the teachers very clearly—is to frighten people, to frighten Manitoba's students, in fact, so that they may not pursue a career in teaching, and that is disappointing because it's a wonderful career. It's one my mother pursued for 40 years, and I'm proud of that fact and I'm proud of the fact our teachers will stand up for their children in their classroom and elsewhere.

Now, while the member opposite talks about his Ph.D. in fairy tales, perhaps he'd like to tell us the story of Humpty Dumpty, who had a great fall and couldn't be put back together again. Perhaps that's why this government in its fearful approach to dealing with its own civil servants continues to try to frighten them. When it has the opportunity to inspire them, it passes on it and instead pursues frightening—

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

Mr. Allum: You know, the Leader of the Opposition says that he stands with educators and he stands with students, and yet when he had the chance to stand up and vote for antibullying legislation put on the floor by the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), he, along with every member of his caucus, abandoned those children and voted against that legislation. Mr. Speaker, when we invested in public schools by the rate of economic growth this year, he and every member of his caucus voted against it.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we've made class sizes smaller. We've hired more teachers. We've built—

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

Child-Welfare System Recordkeeping Practices

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, during the inquest into the death of Jaylene Redhead, both Justice Allen and the investigators from the Children's Advocate office made repeated comments about missing documents from agencies that made complete investigation difficult.

The Phoenix Sinclair inquiry and several inquests have repeatedly emphasized the need for better records. Mr. Speaker, this is about child safety, and many agency workers testified that better records and access to those records would have improved child safety.

What has this government done to make sure there are no more lost CFS records?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): The priority of the child-welfare system is safety of the children, its No. 1 goal, and in doing that we have continued to support the child-welfare system throughout the province of Manitoba.

We have hired more social workers to provide direct service to children and their families and their community. We've also invested in evaluating the Cúram, the technology system in which will help us continue to keep records and better records. We have, again, implemented many standards that talk about the importance of recordkeeping and the value of it so as we move forward and work with families we understand where they've come from.

I think that it is extremely important that we support the workers every day that are doing a very difficult job to protect Manitoba's children.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, testimony during the inquest into the tragic death of Jaylene Redhead by several social workers at the agency state that if they had better access to what records existed, they would've done a better job helping Nicole Redhead deal with raising a child. The minister has had recommendations from past reports on this issue for many years.

What has she done to find these lost records?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The death of a child breaks all of our hearts. As parents, as grandparents, as members of the province of Manitoba, it is a tragedy.

We need to continue to work to strengthen our system, to learn from these tragedies that have happened. We have had hundreds of recommendations in which we have implemented that have strengthened the system: hiring more staff, improving our standards, making sure that we are providing preventative services within—in the Family Services.

I think that it's important that we continue to work with families, with children and all of our stakeholders as we move forward to support families and strengthen communities.

* (13:50)

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, there is a long list of recommendations from many inquests and from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry focused around poor recordkeeping by some agencies.

There is testimony from one former Awasis Agency worker who, quote, told the court that at the time she left there was a room at the agency filled with file notes and reports stacked on the floor. Good recordkeeping.

Mr. Speaker, this failure puts children at risk. How can Manitobans believe children in the child and family services system are safe when they're obviously faced with this type of mismanagement?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Thousands of Manitoba families reach out to Family Services for family support. It is important that they have confidence in the service that they are being provided.

That's why we've implemented very specific standards about types of care that they are to be receiving, about recordkeeping, about ensuring that we are providing them with a continuum of service, with—always with the important priority of keeping children safe. We have continued to build a system that is stronger and better with all of our community partners.

We do know that we have more work to do, and we're committed to do that work with the front-line workers that every day take on that responsibility of providing support to Manitoba families.

Manitoba Hydro IBEW Tenders

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, we know this government will say anything to get elected, even if they have to lie on the doorsteps of Manitobans. Whether the NDP will keep their promise or does not seem to matter whether the members opposite want to keep those promises.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro: When this government made a commitment to the IBEW to allow them to submit tenders on jobs, did they intend to keep that commitment? I guess not.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): This coming from a member of a political party that said they would not sell the Manitoba Telephone System, and then what did they do? They sold the Manitoba Telephone System, Mr. Speaker. So we don't need to take any lessons from any member opposite when it comes to keeping their word, when it comes to fulfilling commitments.

Our commitment in the last election was to keep Manitoba Hydro in public hands. We're going to do it. You won't.

Preferred Development Plan

Mr. Eichler: This is the same government that gave away the Property Registry, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, they have no credibility on any issue. We are trying to stay on the same thing of being re-elected, and they'll say anything to do so.

Final submissions are being heard by the PUB on the Preferred Development Plan by this government. It's obviously very clear.

I'd like to ask the minister to listen to the experts and the ratepayers of Manitoba. Do they have any intentions of staying with what the experts and the ratepayers of Manitobans are telling them, or are they just going to forge ahead with what their own plan looks like?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, Hydro's Preferred Development Plan is before NFAT. The purpose of NFAT is to look at oppositions, look at alternatives. There were 15 options on the table. They are doing a complete and thorough job of looking at those options and they'll come back with a report.

The only people, Mr. Speaker, in the province who have no other option is members opposite whose plan is not to sell hydro into the export market. Their plan is to stop the work on the projects that are going forward now, to jam those brakes on good, solid and tight.

And what does that lead to, Mr. Speaker? That leads to the kind of rate increases that we've seen in BC and in Alberta and Saskatchewan and Ontario, a lot bigger increases than what we see in Manitoba because our formula in Manitoba works, and you'd throw it out the window.

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

Mr. Eichler: This minister has absolutely no credibility. We're going to listen to those experts. We're going to listen to ratepayers here in the province of Manitoba.

We know that this NDP government has a spending problem. The NDP say that building the major hydro projects is the road to prosperity. In reality, the cost of building Bipole III, the transmission line, down to the US customers be—is being borne by the ratepayers of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, obviously, this minister and every member on that side of the House is misleading the ratepayers of Manitoba.

Will they come clean today and tell us really what this deal is all about, not just enforcing new rates on the back payers of Manitoba and doubling those rates at the cost of their deal they made such a poor choice [*inaudible*] on?

Mr. Struthers: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, he's a big talker when it comes to believing experts, so let's try him out. Let's try the big talkers out across the way.

ALLETE chairman president Al Hodnik said, this international project is the right project at the right time to promote a balanced energy future. There is an expert that disagrees exactly opposite to members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, it should be clear this is from the power engineers also at PUB. It should be clear that there'll be an economic benefit to Manitoba resulting from marketing portions of the proposed Keeyask and Conawapa generation stations, another expert totally, diametrically opposed to what members opposite have said.

Do you believe them?

Mr. Speaker: Just want to caution the honourable Minister of Municipal Government, please place your comments through the Chair. We don't want to personalize the debate here.

Flooding (2014) Flood Report Updates

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to flooding, the Province has three main roles: information, mitigation and compensation. Not surprisingly, the NDP fail on all three fronts.

This past weekend I was in the St. François Xavier area and witnessed seeded crops washed away. I was surprised, to say the least, as the most recent information on the Province's daily flood report showed the flow on the Assiniboine River downstream of the diversion remaining stable at 9,928 cfs, well within operation plan. It turns out the flow will reach as high as 12,000 cfs over the weekend.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, is the latest information from the government is stale-dated from May 16th. I'd like to table from the minister's own website the flood reports—daily flood reports from an hour ago that shows just that.

Can the minister advise why his government has stopped providing timely information to residents along the Assiniboine River?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather interesting that the member opposite, who sits next to the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), is now raising concerns about water flows in an area that's very much dependent on the operation of both the Shellmouth Dam and the Portage Diversion.

Yesterday I did admonish members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps the member for Brandon West might want to talk to the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart). Perhaps these two members may wish to talk, because the question that the member is asking today is, in fact, completely different from what the member for Brandon West was talking about yesterday.

Mr. Martin: Well, I appreciate the minister's very succinct response.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Meyer, who has a vegetable farm in St. François Xavier, showed me farmland and crops that are literally under water. He advised, and I quote: Some crops planted just days ago are now submerged. This could have been avoided with advance notice from government. The silence from the present government is unprecedented, and accountability is very much in play with this situation. End quote.

Can the minister explain where farmers like Mr. Meyer are to get the accurate information they need to ensure that crops aren't washed away days after being planted?

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll provide the member with an update. In fact, more glad—more than glad to offer it to any member opposite, a briefing, as we've done in the past. All they have to do is ask for it. I can make—well, you know, I've provided regular briefings when members opposite have had concerns.

I want to point out—and, again, members opposite seem to be rather confused—today, for example, in the Portage Diversion, there's a flow of 7,680 cfs. That does help protect Assiniboine, Mr. Speaker. The current level of Lake Manitoba, by the way, is 1.8 feet below the state of nature.

Again, members opposite have a very confused view, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know, once again, we'll offer. If they want a briefing, that's fine. If they

want to howl from their seat, that's fine, but our department is managing the water flows to protect all areas of the province.

There have been significant rainfalls this spring. We are dealing with that—

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

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, Has Korcia of KOA Campgrounds showed me dikes that are seeping water and flooding camping lots.

Mr. Korcia's concern is the complete lack of information coming from the government to affected property owners: no news releases, no ministerial statements, no information available online. Apparently, the minister should just give everyone their cellphone number.

The information—the government, from May 4th to 16th, updated the daily flood reports 10 times in 13 days. Then, for some reason, Mr. Speaker, the updates stopped.

Just a few hours ago Mr. Korcia emailed to advise that, quote, things are much worse now, as almost half the campground is under water. Sewage system is plugged with flood waters and most of the power to the sites has been switched off, causing huge losses in revenue. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, where is Mr. Korcia supposed to get accurate information on an updated and timely basis?

* (14:00)

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I want to again point out—in fact, members opposite yesterday were complaining about the fact we pointed out there had been significant rainfall this spring, more than 200 per cent of normal. I know members opposite yesterday criticized our forecasting staff, but they have been doing as best a job as they can under changing circumstances.

I want to point out again, Mr. Speaker, that one of the reasons we're operating the Portage Diversion, which they criticized yesterday, is to provide some relief downstream from Portage. That protects, by the way, not only the people downstream in the Assiniboine valley but also in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I know it wasn't that long ago that the Leader of the Opposition was joking about flooding people in Winnipeg. We care about the people in Winnipeg. We care about the people downstream. We do care about Lake Manitoba, and

we're balancing the operation of our flood protection to minimize impacts on all Manitobans.

Flooding (2011) Compensation Litigation

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Producers downstream of the Shellmouth Dam have been impacted by flooding again this year. Many producers won't get crops in the ground this year. This has happened the last four to five years, and some of this flooding can be attributed to the government's management or mismanagement of the Shellmouth Reservoir.

And producers have not received compensation from artificial flooding back in 2011 and 2012. Some producers have been so frustrated they've actually—seeking compensation through the court system, and we've seen this kind of frustration from Manitobans before.

But why is it that the government is not acting on this and actually forcing Manitobans to seek court action for compensation?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll say one thing. We have for the first time put in place statutory compensation, something that did not exist when members opposite were in government—did not exist.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, in 2011, as we've indicated in responses to numerous questions, we were dealing with a real-time flood situation that continued into 2012. We did put in place the statutory program. Forms have been received. They're being processed.

And I want to just put on the record again, it took an NDP government to provide that statutory compensation, something the Tories never did. They talk about the Shellmouth; they did nothing.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, three years later and not one cheque has been cut.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to table a document for the minister. I know the adjusters are coming out talking to producers in the area. But before they discuss any compensation, producers are being asked to sign a form, and it's an acknowledgement and consent form.

I will read part of the form to you: I understand that by making this application to claim compensation from the Manitoba government under section

12.2 of the act for property damage or economic losses caused by artificial flooding, I am giving up my right to commence or continue any court proceedings in respect of property damage or economic loss.

Mr. Speaker, is this dealing in good faith with producers that have been flooded by this government?

Mr. Ashton: I want to remind the member opposite again, and perhaps there needs to be a bit of a caucus meeting across the way, because, Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Shellmouth Dam provides protection for Manitobans. It also provides significant benefits for water supply, including downstream.

The compensation that is in place under statute is for artificial flooding. When I say artificial flooding, that be a—may be a matter of three or four days in a several-week period. But doesn't matter, if there's any kind of artificial flooding, under the legislation they're able to go for compensation.

Mr. Speaker, I think members opposite will also understand there's other kind of compensation available through agricultural programs.

But all this form says is you can't have it both ways; if you're applying under the act, Mr. Speaker, you can't go to court. You can choose which way to go. When members opposite were in government, there was no choice because there was no compensation.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, there still is no compensation. This minister refuses to meet with those producers in that area.

Mr. Speaker, the tale gets even worse here. The Broadway bullies are at work. As a follow-up—and I'll table another letter—correspondence here with the Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation letterhead.

And it says here: If you filed an intent to claim form in respect of the 2011-12 flooding but have declined to complete the acknowledgement and consent form to you, we would encourage you to seek legal advice and confirm your intention to participate in the program by returning a signed copy within 14 days of this letter.

Mr. Speaker, the Broadway bullies are at it again. Is this any kind of way to do business with producers in this area?

Mr. Ashton: You know, Mr. Speaker, I might take the members opposite's comments a little more seriously if his party and government had done anything to put in place statutory compensation. You know, they howl from their seat, but when they were in government for 11 years they didn't care about the people in the valley.

And I want to put on the record again that members opposite seem to be awful confused, because yesterday the member from Brandon West was criticizing the Shellmouth Dam. The member for Morris (Mr. Martin) is complaining today about what—something else. The member for Portage may have a different view.

Mr. Speaker, that dam has been in place for 40-plus years. It's there to protect Manitobans, to provide a guaranteed water supply. Our staff operates in the best interests of all Manitobans.

We need no lectures from members opposite who didn't do a thing when they were in government for those producers.

Maple Leaf Foods Employment Security

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, the—Manitobans do need protection from this minister. That's who they need protection from.

One thousand, eight hundred full-time, unionized jobs are currently at risk in Manitoba due to more NDP mismanagement. Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon will shut down production one day a month. This will affect over 80 per cent of their workforce. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the impact this will have on families?

The shortage of hogs is a direct result of NDP policies.

What is the government's plan? Do they have a plan, or is it their plan to drive these 1,800 full-time, unionized jobs out of Manitoba?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Let me be very clear to the members opposite. Maple Leaf is a very key component to Manitoba's economy, also to the city of Brandon and to the localized area.

This side of the House continues to talk to Maple Leaf of the importance of Maple Leaf sustaining where they are. The provincial government made financial investments towards the operation of Maple Leaf, and we continue to invest. Whether it's the

business on Lagimodiere as far as their curement of the hams and the bacons, we on this side of the House continue to work with Maple Leaf, and we will continue to work.

Surprisingly, it took so long for the members opposite to pose the question in question period to this point in time. It's quite interesting they only chose to do it now. I thought it would have been a priority question right on the onset of question period.

But we are here to work on behalf of Maple Leaf and all the people that are employed there. We will continue to work—

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

Mr. Helwer: Perhaps the minister has forgotten his attempt to answer the questions from the MLA for Midland when he accused him of fear mongering.

But, indeed, Mr. Speaker, the minister and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) are fond of speaking about jobs that they may create. But these are jobs that we have now, jobs that support families in Brandon and western Manitoba, jobs that help drive our economy, jobs that are held by many who continue to contribute to our diverse culture in Brandon.

Mr. Speaker, the government should help to create an economy that enables a company and its employees to be successful. This NDP government puts up roadblocks.

What is the NDP government's plan? What will they do today to ensure the jobs of those 1,800 workers at Maple Leaf, over 80 per cent of the workforce?

Mr. Kostyshyn: We will continue to work with Maple Leaf to find the—make the plant as strong and sustainable in the future.

We believe the processors have a reliable supply of hogs within the rules that protect the health of Lake Winnipeg. We will continue to take a balanced approach that supports jobs, and this is important to the industry but also protects our lakes and rivers from pollution.

We will continue to work with Maple Leaf and any other hog industry in the province of Manitoba, not only from the processors' but from the producers' perspective. And my minister from Conservation is working with us to find appropriate solution that it's in a balanced approach from the environmental but

also sustaining jobs in the processing at Maple Leaf plant.

Mr. Helwer: Obviously, the minister doesn't get it. It's the hog supply that's the problem.

You know, several government ministers try to say they make tough decisions. Not even close, Mr. Speaker. The tough decisions are being made by Maple Leaf. The tough decisions are being made by those workers and their families. The tough decisions are being—those families—being made by those families not be able to afford their children to play soccer, to go on school trips.

Where is the Minister of Jobs and Economy in those photo opportunities? Mr. Speaker, where is this NDP government's plan for those 1,800 full-time, unionized jobs at Maple Leaf in Brandon?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Being repetitious of my previous answer to his questions, we are continuing to work with Maple Leaf towards a balanced approach towards a processing of the hog industry in the province of Manitoba.

*(14:10)

But let's be clear. We are here to work on two components: provide jobs that's sustaining the Maple Leaf, also for the producers that have been somewhat affected by the COOL regulations in the hog industry, also to the shortage of input costs. Finally the hog producers are able to make some money from the producer perspective.

But let's be very clear. This government is working on a balanced approach so that we have a constant supply of hogs to the plant. But also, we're very conscientious of Save Lake Winnipeg Act that they supported and continue to support. I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, but I'm beginning to question whether they want to jeopardize the environmental chose—act that they—

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

Post-Secondary Education Bill 63 Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, last night at the hearings on Bill 63, a representative of the University of Winnipeg Faculty Association called this NDP government's political takeover of post-secondary education institutions a hideous agenda. Bill 63 opens the door to political interference in all areas of university functioning.

Students expressed concerns about the loss of autonomy for universities, the lack of adequate regulation of tuition fees and the lack of student representation on the minister's advisory council.

I ask the minister: Will he either withdraw Bill 63 or make the badly needed amendments to fix the bill?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I was pleased to be at committee last night to listen to the views of faculty and student representatives and others concerned with the post-secondary education system in Manitoba.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, our calling card as a government since we were first elected was to provide a quality, accessible and affordable education for our students. Our objective in rolling COPSE into the department was simply to streamline the system in order that we can have more effective decision making.

We want to keep our education system affordable, and we'll continue to consult with faculty, with students and with the institutions to make sure that we continue to provide a quality education for all of our students here in Manitoba.

Advisory Council Student Representatives

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the minister listened, but he didn't hear.

We know students were not consulted in the creation of Bill 63. Sadly, this is the same problem they have consistently had with the current way the Council on Post-Secondary Education has operated under this NDP government: no student representation.

Last night, the minister stated that students could possibly be represented on his new advisory council, but he provided no commitment as to how many or how they would be selected or even if they would be on the council.

I ask the Minister of Education: Will he commit to having students on the council, and how many student representatives will sit on the advisory council, and how will they be selected?

Mr. Allum: As I said in my first question, our commitment is to provide a quality, accessible and affordable education for Manitoba's post-secondary institutions. That's why we have among the highest funding to colleges and universities in Canada,

Mr. Speaker, and that's why we have among the lowest tuition rates for colleges and universities as well.

On the current Council on Post-Secondary Education board, Mr. Speaker, there is no student representation, there is no faculty representation, there is no representation from each of the institutions, from business or from anybody else. The new advisory committee contemplated in the new legislation going forward will include all of those stakeholders so that we can continue to build a quality, accessible, affordable education for every student here in Manitoba.

Government Intention

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, last night, the president of the University of Manitoba provided a written submission on Bill 63. He called attention to the fact that the government, in this bill, is renegeing on its legislated commitment of two years ago to give a three-year budgetary planning horizon to universities.

Last year, the NDP abandoned good management practices by not following through on their first three-year funding commitment of 2012, and now the minister is changing directions again.

I ask the minister: Why is he avoiding consistent planning and choosing instead, in Bill 63, to treat post-secondary education institutions like Ping-Pong balls?

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, in fact, we have a strong, collaborative, co-operative partnership with each of our post-secondary institutions.

Prior to this legislation being drafted, I talked to the presidents of the universities. We talked to the VP academics. We talked to faculty associations. We talked to students about this. We talked to labour members. We'll continue to consult with each of those stakeholders in order to ensure that we provide a quality, accessible, affordable education.

But, really, if the member was listening closely last night, each member who came, each person who came to that committee said, as a matter of fact, that they trust this government with post-secondary education. Their main concern was the leader of the Liberal—or former leader of the Liberal Party and, fact of the matter, the Leader of the Opposition. There was no trust there at all.

Skill Build Shops Funding Announcement

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, on our side of the House we want the children of Manitoba to have the best opportunities while they are in school, unlike the vision of the Leader of the Opposition who cut over 700 teachers and closed schools and who, moments ago, sat here clapping in this House that he voted against the funding cuts that our government is giving education.

We know that skilled training is an important piece of the puzzle for our students to get job-ready skills they need while they are still in high school.

Today the Premier (Mr. Selinger), the Minister of Education, the Minister of Labour and the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) all were at Concordia—at Kildonan-East Collegiate to announce an exciting new fund to give more opportunities to our students to get training right in high school.

Can the Minister of Education please inform the House of these wonderful announcements?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I thank the member from St. Norbert for the question. He's a skilled tradesman, after all, in his own right.

Today I had the great fortune of being at Kildonan-East once again with the Premier, the Minister of Labour and the member for Concordia to announce the brand new, \$30-million Skill Build shops fund to build and expand high school training shops across Manitoba. This means that students will have access to state-of-the-art facilities and equipment while earning credit in high school toward their certified apprenticeship.

We want our kids to have every success, and by ensuring that they get job-ready skills while in school, we can get them on a bright path for a good life and a great job right here in Manitoba.

Lake Manitoba Operating Range Levels

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, the operating range of Lake Manitoba levels is supposed to be between 810.5 and 812.5. Lake Manitoba operating level is presently at 813, yet the minister said yesterday that Lake Manitoba is well within normal operating range.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: Why the discrepancy?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): Well, Mr. Speaker, I pointed out yesterday and I'll point it out again today, and I put this on the record, that we are currently at 813.1, to be exact. The flow through the Portage Diversion is 7,660 cfs; that's actually significantly below the outlet from Fairford. I point out that the Fairford has been operating full blast now for basically the last four years. And actually, just to indicate, it's not only below flood level, but Lake Manitoba is currently 1.8 feet below the state of nature.

So as we have dealt with a very wet spring, more than 200 per cent of normal moisture in various areas of the province, we're balancing all the needs, including protecting people on the Assiniboine, including protecting people in Winnipeg, and managing the flows into Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin accordingly.

Outlet Timeline

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, the minister went on to blow about the emergency channel from Lake St. Martin and the proposed outlet for Lake Manitoba. The channel is not in use, hasn't been for two years. The outlet is promised sometime between seven years and infinity.

What confidence can ranchers, farmers, First Nations and property owners have in this NDP government keeping their promises?

Mr. Ashton: First of all, Mr. Speaker, in fact, following the major flood in 2011, the—both the last two years, we have positioned equipment to operate the emergency outlet if needed, point No. 1.

Point No. 2, it has to be above flood stage before we can get the approvals from the federal government that did work with us co-operatively to allow that to happen in 2011.

*(14:20)

Point No. 3, and this is the most important point, we have put in place not only the plans to put that there, both the emergency outlet for Lake St. Martin and for Lake Manitoba, our budget has put in place the revenue.

I'd note that members opposite talk about Lake Manitoba, they talk about Lake St. Martin, but when they had the chance, they voted against the budget that will protect the people around both those lakes.

Flood Victims (2011)

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, Lake Manitoba flood levels are dangerously high. Farmers and ranchers can't access the crop insurance they need, 1,800 people out of their homes for more than three years. Broken promises from a former minister of Agriculture, empty promises from the NDP government.

The victims of the 2011 Lake Manitoba flood want to know: When will the hypocrisy end?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the only hypocrisy here is a member of the Conservative Party getting up and talk about Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba when they voted against the mitigation, the \$250 million that's going to solve the problems for those communities.

And I want to put on the record that we put in place more than \$120 million of compensation in Lake Manitoba during the 2011-2012 flood. We built the emergency outlet in a matter of weeks.

And unlike members opposite, we don't get up on one time in question period and criticize the Portage Diversion and putting people in the Assiniboine valley and Winnipeg at risk, and then to get up at the end of the question period, talk about Lake Manitoba.

We're there for all Manitobans, including putting in mitigation for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. They voted against it.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It's now time for members' statements.

YWCA Women of Distinction Award

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): An accomplished engineer, a popular radio host and a world-renowned ballet dancer were among the 13 women honoured with the YM-YW Women of the Distinction Award on May 7th, 2014. I had the wonderful privilege of attending this event, along with many of my colleagues from both sides of the House.

The Women of Distinction awards were created by the Winnipeg YWCA in 1977 to honour the contributions and achievements of women and girls. The awards are selected on a nomination basis and

recognize women who have made a significant difference in the lives of others.

This special occasion is an excellent reminder of women's diversity within this province. This year more than 50 amazing women were nominated in 12 different categories and came from backgrounds in commerce, science, engineering, the civil service, community groups and educational institutions.

All of the nominees demonstrated leadership, determination and creativity in breaking down barriers and challenges faced by women and girls in Manitoba, making it very difficult for the selection committee to decide on just one woman of distinction in each category.

I would like to thank Nancy Chippendale, the chair of the Women of Distinction Awards celebration, the steering committee and the many staff and volunteers who put in countless hours to ensure that this event would be a night to remember.

I would also like to thank the YM-YWCA which has hosted and co-ordinated the Women of Distinction Awards annually for the past 37 years. On a daily basis, the Y continues to provide programming and support to families and children in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would also ask leave to table this year's recipients' names so that they may be preserved in the public record. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit the tabling of the names as mentioned by the honourable member for Charleswood? *[Agreed]*

Hannah Taylor, Gerrie Hammond Memorial Award of Promise; Karen Williams, Wellness, Healthy Living and Recreation; Jan Sanderson, Leadership and Management; Patti Caplette, Arts; Dr. Zahra Moussavi, Science, Technology and the Environment; Rhianna Holter-Ferguson, Prairie Award of Promise; Prairie Yogi: Monique Pantel and Rachele Taylor, Circle of Inspiration; Joan Hibbert, Eira "Babs" Friesen Lifetime Achievement Award; Ruth Livingston, Culture; Sheila Billingham, Education, Training and Mentorship; Akosua Bonsu, Young Woman of Distinction; Colleen Allan, Voluntarism, Advocacy and Community Enhancement; Chrissy Troy, Public Awareness and Communications.

Now, further members' statements.

Pride Winnipeg—Pride of the Prairies

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): This week Manitobans are celebrating diversity, equality and LGBTTTQ rights at Pride Winnipeg, Pride of the Prairies.

Pride Winnipeg has been celebrated annually since 1987, when 250 brave individuals marched for the freedom to love and against the oppressive and homophobic culture of the day. Twenty-seven years later, Pride Winnipeg welcomes over 30,000 people to its 10-day festival filled with confidence, music, laughter, dance, optimism and activism. This year for the first time, the Pride Forks Festival will be celebrated over two days.

This year's theme, Without Borders, reminds us that Pride is a boundless ideal that permeates all cultures, all countries and lies deep within us all. In a global sense, it means justice and equality for all the world's citizens, and in a personal sense, it is the freedom to self-expression without obstruction.

The parade Grand Marshal, Hamed, embodies the spirit of the Without Borders theme. Four years ago Hamed was forced to leave his home in Iran to avoid being executed. His only crime was being gay. Hamed came to Manitoba as a refugee and two years later he has own apartment, a career and new friends.

His story is a vivid reminder of the horrific treatment that LGBTTTQ individuals still face in many parts of the world. It reminds us that we must continue to lead the fight for LGBTTTQ rights, spreading the pride movement and a vision of equality for all across the globe.

I encourage all Manitobans to join Pride Winnipeg at events this week. This is a celebration for the LGBTTTQ community and all of their allies regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity or religion. Pride Winnipeg truly has no borders.

I'd like to thank Pride Winnipeg president, Jonathan Niemczak, parade and rally director, Ryan Zacharias, and all the dedicated Pride board members, also the event sponsors and the hundreds of volunteers who helped make this year the biggest and most fabulous Winnipeg Pride festival ever.

Happy Pride, Manitoba.

Jean Borchardt

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, volunteers are the heart of community organizations, and today I would like to recognize one of

Neepawa's best, Jean Borchardt. Jean Borchardt is a committed community volunteer. She's been volunteering in the town of Neepawa for the past 30 years.

On April 17th, 2014, Jean was the recipient of the Paul Harris award by the Rotary Club of Neepawa for volunteerism. The Paul Harris award is awarded to individuals who meet high professional and personal standards.

Jean's involvement in community well-being has led her to wear many hats within the town of Neepawa. Jean has been president and vice-president of Neepawa hospital auxiliary and was the one that introduced the idea of a gift cart at the Neepawa hospital. She organized and participated in this for 20 years until it came to an end in the fall of 2013.

Jean has been involved in her church's Lutheran Women's Missionary League, which supports mission outreach and personal spiritual development.

Jean is a member of the board of governors that oversees the operation of the Neepawa access television station, which is a local non-profit organization licensed by the CRTC. Their mission is to aim to train youth and adults in the skills necessary for design, production and broadcast of television programming. They promote ongoing education within the community and provide community information. Along with being a board member, Jean spends many hours in their fundraising initiatives.

Another one of Jean's passions has been to be involved with the Heart and Stroke Foundation. She has a daughter who suffered a stroke a few years back. Jean became involved in the door-to-door campaigns and in the Big Bike ride. She has raised thousands of dollars for this worthwhile organization over the past many years.

On receiving her award from the Rotary Club, Jean expressed her thanks to the community: The community is behind me in every endeavour. The Neepawa community deserves recognition of their wonderful generosity.

Jean ended her acceptance speech saying she would also like to share this award and gave thanks to her husband Reverend Al Borchardt for his support, help and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize Jean Borchardt for all her community

involvement and the tireless hours she dedicates to supporting a variety of community groups.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Unlocked: The Stories of the Interlake
Traveling Trunk Exhibit**

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's Interlake has a—Interlake region has a rich history. Many communities have called this place home. From the First Nations to European settlers to people of the world, diverse communities have been part of building our province. This rich heritage will be the focus of Unlocked: The Stories of the Interlake Travelling Trunk Exhibit.

Mr. Speaker, this trunk exhibit is made up of 10 stories, one from each of the participating museums, and are presented in custom-built trunks that will showcase and protect the historical artifacts that bring each story to life. The exhibit tells fascinating stories of our past, many not yet publicly heard. Visitors can immerse themselves in a variety of tales, ranging from the struggles of the early pioneers to the devastations of prairie firestorms to bank robberies to the life of a new doctor serving communities in the early days of settlement.

This exhibit will travel for two and a half years to hosting museums all over the Interlake. Exhibit visitors will receive a passport that they can get stamped at each participating museum they visit, which they can then use to enter into an annual draw. I invite everyone to take advantage of this unique Interlake travelling trunk exhibit and come and discover more about our past.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I received my first passport stamp at the Arborg exhibit. There I learned about the region's history dating back to the early 1900s when settlers moved onto the land. It gave a first-hand look into the challenges and triumphs of these early pioneers.

* (14:30)

I would like to thank Travel Manitoba CEO Colin Ferguson; Jacques Bourgeois, president of the Interlake Tourism Association; Gail J. McDonald, manager of the Interlake Tourism Association; and the rest of the ITA for putting on such a spectacular learning experience.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Neurofibromatosis

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Neurofibromatosis, or NF, is a debilitating illness that affects many of our friends, neighbours and family members in Manitoba. There is no cure for this illness and it is—it can seriously disable those who are afflicted.

One of the biggest hindrances to finding a cure, management and coping with this illness is the lack of awareness of its existence. Currently in Manitoba, an organization by the name of the Manitoba Neurofibromatosis Support Group operates and tries to spread awareness of this illness as well as provide support and information for members, families, health-care professionals and various other organizations.

Understanding and awareness is key when it comes to treating and supporting individuals and families who live with the effects of neurofibromatosis and their quest to live lives freed of physical and emotional pain caused by NF. It is because of this, Mr. Speaker, that I rise today to encourage members of this House to support Bill 214, which will hopefully be debated this week in the Legislature.

Bill 214 intends to proclaim the month of May of each year as an official—neurofibromatosis month in Manitoba. The first step towards awareness is the concerted effort of education, and that is exactly what we hope to do through Bill 214. So we encourage all members within this House to heed the partisanship that often dominates this Legislature and support this bill that is truly a bipartisan issue. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances? Seeing no grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Monday, June 2nd, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act; Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act; Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts); Bill 54, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Time Lines for Labour Board

Decisions and Hearings); and Bill 65, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Human Resources will meet on Monday, June the 2nd, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act; Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act; Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts); Bill 54, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Time Lines for Labour Board Decisions and Hearings); and Bill 65, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act.

Mr. Swan: On further House business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, June 2, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act; Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution); Bill 56, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Bill 61, The Peatlands Stewardship and Related Amendments Act; and Bill 68, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Critical Incident Reporting).

Mr. Speaker: It has also been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, June the 2nd, 2014, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act; Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution); Bill 56, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Bill 61, The Peatlands Stewardship and Related Amendments Act; and Bill 68, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Critical Incident Reporting).

Mr. Swan: Mr. Speaker, could you please call concurrence this afternoon.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

The Acting Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has before it for consideration the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions

relating the Estimates of Expenditure for fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

On May 26, 2014, the official House—the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for concurrent questioning in the debate of this motion: Health; Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Education Advanced Learning; Municipal Government.

Wouldn't you know it, the floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Chair, I had got a phone call from somebody from west Winnipeg who was having difficulty finding a physician. And this man called the doctor's line, the one that is supposed to be available to help people find a doctor, indicated he phoned several times and left messages and never had a return call.

Can the minister indicate how that line is normally handled? Would they not be calling back to people? Is that not the protocol?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I thank the member for bringing this to my attention.

Absolutely, people should be getting a call back as soon as possible. We certainly want to make sure that they're getting a timely answer.

I wonder if perhaps the member would be care enough—kind enough to share the information with me or my office so that we can look into it, because we certainly want people to get called back in a timely manner.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, actually, this gentleman did call the minister's office and, apparently, the reception received from the minister's office was a tone of—and this is what he said, quote, in quotes, you're wasting my time. So that was the feeling that this man got when he phoned the minister's office, spoke to somebody. It sounded like it might have been a political staff person in her office, and so he was quite upset. He felt that there should be a better service provided and so he did actually call the minister's office.

On another question then—and I guess I would appreciate it if she would look into that. Certainly, there are a number of people looking for physicians and it—hopefully, that line would be working efficiently.

The other question I had—and, again, this was from another person that called in to me, and it was something she was very concerned about. Her daughter was in hospital and the daughter saw the nurses taping the floor around her bed, and the patient asked, are you putting the tape there because of the person coming into the next bed having bedbugs?

* (14:40)

Can the minister indicate what would normally happen if a patient is in the hospital? Would another patient that they know to have bedbugs be actually put into a room with another patient, or would a patient coming in with bedbugs be not put into isolation?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, two questions in there—let me answer the first one.

The situation as presented by the member is absolutely not acceptable for someone looking for help through my office, and I would again ask if she could please give me the information and the person's name so that I can look into it. Certainly, want to make sure that people good care—get good care when they call either the family doctor line or call my office, most certainly, and as presented, of course, that would not be acceptable, so I would like to be able to look into that.

I would have to get back to the member on procedure and protocol in the various regions in the case of bedbugs. I'm not sure what their actual policy is in each, whether it's by region or by hospital, and if the member could be patient, I could get back to her with that information.

Mrs. Driedger: That particular patient did ask the nurses to not allow the patient with bedbugs to be put into the same room but, instead, what the mother indicated to me was that instead, the roommate became a, as the mother put it, a male, mentally challenged person, that was put into this same room with her 30-some-year-old daughter.

Now, I do recall, a number of years ago, the former minister of Health was being asked a question in here about male and female patients being forced to share rooms in hospitals now, and the minister of the day indicated that if we can put a man on the moon, then we should be able to ensure that we can fix the problem of having male patients having to be in rooms with female patients.

Can the minister indicate what the policy is today about whether or not male patients and female patients are having to share the same room?

Ms. Selby: Certainly, it is not ideal when we have members of the opposite sex sharing a room, and I know that that, in every endeavour, is made to allow people to—of the same sex to be sharing a room and not to have to do that.

I understand that from time to time, depending on patient flow and urgent need of bed, it occasionally does happen. I know it's not comfortable for people, certainly. I would have to get the member more details on how those decisions are made, exactly what the criteria are in order to make that decision, but I know that it is everyone's preference and certainly it is certainly what we strive for is to make sure that people of only the same sex are sharing a room.

Mrs. Driedger: I would be interested in whether or not there is a specific policy on that. I know from a personal experience, my 99-year-old mother-in-law was in a room for several days with a male patient. If you walk through hospitals, you'll find it's actually quite common, and I would be very interested in what the policies are in the hospitals or if there is a certain perspective that the government has.

Certainly, years ago, that was not a common occurrence at all, except for intensive cares or step-down units or special rooms like that. That was very uncommon to have, you know, men and women having to share a room. But if there is a bed problem now and not enough beds, and it does beg the question, because it is happening far more, maybe, than what the minister realizes. I would be very interested in knowing what the specific policy is and, whatever the policy is, just an explanation behind it.

Ms. Selby: Yes, I'd be happy to provide that.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister tell us why Manitoba doesn't have a dedicated stroke unit? I still find that really troubling. I find it disconcerting that we are the only province in Canada not to have it, and there are such good reasons for having a stroke—a dedicated stroke unit in terms of the type of care, its effect on morbidities and mortality. It seems to have very, very significant value to it, and yet we can't seem to get one in place in Manitoba, and we are the only province not to have a dedicated stroke unit. We know that it could save lives, and I just—I don't understand what is the holdup in Manitoba that wouldn't allow this to happen?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, certainly we do know that other provinces have had success with stroke centres. It's something that we're investigating. Right now we are continuing our work with our regional health authorities and a regional stroke co-ordinator to develop better ways to make sure that patients who do suffer a stroke receive the right stroke care at the right time and in the right location, keeping in mind that we want to make sure that we provide service to all of Manitoba, not just one particular area.

Certainly know that that time right after stroke is most critical. Winnipeg is known as being recognized as having the best door-to-needle time in the country—I know the member understands what that means. The national average is 74 minutes; the recommended time is 60 minutes, and Health Sciences Centre has a time of 15 minutes, which is really something quite remarkable and just goes to show the good work of people on the ground and how well they've co-ordinated that.

We've also brought a few resources together to help stroke patients get the care they need. We've launched the integrated stroke project, which means that anyone who has a symptom of a stroke is going to Health Sciences, St. Boniface, Brandon General Hospital, where they can get a CT scan which is, of course, important for doctors to determine if it's being caused by a clot, if they can quickly treat it with the clot-busting drug, as they refer to it.

We've also seen, I would say, great thanks to the fact that we are the first province to have a Healthy Living Minister, that we've seen the number of people who have a stroke in Manitoba has decreased over the last decade by 25 per cent with many less Manitobans suffering stroke. But, of course, that still means we do have more work to do.

December 2011 we launched the Manitoba Stroke Strategy that will help us to prevent disability and, of course, improve the quality of life of Manitobans after a stroke. It's a five-year plan that focuses on primary care, innovation, wrap-around rehabilitation, and, of course, rapid access.

So, as I said, it is something that we are investigating, but I do want to just draw attention to the good work of the people in our health-care community that have got us that rapid door-to-needle time, the best in the country, and we'll keep working to make sure that we're providing the best support afterwards as well.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate whether there are active discussions actually going on about creating a dedicated stroke unit?

* (14:50)

Ms. Selby: As I said, there is active discussion in all areas of stroke care in terms of are we doing the best we can to help people, both making sure that they have quick access and also to make sure that they have that wraparound service afterward to better improve the quality of life to prevent disability. As I said, we are investigating stroke units and whether this is something in the direction that would be the best way to go in Manitoba.

But, of course, we also, in 2005, the WRHA launched the home-care program, Community Stroke Care Service, which helps people maximize their recovery and independence through things like case co-ordination between hospital and home, home-care support for those who need it and in-home rehabilitation for all discharged patients, and that would include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech-language pathology.

So I can tell the member that, as I said earlier, absolutely it's something that we are investigating, and we are always speaking with our experts on what is the best thing that we can be doing to both ideally prevent stroke, and we've done quite well on that, but we need to do more, as well as to make sure people have access to timely care. We know that that's the most important part after a stroke, but, of course, making sure that people have the support they need after, in terms of rehabilitation as well, and what is the best way we can do this.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, the minister isn't answering the question specifically. And she indicates that there are discussions going on about if this is the best way to go in Manitoba. Well, it is the best way to go. Every other province in Canada has already determined that, and we are the only province being left in the dust on this issue. So there shouldn't be any discussion as to if this is the best way to go. It is the best way to go. And the minister doesn't seem to want to answer the question or perhaps doesn't know, but I would urge that the research is certainly indicative of the value of this. There should be no question about that. It's just a matter of some leadership to make it happen.

On another issue, then, where Manitoba is left in the dust, is around the issue of digital mammography machines. And my question to the minister, again:

Manitoba just doesn't seem to be keeping up with other provinces. Is there a goal in Manitoba to bring in digital mammography machines, even one?

Ms. Selby: Certainly, our government is committed to making that cancer-patient journey easier for families. It is why we made the cancer-patient journey commitment to see that patients will have suspicion of cancer testing, diagnosis and a treatment plan in 30 days or less. Thirty days is still a long time if it's you or a family member going through it, but we know that it does help to speed up that journey.

We do know, also, according to the Canadian Cancer Society and the Public Health Agency of Canada, that our survival rate for cancer has increased nearly 10 per cent since the 1990s, but we know that we still have more work to do on that. We are committed to a sustainable transition to digital mammography that minimizes service interruptions to patients. It is taking longer than first anticipated for the—for that first digital machine to be put in place. We did think that that would be done by last year. I can tell the member that I'm disappointed that that didn't happen. And there is, of course, always possibility of complications and IT difficulties with a big change like this, and I'm trying to be patient and understanding of that. But I have asked the department to make sure that the first machines are in place by this time next year.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you. I certainly do look forward to that happening in Manitoba. I find that, certainly, having the reassurances for women who are going through the fright of breast cancer, you want to be able to know that you are, you know, being examined by the most modern technology that there is.

The minister also talks a bit about the cancer journey, and I know likes to indicate often when she speaks that they've made great strides. Sadly, there are some instances—and the minister could very well be aware of one right now because those emails have also been coming to my office—about women that have had lung cancer that have fallen through the cracks of diagnosis and, in fact, both women did die.

So I guess I would like to ask the minister: In terms of diagnoses that are being missed in the field, is there any discussion at any medical level perhaps about lung cancer in women and ensuring that we don't have women falling through the cracks?

Ms. Selby: Certainly, we don't want to hear of any family who's suffered a tragedy of a cancer diagnosis

that is—that has not been able to be successful. We're certainly aware of the cases that the member is speaking about. It is very difficult. Our hearts go out to the families, the loved ones of these particular women and, of course, we'll be inquiring as to what happened and how that can be prevented. Certainly, we don't want to see that and certainly no one working in our system does either.

Before I address that second question, I just wanted to address the first question that the member had. She was talking about breast cancer. We were discussing the digital mammography, and I do want to just make people aware that, well, certainly, we want to see transitions in digital mammography, absolutely. I expected that to be in place by next year.

I do want to say that there has been incredibly important work done by CancerCare in Manitoba. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, our breast cancer survivor rate is up from 79 per cent to 85 per cent. I'd like to see that number get to 100, but certainly know that people in our system are working very hard.

And I also want to be clear that certainly women want to know after they get a mammogram that they're going to get the results as quickly as possible. You want to know if you do have cancer, that's although difficult and scary, people want to know that answer, and Manitoba, of course, leads the nation in ensuring that women get their results fast. We have the—89 per cent of women in Manitoba receive their results for mammogram within the targeted time, which is the best in Canada. I think we can still do better, but I do want to be very clear that until we have digital mammography women are still getting their test results. And we have also invested in advanced diagnostic machinery that helps determine the best therapy for breast cancer patients. It speeds up the treatment and, of course, helps to shorten that cancer-patient journey.

* (15:00)

Certainly, as I said, in terms of whether it be lung cancer or whether it be any other kind of cancer, we are certainly committed to doing what we can to speed up the journey and to make—to see that people get the treatment that they need. We have brought in a plan that is on the recommendations of the Canadian Cancer Society. We committed \$19.5 million to fully cover the cost of cancer treatments and support drugs for patients to make all 16 of the province's rural chemotherapy locations full

CancerCare hubs with cancer patient advocates that will help people with the scheduling of appointments and co-ordinating, particularly for rural families.

But more importantly to the member's specific question, we've also are providing better and faster cancer screening by hiring eight more pathologists, more cancer testing co-ordinators and, of course, enhancing supports for Manitobans who want to quit smoking, which I think is also an important part of it.

Certainly, we are in the midst of developing a rapid diagnostic network for cancer patients to better link and to better speed up diagnostic imaging and pathology. We are also—have announced 500 additional chemotherapy treatments will be conducted every year by nurses who have agreed to work on statutory holidays. And, of course, we've opened the urgent cancer clinic at the Health Sciences Centre for people who may be undergoing treatment and have a difficulty come up and prevents them from having to work—having to sit in a regular ER where they might be exposed to other viruses and germs and that sort of thing.

So certainly appreciate the member bringing this to the attention of the House and to rest assure that we are looking into what happened and how that can be prevented in the future.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate why it's taking so long for STARS to be fully functioning?

Ms. Selby: We are certainly eager to see STARS back up to full service. We certainly know the important service that it provides, particularly in rural Manitoba where STARS is really front-line service for people and, particularly, even more so as we get into cottage season and we know that the numbers of people in rural Manitoba increase during this time.

We are right now following the direction of the Clinical Oversight Panel under the direction of Dr. Brian Postl. Dr. Postl has said publicly recently that he thinks that they are close to being able to go up to more service, and we look forward to that and I will wait for his direction. Dr. Postl and the experts around the Clinical Oversight Panel will guide us up to full service again, and I think that's important and we eagerly await that, but, of course, safety is our top priority.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate whether or not the Clinical Oversight Panel basically had to start from square one as they started to look at criteria for STARS flying and the types of flights and the

decisions that are made? Was it an actual—the oversight panel having to start at square one? Is that where things were at?

Ms. Selby: I certainly can tell the member that the Clinical Oversight Panel was looking at all the recommendations of the Wheeler report and addressing concerns that were raised there. If the member's looking for a breakdown of everything, I can tell her that they were looking at specific concerns that were raised in that report, if they were looking at critical incident concerns that have been raised and, of course, looking at it at the whole picture of how to bring it back into full service, which would include everything from looking at dispatch to making sure that people working with STARS are getting the ongoing training that they need in order to make sure they keep up that critical-care skills that they have.

Mrs. Driedger: When the government entered into the contract with STARS, was the original groundwork for bringing STARS into Manitoba so poorly done by the government that STARS—that problems were created because of the poor groundwork and the poor decisions made by government?

Is that why the clinical oversight committee is in a position now of taking so long because they've got so much to address?

Ms. Selby: We followed the advice of our medical professionals. The clinical oversight committee is made up of experts in the field under the leadership of Dr. Brian Postl. And, when he gives us advice, we think it's important to listen to it, and we will follow his advice when he feels that—issues have been addressed and I look forward to him giving the go ahead to resume to full service.

Mrs. Driedger: I think the last time we had an opportunity to address the minister we had asked what percentage of nurses were working full time in Manitoba.

Does she have that answer now?

Ms. Selby: I thought I had that information. But I have more information; the member wanted some details on the nurses' contract and I have that, but I would have to get back to her with those other numbers.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister tell us in rural Manitoba when the ERs are closed and families end

up having to call 911 and take an ambulance, who ends up having to pay for that ambulance cost?

Ms. Selby: I'd like to confirm that, before I get back to the member, I don't want to put something incorrect on and I just want to confirm that it's the same in each RHA.

I do have some nurse vacancies numbers for the member in the WRHA if she would like me to read those into the record.

Mrs. Driedger: Sure, if—only if it's more current. I do have the ones for December 2013, and I don't need those reread. But if the minister has anything more current than the end of 2013, I'd be interested in that.

Ms. Selby: I will have to confirm that.

Mrs. Driedger: Lately we've been hearing of some serious ambulance offload times where they've—the numbers have been actually quite high.

Does the minister have any information as to whether or not this same type of problem occurs with air ambulance, for instance with Lifeflight. Are there situations where they are actually stuck on the ground because their people are also stuck in ERs unable to offload?

* (15:10)

Ms. Selby: The member raises an interesting question. I would have to get back to her on that.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to delve into some of the program plans that might have been put into place over the last period of time since there was the postpartum depression situations. And I'm curious what kind of, I guess, follow-up or attention the minister has, you know, put her focus on in terms of young moms suffering with postpartum depression to the point that they kill their children and then themselves.

I was actually involved in a run for women on Saturday, and certainly the Gibson family situation was front and centre in the opening remarks, but also during the day I heard of another situation a few weeks ago where another young mom, after having had a baby, eight days later, committed suicide. The dad had taken the baby out for pictures, so there wasn't any issue from that perspective, but when they came back to the house, this young mom had committed suicide and she had postpartum depression.

I'm just wondering if there has been more effort put into ensuring a stronger focus on dealing with postpartum depression and looking at opportunities in Manitoba for how we can address that more effectively.

Ms. Selby: I do want to say how tragic a situation it is that the member is referring to. I'm aware of the situation and we are looking into what happened, what supports were there for the family and, of course, what we can do better.

There is still a lot of stigma in our society about mental health. That includes, unfortunately, postpartum depression. It can be hard for people to ask for help. It can be a bit of a stigma for people to seek the support and care that they need, but certainly we have tried to make that accessible to people, including having the Mental Health Crisis Response Centre, but it's certainly something we need to work on. It's letting people not be afraid to say that they need the help.

I can tell the member that every new mom is contacted by a public health nurse after they leave the hospital to provide support and advice. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, more moms are being contacted at home by a health provider to offer supports after giving birth, and it's done sooner after discharge than in the rest of Canada. Manitoba moms are generally visited within four days. I can also tell the member that through Families First, a public health nurse visits new moms and supports families in building the relationship with the child by things such as performing initial screening of needed services or, if they notice any risk factors, suggesting activities to ensure the child's physical health and safety, supporting with secure attachment, supporting breast feeding, promoting healthy growth and development and, of course, also building connections to community resources. The folks there, the public health nurses, of course, able to let them—new moms know and new families know of support there is, whether that be a support group of just new moms or whether it's more geared towards postpartum depression.

Also let the member know that Families First can help connect new moms with mental health supports if risk factors are identified. Nurses, of course, do assess the mental health of new parents and offer solutions to those who may be at risk, identifying potential postpartum depression, offering advice and support of what to do with that. They also, of course, provide access to support groups.

They do follow-up visits with public health nurses on the progress of the new parents and particularly those who've been attending support groups, as well as assisting with access to other programs that may be available for mental health in our public system.

Certainly, I can tell the member that this is a very tragic situation when this happens, and it is certainly something that, as a mother, I have a great deal of interest and concern about and want to make sure that we are doing the best that we can.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister had indicated that moms are visited in four days and, actually, that might not totally be true because the patient has to agree to have a public health nurse come and visit. It isn't an automatic that happens—unless something has changed, and I wonder, has something changed?

Ms. Selby: The member is correct in that the moms are contacted by a health-care provider to offer support giving birth, but this is done sooner after discharge from hospital than any place else in Canada, and I would encourage moms to take up that offer and that it can be a wonderful way to learn more about supports that are out there for families.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister give us an update as to how the new policy with taxi drivers is working after the deaths of the two patients at the Grace Hospital, where the minister's first reaction seemed to have been a bit of a knee-jerk one, you know, and indicating there was some blame by taxi drivers. And now a policy, then, had to be put into place as to what taxi drivers could do. And I'm wondering if she could give us an update as to how that's working and if there are any problems with taxi drivers being reluctant to pick up patients at hospitals, especially from ERs, and take them home.

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, again, I should just reiterate, as I have in the past, that the onus is, of course, on medical professionals to make sure that patients are ready to be discharged. They're the ones that make that determination.

I know that WRHA—the WRHA worked with taxi companies to create these guidelines for patient transportation. It includes a clear process for taxi and stretcher services. My understanding are that those meetings were very—went very well. People were co-operative and worked well together. And my understanding is that the new policy has been going well. But, of course, with any new policy, we do need to give people time to learn it. But reports to me have been that it's going well, and I think it's a good

chance to thank everybody who worked so well together to address patient safety, and we're guided by our medical professionals to make sure that we're doing the best we can for people in Manitoba.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Driedger: What I found, I guess, sort of a bit disturbing, maybe, was that the minister's first response was looking at taxi drivers. What I want to ask her is because Heather Brennan had been sent home, I think it was a year or two almost to the date of these other two patients that were sent home and died, and after Heather Brennan's death, there was some discharge policies put into place.

Did the minister ask the question as to whether or not those discharge policies that were put into place after Heather Brennan's death, had they been followed? Was that a question that she would have asked, or her department asked, to find out what happened with these two other patients, because Heather Brennan's death led to recommendations? Those recommendations should have been about safe discharge, and yet, again, it happened with two more patients. What happened to those policies that were developed after Heather Brennan's death?

Ms. Selby: Of course, we expect safe discharge procedures to be followed. That is absolutely what we expect. We expect policies of safety, in particular, to be paid close attention to, but I do also think that it's important that one notices that if we can strengthen patient safety, that we will, which is why originally we brought in critical incident reporting is so that we can strengthen patient safety by learning from mistakes, by addressing where there may be shortfalls and making sure that we do that.

I think it's again important to make sure that patients are discharged appropriately and safely—and safely. The onus, again, is on medical professionals to make that decision of when a patient is ready to discharge—to be discharged, but anyone who feels they're not well enough to go home always has the right to let medical staff know that.

The time in early this year that we looked at strengthening those discharge guidelines and enhancing the process for safe ER discharge included an implementation of a regional discharge list. The new list is making sure that the plans are clearly documented and clearly communicated effectively with patients so patients know exactly what the plan

is and can ask questions and can raise concerns if they're not comfortable with the plan.

It also helps reinforce to medical staff to what they already do but reinforce the evaluations that they do to look at whether a patient is ready to go home or not, to make sure that—beyond whether they're healthy enough to leave the hospital but also whether they can manage safely at home, that the patient understands the care plan and know what to do if their condition worsens after they leave the emergency room. So, certainly, we will always be looking at what we can do to improve patient journeys and patient care and particularly in safety, and should we need to address something, should we need to strengthen the policy, we're always willing to do that.

Mrs. Driedger: After Heather Brenan died, there was a policy put into place about, you know, safe discharge. And then we find out—you know, we're a year or two down the road and two more patients are discharged, and then we hear again that we're going to do another patient safety check-off list before patients are discharged.

What happened, then, to the policy on safe discharge that should have been put into place after Heather Brenan's death? Was it not followed, then, with these other two patients that were sent home as they were and then died on their doorsteps? Was that first policy not followed and then we're going into another policy? Like, are there some gaps here?

Ms. Selby: As I said earlier, we expect all our policies to be followed, particularly around patient safety. Certainly, when a situation arises where a patient may not have received the service that we all expect them to receive, you have the choice to sweep it under the rug or to deal with it and see what we can do to strengthen the policy. And that's what we've done here. And the discharge list is making sure that those plans that are in place are clearly documented and also communicated with the staff as—with the patient as well. I think, you know, as I've said, it's definitely a medical decision as to whether or not somebody is ready to be discharged from the hospital, but we are asking our medical staff to also look at other circumstances to make sure that the person has a plan in place for when they get home, making sure that they can manage on their own if they need support there.

I should just say, as the CEO of the WRHA said, both of the patients in December that the member's referring to died of an underlying medical concern.

But discharge is always a medical decision. We took this as an opportunity, though, to look again at the policy and to make it stronger. And, Mr. Chair, that is something that I would commit to doing in any situation where we think we can do better, when we can bring in a stronger policy, when we can make sure that we're addressing the needs. And that is what a good health-care system does. A good health-care system looks at situations and learns from them and sees what we can do better, and that's exactly what we endeavour to do in this case and in any situation.

Mrs. Driedger: Following those deaths of the two patients that were discharged from Grace Hospital, a constituent of mine got a hold of me and wanted to share some varied concerns as to what had happened with her husband.

Back in July of last year, her husband was taken by ambulance to the Grace Hospital with severe abdominal pain. He was examined—sorry, let me backtrack. Before that happened, in May of 2013, he was admitted under emergency conditions to the Grace Hospital for three weeks, and he had an inflamed gallbladder, he had hepatitis and he had kidney failure and, of course, had multiple side effects. His gallbladder wasn't removed at that time because of the kidney failure.

So then we go to—you know, after that three-week stay, he was discharged. July 19th, then, her husband was taken by ambulance to the Grace ER with severe abdominal pain. He was examined, given morphine, blood tests, and then sent home with a prescription for Tylenol 3. And then, on July 23rd, he was returned to Grace Hospital again with severe abdominal pain. He was finally admitted, which resulted in emergency surgery for a ruptured gallbladder, and he almost lost his life.

* (15:30)

The question that the family put to me, you know, they were concerned why he might not have been admitted in July. You know, he went in with severe abdominal pain. All they did was an examination and gave him some blood tests and morphine and sent him home with T3s and then he comes back, you know, just days later with a ruptured gall bladder, which could certainly have ended up with him losing his life.

What the family was told by the Grace Hospital staff was that the ER was understaffed. The hospital admitted that they were understaffed in the ER on that July 19th date. They were told there was only

one ER doctor working at the time that the patient was in the ER.

And I guess my question to the minister would be, are there some—or have there been any reviews done, because we seem to be hearing more problems that have occurred out of the Grace ER? Have there been any examinations done of whether or not there should be more doctors working in that particular ER? I know there are standards that are set, Canadian standards, and there tends to be, you know, and maybe sometimes some just stringent sticking to the standards that you only need one doctor at a time. But are there any circumstances that are pointing to the fact that maybe the Grace Hospital, you know, if it's very busy, there seem to be just too many times that we're hearing of some circumstances where patients have run into problems, serious problems or, you know, in a few instances have died after being discharged from that particular hospital.

I know that the WRHA runs the ER program. My question would be, is the minister having any discussions or has she or her department had any discussions with the WRHA about the challenges at the Grace ER and if those challenges need to have, perhaps, more improved staffing, medical staffing at that particular ER?

Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Selby: I thank the member for raising these concerns of the—I believe it was a gentleman she said she was discussing. It sounded like a difficult situation for the family. I would hope that the person has received the treatment that they need and has recovered. It sounds like that's perhaps something that happened last summer, so, hopefully, they're feeling much better now.

I do want to say that the onus is always on medical professionals to decide the course of treatment including whether or not someone should be discharged or what treatment they should be making. That's a decision that medical professionals, doctors and nurses on the front line, make. And I would ask the member, if she hasn't already, if she could give me some more information on this particular family situation so that we could get them some answers of what exactly happened in their situation. I'd be wanting to know that as well.

I can tell the member that certainly we are looking at making sure that people get the care that they need, the appropriate care that they need, where

they need it, when they need it, and part of that is making sure that we have other options for people other than having to go to an ER should they maybe not have that—as serious a situation, thus freeing up the people in the ER to do the work that they are trained to do, that specialized care for those most urgent cases.

It's why that—we've just recently opened the ACCESS centre right on the grounds of the Grace Hospital to help take some of that flow out of the ER for people that may be better served under a nurse practitioner or a nurse. It's also why we are committed to opening yet another QuickCare clinic, this one in west Winnipeg, again, to make sure that people can get the care that they need when they need it, that they may not need to be in emergency room, and that way we save the emergency room staff there to do those urgent cases that they need to do.

Certainly know that—but the importance of making sure that we have people in that emergency room that are able to do what they need to do, it's why we've hired 560 more doctors since we've come in, why we've built 22 more clinics and, of course, we've got more clinics on the way, in west Winnipeg, that are going to help take some of the pressure off of our ERs and so that people can get care as they need it.

I should also say that it's not just one solution for ERs, making sure people have a family doctor which is why we've got a commitment to having a family doctor. It's making sure they have alternatives to, whether that going to a QuickCare clinic or their family doctor; it's opening the Mental Health Crisis Response Centre that sees 500 patients a month that would normally be in an ER. This way they can go to a specialized service for the care that they need. All of these things, including building more personal-care homes to make sure that patients are able to move out of the hospital and into personal-care home, it all goes towards helping our ERs flow better, as well as some innovations we're trying like the EPIC program, the Emergency Paramedics in the Community program. It's identified some very frequent ER users and treats them at home, often avoiding them having to go to the ER whatsoever. And also new projects that we're introducing like the Hospital Home Teams that is cutting down ER visits and admissions by over 50 per cent among the elderly clients that are using this program. So there are a number of things in place to do it and certainly some of them are right there in conjunction with the

Grace and nearby in the community to help serve that community.

Mrs. Driedger: I would indicate to the minister that the family did write a letter. It actually was directed to the Deputy Minister of Health on December 2nd, 2013. This family ended up under, I guess, during a lengthy recovery period, they ended up having some severe financial difficulties. They do not feel that they were heard particularly well. I, in speaking with the wife not that long ago, I'm not sure that they have even felt that they have received appropriate attention from the minister's office. But this family did have some major challenges because of what happened in the hospital and that it took so long for any diagnoses and treatment to actually happen so I hope there is—or there has been, by the minister's office, a close look at this and a fulsome response to the family. And I will contact the family just to be sure that their concerns have been addressed. But I did indicate to them that I would be bringing it to the minister's attention and I will get an update which I can then pass on to the minister.

And just a final question that I have: Can the minister provide the names and positions of the political staff in her office?

Ms. Selby: I thank the member for that if she could provide me with that information and I will also follow up and see what has been done to address this family's concerns.

I can let the member know that in the Health office the political staff are Rebecca Bock-Freeman, who is a special assistant; Brad Hartle, who is a project manager; Shauna Martin, who is a special adviser; Jill Stockwell, who's an executive assistant; and Jodie Lucas, who is intake co-ordinator, which is not a political position, but I thought I would include her in that list as well, and to let the member know that there is a vacant project manager position in the Health office.

*(15:40)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just a couple of questions. The first one deals with the universal newborn hearing screening. Of course, the legislation was passed last year to implement that, and I'm just inquiring what the status of the situation is at the moment. I understand that the individual who was in the position of co-ordinating the project has been let go, and so there's some concern about its future.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Chairperson, in the Chair.

Ms. Selby: Certainly, it was a good day in the Legislature when all parties came together to ensure that newborns are screening for potential hearing impairment by September 2016. That was when the legislation that was brought forward by this member—and I'm blanking out on the other member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat) who brought it in as well, perhaps? I'm not sure if I've got that right.

I can tell the member that babies, all babies currently receive a basic hearing screening, and more advanced universal screening is in place in Brandon and several other rural communities already and targeted at-risk newborns in Winnipeg and the rest of Manitoba. I'm confident that we will have it in place as expected, as legislated by the legislation.

Certainly, it's an important test. We know that five other provinces do offer it as a universal basis right now, and I am glad to see that Manitoba is going to be joining them as well. But I should also point out that in terms of other screening, that Manitoba offers the broadest newborn screening of any province, so this will just enhance the screening that we already do do in Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: Just on that subject, I had brought up the issue of hemoglobin screening earlier and would just remind the minister about that. But my next question deals with—when critical incidents happen, they can happen not only in hospitals and in personal care homes, but in other areas within, for example, the broad WRHA system, in clinics or in doctors' offices or in nurses' offices, and the—when people have tried to report them, they've been told that they don't accept reports from outside hospitals and personal care homes.

So I wonder if you can tell us what you will be doing as minister to address that gap.

Ms. Selby: And I do appreciate the member raising the point of hemoglobin as well. It's something that I did look into. I don't have the information in front of me, and I would be naive to think that I could explain it to him better than he could explain it to me. So I won't try to do that, but I did get some information on that and I appreciate the member bringing that to my attention.

I'm not sure I quite understood the member's question. He's saying that people are concerned that they can't raise a complaint if they're not in a hospital or a health situation like a clinical—a clinic or an ambulance. I'm—if the member could just maybe give me a bit more specific of what he was asking.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I'm told that people who have tried to raise concerns about a critical incident if it has occurred outside of a hospital or a personal-care home that the reporting mechanism doesn't seem to work as well, that the—if it happens, for instance, in a physician's office, there may be an option to raise a complaint, but this is not necessarily a complaint; it's just a concern about something that happened which is a—could be—was a critical incident. You know, it doesn't necessarily mean something was done wrong, but it means that it's something that should be looked at.

And so it would seem to me that there should be an approach that could be used to report a critical incident if it occurs within the WRHA, for example, boundaries but is not necessarily in a hospital or in a personal-care home or places where, you know, such reports are currently accepted.

Ms. Selby: I appreciate the member bringing this to my attention. I know he's familiar with critical incident reporting. He's familiar, I'm sure, with the Protection for Persons in Care Office as well, and I know that Doctors Manitoba, of course, handles the complaints if it's about a specific doctor's behaviour. They, of course—the college has the ability to look into that. But I will endeavour to learn a little more about what the member is raising.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): A couple of questions for the Minister of Health regarding some issues in health care in Steinbach.

The emergency room in Steinbach, the renovated emergency room, I think, is close to opening. This has become the issue of myth and lore. I think the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) announced that there was a new hospital opening in Steinbach. I searched high and low for it, but it turns out it's the new ER, our new ER, partial renovation of the ER, not a new hospital as he announced; however, maybe in the future.

The ER, I think, is supposed to open fairly soon. Driving by, it looks like it's complete although the gates are still in front of it. I think the new entrance is open. Does the minister have an update of when patients will be able to access the new ER in Steinbach?

Ms. Selby: Of course, it's confusing because we're building so many things in Steinbach. Sometimes people can't keep track if it's a hospital, a school, an ER. I can get back to the member with that.

Mr. Goertzen: I'll be careful not to put that out into the community. They were so disappointed to find out there wasn't a new hospital as the member for Elmwood had promised, and now when they hear there's 20 things they'll be looking around, they won't find those either, but don't want people living in disappointment. Perhaps when the member for Elmwood runs as an MP, he'll make that promise. I look forward to hearing the response to when the ER is intended to open.

There's been questions about dialysis service for some time in not just Steinbach but the southeast, because it impacts all of southeastern Manitoba and the need for dialysis service in one of the fastest growing regions of the province. I've brought forward—I don't think to this Minister of Health but to previous ones—some of the stories of difficulty in accessing dialysis service and the drive that people have to make from all over southeastern Manitoba representing a number of different regions.

What plans are there to get dialysis service into the Steinbach area?

* (15:50)

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, I'm sure that when the member for Elmwood was speaking, he was probably either thinking of the QuickCare clinic in Steinbach or perhaps the new wellness centre that's going into Steinbach, or maybe he was thinking of the fact that Steinbach, of course, is the first spot for the my home-care team, the primary-care network. So, lots of things going on in Steinbach.

I can certainly tell the member that we've been bringing more dialysis to rural Manitoba since we've been in office. There are 16 rural northern 'dialysis' units now, 80 per cent increase from when we came into office. We've opened new dialysis in Norway House, Gimli, Russell, Swan River, Island Lake, Berens River and Peguis, also renovated or expanded those dialysis units in Boundary Trails, Flin Flon, Portage, The Pas, Swan River and Thompson. Also have been able to expand the home dialysis, which, of course, can significantly improve the quality of someone's life. I can tell the member that I can look into more specifics for Steinbach and get back to him with some more information.

Mr. Goertzen: I'll look for the response. I think in the earlier lists she gave, she didn't quite hit 20 projects but, certainly, the ones that she named were good projects that the regional health authority is funding a good portion of it. I think they ended up

paying for about half of the CancerCare unit. I think they're paying for the building on the primary health-care centre. They paid for the building on the CSU. Under this government, private health care is alive and well in our areas. Half the money is coming from private investment. The—and they're happy to, of course, raise the money as good, generous people of the area.

Questions regarding the surgical rooms for Bethesda—there's been lots of frustration over the years regarding the surgical rooms. There's just some questions, even, about the appropriateness of them, given their age, and it's caused for, I know, a number of delays in surgeries in that region, not just Steinbach. And I look at some of the medical facilities as a bit more regional. But can the minister—and I suspect, given the previous two answers, she might have to get back to me on this, and that's fine—can she give me an update on what plans there are to bring the surgical rooms in the Bethesda regional hospital up to the current standards?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Chair, I'll get back to the member with more details.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank the minister for that commitment.

Last one: personal-care homes. Like a lot of the growing areas, a shortage of personal-care-home beds in the Steinbach community. I could give the minister stories of individuals who've grown up in the community and then had to move some distance away to live out their final years. There have been some proposals put forward by the Rest Haven group in the Rest Haven personal-care home, represented by the HavenGroup, and looking at the expansion of their facilities to benefit the entire region. Is there any indication of where approval for funding might be on personal-care-home beds in the Steinbach region?

Ms. Selby: I don't recall if that proposal has come across my desk yet, but I can get back to the member.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, I appreciate that, and I will follow up with a letter to the minister just as a reminder of the different commitments, and I look forward to hearing back from her office for that. Thank you.

Mrs. Driedger: I have just one other question for the minister.

There was some indication the other day, publicly, that a doctor was being hired for a QuickCare clinic. I understood that, when the QuickCare clinics were set up, they were to be run by nurse practitioners. And I believe there was a media report out the other day that there was a doctor being hired for one. Can the minister indicate when the—or—and why a decision might have been made to bring doctors into QuickCare clinics?

Ms. Selby: Certainly, the model of our QuickCare clinics is to have a nurse practitioner. I'm not familiar with the report that the member is speaking of. Perhaps she could give me some more detail on that.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, no. I'm finished my questions now, thank you.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): To the minister: Last year and for the last couple of years been asking questions to the Health Minister in regards to the fact that ERs have been closed or temporarily out of service, especially during the summer months, which started May long weekend and all the way through to November. It's very interesting that here we are again, third year in a row, and I'm asking for a commitment from the minister why the ERs are not open 24-7 or all of the time, especially when our population grows a minimum of tenfold. And it just seems that, you know, the minister's department should be very much aware that this question is coming. Last year, the Minister of Health guaranteed that the months of July and August, there would be no disruption in services for the ERs in the Powerview-Pine Falls, Pinawa and the Beausejour district hospitals, and I just want to know what the minister's plans are for this coming summer.

Ms. Selby: I thank the member for the question. Certainly, one of the plans is to make sure we're graduating more doctors. We've had a record number of doctors graduate this year, 109; 90 of them are staying in Manitoba; 19 of those 90 are going to rural residencies. And, of course, we've also, just in the last couple of months, brought in 19 additional IMG graduates as well.

I can let the member know that five new physicians have been recruited to the Interlake-Eastern region, including new doctors in Pine Falls and Lac du Bonnet, who started in April. Certainly we want to see more doctors as well in the ERs. The RHA has indicated that for Pine Falls, Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet and Beausejour, they expect to have physician staffing for all of May and June. But I should also say that there could be unexpected times

when nurse-managed care is required should something happen personally to one of those doctors.

But certainly feeling confident and optimistic about the 90 new grads who are doing their residency here, 19 of them in rural Manitoba and on top of 19 new IMG doctors that have been hired around the province.

Mr. Ewasko: So my—another question to the minister, and I thank her for the last answer. Other question to the minister, is there going to be appropriate information going out to all the communities in the areas serving those three hospitals, letting people know when the ERs are going to be open and actually having a doctor on call in those three hospitals in the upcoming—within the upcoming weeks?

Ms. Selby: Yes, I can tell the member that we do expect the RHAs to make sure that people are aware of that, and they, of course, probably understand their communities best on how to best do that. But, again, the RHA has indicated that Pine Falls, Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet and Beausejour expect to have physician staffing for all of—well, we're part—we're a good chunk way through May and into June as well.

Mr. Ewasko: Last point, and I apologize for this to some of my colleagues. So I just didn't hear the commitment for the summer months as well. I know you mentioned partially through May, which I know already that the—some of the ERs were not open, but, you know, are we hearing the commitment for July, August, September and October and that type of thing as well, Minister?

Ms. Selby: I can tell the member that the RHA has indicated for May and June at this point.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): For the Minister of Agriculture: We had some discussion about Maple Leaf and Brandon today, and I've been looking through Hansard trying to figure out what some of his responses to the MLA for Midland were meant earlier.

So, just a question to the minister, then, what—with the reduction here of one day a month in production of 1,800 of the plant's employees, 80 per cent, what does the minister think is the issue here that is causing this?

* (16:00)

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Thank you, Mr. Chair and Mr.—thank you for the question, and,

obviously, let me just say first and foremost, Maple Leaf industry in Brandon is very key to the province and also to the Brandon local economy. And I want to ensure the member opposite that we are very diligent in working with Maple Leaf to find solutions of, obviously, you know, the shortfall of the number of hogs that could be processed at the plant.

But I think the member opposite is quite familiar, is that, you know, the hog industry, much like a number of other livestock industries have had some major challenges of, you know, staying in the profitable position. Obviously, a number of the hog producers that delivered to Maple Leaf were in situations where the return on their investment has been challenging for a number of years, whether it's because they're COOL or basically going through situations where there was a shortage of feed. And I think it's pretty evident last year or two years ago where they had to purchase corn from Iowa, and, you know.

So, you know, over the years, three or four or five years, that numbers have been challenging for producers and Maple Leaf is, you know, requiring the numbers that they have to sustain the processing of those numbers. Maple Leaf presently is, I believe, running at about 80 per cent in that capacity, and it's not only—the only processing plant. You know, I had the opportunity to be down in the US side and down in Minneapolis and had some discussions with the people when the pork industry—also in the US side, and it's also been a challenge for them to sustain numbers based on the economics from the producers' perspective. And, you know, and now the challenges the US faced and, you know, fortunately, in the province of Manitoba, you know, the PED is really a concern. And we continue to monitor it in partnership with Manitoba Pork and, you know, with great organizations such as Maple Leaf and HyLife who are helping us to somewhat monitor and minimize the spread of PED in the province of Manitoba.

But, you know, the Province has put a lot of dollars in perspective to monitor the PED spread and, in fact, just recently I had staff brief me on approximately 300-and-some-odd thousand dollars has already been spent and—in our cost of helping out producers and industry to minimize the spread. Because if we are sitting at about 80-plus per cent of capacity at Maple Leaf, I'm sure the member opposite can appreciate if we didn't do our due diligence working with the industry to minimize PED spread.

So I just want to let the member know—from Brandon West—that we are continuing to communicate with Maple Leaf. We've had some discussions with Manitoba Pork and we're continuing to work with the industry because we do value the importance of Maple Leaf as a processor in the city of Brandon, the number of jobs created, and we will continue to work with the industry. But we also want to make sure that we have the possibility that we believe processors need to have a reliable supply of hogs, but within the rules to protect the health of Lake Winnipeg, and that continues to be our support and we will continue to have the balanced support towards jobs, which is important to the industry.

But let's be realistic, we need to be very vigilant to protect our lakes and rivers as we move forward. So we continue, through MAFRD and with the Maple Leaf and with HyLife and any other industry and producers that we work together, and as I think the member opposite is well aware, we've been very helpful in a number of programs that we've brought forward in partnership with the federal and provincial government through Growing Forward 2, and we continue to move forward on that.

So that is my commentary, and I just want to end by saying, Mr. Chair, is that we as a department and as government are continuing working with Maple Leaf, the importance of Maple Leaf in sustaining their numbers in the processing.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I thought I asked a short question, but I'm not sure that I really heard any response in there.

Given that this government is—has the worst environmental record of any government in Canada, I'm disappointed in the government's response, but I want to know: Why is there a shortage of hogs in Manitoba for Maple Leaf?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Well, I guess being involved in agriculture, being a livestock producer for a number of years, if I want to relay back to a question to the member opposite, I think if you would refer the same question to the beef industry where it's at, I think you'd be quite educated to know that the livestock industry has been challenged by a number of things, and I think COOL has a lot to do with that. And I think I don't need to educate the member opposite for Brandon in that perspective, that, obviously, producers are always challenged by, you know, international trade and moving forward.

So here we go. You know, the COOL has had some issues. I know that the livestock industry's been challenged and the hog is no different. To the member from Brandon West, as I said earlier in my commentary, you can quite easily remember the fact that there was feed cost, that they had to import corn from Iowa, and the cost was around \$7 to \$8 a bushel, and, traditionally, they pay, like, \$3. So, when you talk about—the question being is that you're asking why is the high—hog numbers as low as this, the reality is, is the fact that there is the balancing of cost of production and where the producers, I think, were somewhat being financially challenged at sustaining their operations.

So I think from the member from Brandon West, I guess to stay focused on the question he's bringing forward, I would suspect, in my understanding of the agriculture industry, there is a point in time where the cost of maintaining supply numbers from the producers' perspective became a balancing—financial balancing act and continues to be.

And, you know, fortunately now, the price of hogs are probably at a record high, and the fact of recovery is—may happen, but I think there's some producers that have chosen to lose or leave the market simply because the financial awards were challenging a number of years ago.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I appreciate that the minister at least understood that he was not giving—answering a question, he was making a commentary, so, some sad to say, but what are the government's plans to increase the hog numbers in Manitoba?

Mr. Kostyshyn: As I said, we are continuing to talk to Maple Leaf about applying to find creative ways so we can sustain.

You know, we've got other areas that, you know, that—in my area, I'll give you an example. There's been a barn that has been somewhat been out of operation in the last number of years. Just in the last month here, the barn's been renovated, put back into production. So I'm sensing there's probably a renewed interest of facilities that have somewhat have been—not been put into production are now probably put into production.

I'm sensing that also there's a renewed interest from investors in—or producers, given where the market price of hogs are right now, are somewhat of an interest. So I am—feel very comfortable informing the member from Brandon West that we, in—with MAFRD and Manitoba Pork Council, have been in

discussions with it. And I want to ensure the member opposite, we are doing whatever we can to work with Maple Leaf to sustain those numbers and provide, you know, an opportunity to explore options.

You know, as the member from Brandon West knows that, you know, we have a partnership with the federal government, through Growing Forward 2. Is there an opportunity to help out the industry by—we've done historically—dealing with the environmental improvements to certain facilities, to certain barns that need to be rejuvenated? Is there an appetite, is there an opportunity, or is there a partnership that could be developed from sourcing hogs from other jurisdictions? You know, maybe Saskatchewan may have a surplus; I don't know.

But I want to assure the member opposite that we will continue to talk to Maple Leaf and supply hogs in the future. But there is no intention of, you know, us not communicating with Maple Leaf. As I said earlier, Manitoba Pork is, you know, is quite in tune with us. We talked to the chair and the general manager.

*(16:10)

But, you know, at the end of the day, as the member from Brandon West, is that we've become very diligent about the bill that was signed, when we talked about—the day we looked at the means of supporting jobs and the importance of the industry, but also the protection of our lakes and rivers. And let me just remind the member opposite that you supported the Lake Winnipeg initiative, and I would assume the member from Brandon West still supports that bill as we have this discussion.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I didn't hear any plan whatsoever. So when was the last hog barn built in Manitoba?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Sorry, I didn't hear the question. May I have the question repeated please?

Mr. Helwer: When was the last hog barn built in Manitoba?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Well, I—thank you. Once again I think one of the questions being brought forward by the member opposite was asking about when the last time.

I guess the question I would have—and I'll get to the answer to the member from Brandon West shortly—is that, I guess the question is that does the member opposite still believe on the bill that they

supported in 2011 in 'numberay' to expand the province-wide?

So I guess to the member from Brandon West, do they still believe that it's important to have the environmental component in place when we talk about the hog moratorium that was brought—and they supported that in 2008—they voted against it in 2008, the regional hog moratorium, then too much to our surprise, in 2011 they voted to expand the moratorium province-wide, now they want to return to their roots.

So is the member opposite from Brandon West asking us to consider dropping the moratorium and moving forward with that in the future?

Mr. Helwer: Well, I appreciate the minister's interest in asking questions and I assume that he may get an opportunity should he get re-elected in an opposition role. But for this part here I was asking some pretty simple questions that the minister obviously doesn't know the answer to.

Now he did talk about a barn that was reopened that was given the licence, apparently, and I'm interested in how in a barn that was closed and reopened, where did they get this licence for their lagoon? Conservation has not issued any new licences, permits, but the minister did declare that a barn has reopened; so where did they get this permit from?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Well, I think if—thank you. I think if you check, there's nothing stopping any existing facility that has been shut down to be refurbished and reopened providing they sustained the numbers that were in those existing barns. So there is nothing saying that you cannot reopen an existing facility that has been shut down. It could be refurbished and put back into production providing it meets the environmental regulations that were in place when it was first set up. So there is not—there is no moratorium as far as renovating an existing facility providing that the barns are—and the lagoon is in appropriate manner.

Mr. Helwer: I think the minister needs to talk to the Minister of Conservation about when licences and permits lapse and the length of time.

Just one more question. We talked about reductions in production at Maple Leaf and reduction on staff. What does the minister feel this is going to have—what impact is this going to have on the Winnipeg Maple Leaf plant?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Well, I guess that's—I think that is something that, you know, our department is staying on top of. I know, obviously, any less production at Maple Leaf may have some effects at the curing on Lagimodiere, and I guess time—we'll stay on top of that, but I think it's very inappropriate for me to predict what effect it's going to have, you know, on numbers. As I said to you, that—we are continuing to talk to Maple Leaf. We are trying to help out in any way we can to find a source of hog supplies and talk to the producers. Obviously, at the end of the day, it's the producers that need to have some means of getting additional dollars into speeding up their production, but also to have Manitoba Pork be involved in finding the appropriate numbers to sustain Maple Leaf.

In closing, let me repeat the comment that I made before to the member from Brandon West. Our staff continues to work with Maple Leaf and continue to find alternative mechanisms to help out the industry, to sustain the numbers and to get up into the appropriate numbers of hog.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I'd like to ask the minister, of the number of applications for the Farmland School Tax Rebate, how many of them were deemed ineligible?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Let me just share some information with the member from Emerson. The application forms for the school lands—Farmland School Tax Rebate were available to farmers almost six months prior to March 31st deadline, so, with that being said, over 98 per cent of the application forms were mailed directly to producers by October the 4th. A total of 28,869 forms were processed or mailed out. If the producers did not receive through the mail, for whatever reason, farmers can receive a preprinted application form to get a blank application from the MASC website, and these forms were also available at MASC offices, MAFRD offices, GO offices and rural municipality offices.

As we continue to get numbers coming in to the member opposite, where I don't have the exact figures in front of me to answer the questions to the member opposite, but I'm more than willing to share that information with the member opposite very shortly because my last form of documentation was near the end of March, so I'd like to be given the opportunity to provide the information to the member opposite in short order, if he's okay with that process.

* (16:20)

Mr. Graydon: Well, I appreciate that, that the minister doesn't have that at his fingertips, but, Mr. Chair, I also want to acknowledge that when he and his government took over, took the government's reins, that there were over 30,000 farmers and that they have reduced that. Actually, they've reduced it by about 10,000 farmers, and it's because of policy, because of these types of hardships that they have done, and when he says he doesn't have these figures at his fingertips, I think, because they closed on March 31st, I'd like to remind him that this is half past May, and you would think that he would have those numbers. And he was asked in question period for those numbers, and he said, oh, I'll give them to you. Well, Mr. Chair, I look forward to him doing that and we will hold him to that.

I would also like to ask the minister now, has the government or the minister himself paid the \$390,000 grant to Plains Processors that has been promised for over a year?

Mr. Kostyshyn: I'm sure the member opposite would have no objections to me kind of summing up the Farmland School Tax Rebate program, and it's truly ironic that, you know, since 2004, the Manitoba government has provided significant education taxed relief to farmland in the school tax program.

And I'd like to acknowledge Minister Wowchuk who, you know, instituted the school tax paid on farmland which started out at 33 per cent in 2004, and, you know, the current level is up in the 80 per cent. And it's pretty ironic that since the inception in 2004 to 2013, the Farmland School Tax Rebate has 'basilly' put back \$275 million back into the producers' pockets, and it's really ironic that when the members opposite were in power, that no such thoughts never crossed their minds that they would ever consider that.

So it's kind of ironic that I would sense that they would want to target this government for being somewhat proactive of addressing the school tax rebate, and we continue to 'abooove' that. And, you know, the fact that farmland—and I think the member from Emerson is quite familiar with the recent value of farmland, where it's at today. And I think we're very proud of the province of Manitoba in western Canada, you know, the farmland values have increased and I think Manitoba's sitting right about 25 to 27 per cent increase across Canada on an annual basis, and that to me is a good sign of the healthy situation where we are.

And the fact that the challenges where we have, you know, the schools that exist, and thank goodness to our Education minister previous and present Education Minister that believes that schools are a vital component to our rural economy. And I would somewhat want to renege on the possibility the member from Emerson is saying that we should continue to sustain school tax rebate and become somewhat proactive of reducing dollars to the school divisions. And I know that, you know, we could refer to different locations in the province of Manitoba. We could talk about communities like Argyle. We could talk about places like Langruth, you know, where the school population is probably 40, 50 students, and this is the government on this side of the House see that we need to sustain those country schools, small schools in the community to stay alive.

And I think the challenge would be is that if the member feels that that's more of a priority to close schools in the rural communities, I would beg to differ on that. So I would appreciate, you know, that there's some consideration from the member opposite when we talk about the pause on the school tax rebate and measure the importance of sustaining schools open in communities such as I indicated, Argyle, Langruth, Ethelbert, you know, Benitos of the world. And I'm sure there's a number of other small schools in the rural communities around the province of Manitoba that I wouldn't want to hang my hat and say we had to close it because we felt that that was a proper thing to do.

I think—it was key for me to mention that to the member opposite, and I think that I want to acknowledge also the Education Minister and the previous Education minister for thinking about the closure of schools. And we continue to work on that and hopefully that the member opposite does remember where the members opposite were in power but they chose not to educate or consider that at all, so.

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

I would ask all honourable members if they want to shout across the floor to each other, that's very disruptive. We have loges to both sides that members are free to adjourn to if they want to have a discussion, but right now I'm trying to rule between a discussion between the Minister of Agriculture and the member for Emerson. So I would ask all members to please co-operate and not be shouting

back and forth across the House to each other. Please.

Mr. Kostyshyn: I guess maybe that is one of the things that should be considered. When we went to school, we weren't allowed to do that. And I'm sensing we should learn from our time in school, that we were all good students and I would suspect that we continue to think that way as members here in the room.

So, I thank the member opposite for me to put forward the—my opportunity to discuss the opportunity on the school tax rebate and the importance of what it is to the province of Manitoba but more importantly the rural development—rural economic development in the communities that we are all very proud to come from.

So, with that being said, maybe then I'll focus on the question that has been brought forward when we talk about the Plains processing and the \$390,000. You know, we value the importance of the plant being built near Carman, Manitoba, and the importance of the \$390,000 that has been committed. As to my understanding, the money is in process and if it's not I think it will be shortly coming towards the opening, which I'm sensing will be sooner than later in the area.

Mr. Graydon: Could I expect the minister to come with a cheque for \$300,000–\$390,000?

Mr. Kostyshyn: I'll definitely show up at the grand opening. I'll bring a pair of scissors and do the grand opening, if I'm given the honour. I'd love to. I'd love to sit there and have the opportunity to bring the big scissors and do the cutting. But I would somewhat have the opportunity to address the issue regarding the cheque being delivered. I'll check that out to the member from Emerson and if they feel that I could be safely trusted to deliver the cheque, I'll definitely will, if time allows. But at this point and time I'll just reserve my opinion on that.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister tell the House how much money has been raised by the auction of the internals and of the MCEC?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Maybe I didn't quite hear the question but I'm—I'll ask the member opposite to repeat the question, please. Thank you.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister tell us what the proceeds of the auction was at MCEC of the internals from—that were left at the MCEC's plant on Marion Street?

Mr. Kostyshyn: No, I don't have the information in front of me but I'm glad to share that information and I think the audited reports have been somewhat put together. I know that the assets on Marion Street has not been moved forward but I will gladly share the information. But, unfortunately, as I'm hoping the member opposite can appreciate, I don't have that information in front of me, but I'd be glad to share that with you in the very near future.

Mr. Graydon: At the same time, I would ask the minister to perhaps give us a full list of what was in the building and if some assets had been sold prior to the public auction because when I was there the other day there wasn't enough there to run a \$10 butcher shop. So, if he could tell me if some of the assets had been sold privately before, I would appreciate that.

* (16:30)

Mr. Kostyshyn: Yes, I will definitely investigate the question brought forward and I'll share that information with the member from Emerson as he's requested.

To my knowledge that—there was some inventory on site, but I don't traditionally get a daily update or a monthly update. I leave that up to the appointed chair and the person dealing with the property and the wind down of the situation. As the member is quite aware, and I think there were some questions that were brought forward by the member opposite at the AGM—at the MCA board that him and the member from Midland were in attendance, that maybe some of the similar questions were brought forward and were addressed at that point in time.

But I do want to, you know, kind of stay focused on the MCEC, but I do want to acknowledge the board that we're involved with, the MCEC board and their visionary, of the importance of the MCEC and I want to acknowledge their time and effort that went into sustaining the MCEC where it is today. So thank you.

Mr. Graydon: It seems that the minister has been well versed on the AGM of the MCEC, and so perhaps he can tell this House that—at what stage or when we could expect the complete audit that was requested at the AGM.

Mr. Kostyshyn: As the member opposite was well aware of the fact that the audit for 2013 has been completed and it's available on the website for 2013. As you're aware, that the audit for 2014 is still—needs to—has a window of an opportunity to be played, obviously, come 2014. So I think it's—a fairly

straightforward answer is the fact that the 2013 audit has been completed, and because the MCEC still has, you know, the wind down to complete, it would be very inappropriate to assume that anticipation the 2014 audit should be completed. It'll only be completed when the wind down is completely completed.

Mr. Graydon: The—I'm pretty sure that the minister understands that the audit that was requested was a complete in-depth audit and the board suggested that they could do that. The chair of the board suggested that they would do it and the lawyer suggested that it should be available. So I'm asking when will it be available, the complete in-depth audit of 2013? We know the financial audit. We just want all of the figures for all of the things that took place, and that would probably cleanup a lot of the answers that the minister doesn't have available at this point. When will it be available?

Mr. Kostyshyn: I guess, when we talk about the audit report, the accountant firm has been hired. They have done the audit for 2013, and, I guess, to the member opposite to—you know, the in-depth audit is what it is. But, obviously, the audit has been done. It meets the standards of an audit report, and if the member opposite is wanting some additional information, I'm sure the MCEC organization will try and accommodate or the auditors will try and accommodate. But at this point in time, according to information that I've received, has been compiled and is available on the website, and if there's any further information there are the appropriate agencies to ask for further questions that could be answered.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and for the Minister of Agriculture also.

I've raised it in question period; I've raised it in Estimates. The Lake Manitoba inundation zone, which goes out in most places no more than five miles from Lake Manitoba, is the area where the water sat all summer; the hay crop, both native and seeded, was drowned out with no recovery. Because of that—and I might add, it was a man-made, artificial flood; it was caused by the extra water that went through the diversion into Lake Manitoba—and now we find that these—Waterhen River runs every year, of course, and so does the Whitemud. And now we find that the—those producers' crop insurance has been absolutely destroyed. They haven't got—I've got one particular producer, his coverage has gone from 1,000 acres down to 100 acres. They won't even insure him on the rest of his production land.

And everyone knows that it takes—anybody that has a farm background would know that it takes several years to re-establish hay or grassland after a flood or after it's been torn up. Because it was a man-made flood, because it was through no fault of those producers, and the minister has, on other occasions, said—he's referred to the federal and the provincial government, but he's never included the farmers, who are part of that whole crop insurance thing, too, with the premiums they pay. He blames the feds. He says that the—Ritz said he wouldn't pay for the same flood twice. Ritz was referring to disaster financial assistance. He wasn't referring to crop insurance.

Is the minister going to address the problems those farmers have, in that very narrow strip, which is—impacts the Interlake constituency also along with mine and a couple of others to a smaller degree? Those farmers, those ranchers, shouldn't be penalized through their crop insurance, for a flood that they had no control over.

Mr. Kostyshyn: Obviously, let me just say as a livestock producer for 30 years of my life, I can relate to the hardships that the producers went through. And that's one of the challenges we face as agriculture producers, because sometimes Mother Nature has not treated us all fairly in appropriate weather.

The 2011 flood, you know, is one of those floods that I think that all producers will never, ever forget about. And I can refer to my own personal experience when I had moved my cows and calves out across the road, and the green grass was starting to show up, and all of a sudden, we were—we had a—it rained for five hours, like a July rain, and this was May the 3rd. Then we landed up with three feet of snow that was constant snow that basically kept coming down. I had 125 cow-calf pairs across the road and calf huts to accommodate. Unfortunately, when you—when a producer gets lost trying to feed his cattle in a snowstorm, that's a magnitude that is unbelievable of what Mother Nature can do to you.

So when we talk about the hardships that I personally experience, and the Lake Manitoba ranchers experience, and we can somewhat be somewhat pointing fingers of a lack of due diligence of whoever's in charge of it. We can't control the weather elements. We talk about what's changed in the landscape from the whole watershed that occurs from Saskatchewan; really, theoretically, we talk about the Assiniboine River, the Qu'Appelle Valley

system and the Red River system. And when you are challenged with making some decisions to minimize flooding throughout the province of Manitoba, some decisions had to be made. And the fact that Lake Manitoba, and using the Portage Diversion, always had some challenges. As the member from Agassiz is quite familiar with is that the lake level is what it was, but when we had to deal with a wind's velocities that were always two days consecutive of—created the hardships not only for agriculture but also for the cottage owners on Lake Manitoba.

* (16:40)

And, you know, this is 'non-unique.' I've had an opportunity to speak to producers that ranched in the Interlake area, and they talk about events that happened like that back in the '50s. And, yes, it does take about five years for the receding of the water that's trapped in a inappropriate watershed and to harvest the cattails and to bring back the natural vegetation that is in those areas. It's challenging and it doesn't happen overnight. And, when you've got a natural setting where you want to minimize man-made drains to accelerate the drainage, those are kind of the landscape soils that the producers have to deal with.

So, when we go back to the area that was flooded, and I think the—whether we refer to as artificial flooding or man-made—I think the reality should be noted in here that the government chose not for this to happen. It's just the fact that, you know, when we get these rain events, we get three feet of snow and a July rain on May 2nd that accelerates excess moisture. Nobody has drains and water system designed to minimize any overland flooding.

So, when we talk about programs that our government are focused on to help out producers, and we talk about crop insurance programs to help out producers in Lake Manitoba, we definitely realize when we have those areas of recovery. And, working with the federal government, as the member from Agassiz is quite familiar with, the partnership between federal and provincial government with crop insurance is what it is. And I'm not putting that as an answer that I'm trying to deflect to the question, but the reality is, to the member from Agassiz, there is an understanding that has to be shared with the federal Ag Minister and crop insurance, provincial crop insurance departments that we need to work in partnership and not to take any way any kind of insurance programs for the producers.

But there comes a point in time where alternative mechanism—that's why we are very proactive when we talked about programs that we brought forward in Growing Forward 2. We brought forward forage insurance programs. We're working with livestock price insurance. We're talking about some means of helping out producers when we are talking about community pastures that, you know, the federal government, you know, felt maybe wasn't their choice to maintain. So we as a province move forward with opportunity to provide producers, you know, along Lake Manitoba with an opportunity having a place to take their cattle should an event, that a flood should reoccur like it did in 2011.

So, you know, I think our government is trying to work with producers that have been affected by the 2011 flood, and foremost the importance of our budget targeting to have a secondary outlet in Lake Manitoba and to have members opposite not support us in that. And I think the member from Agassiz can really relate to the fact that we are, you know, being proactive in designing a system that has some alternative solutions of draining of Lake Manitoba in appropriate manner so we minimize the risk of the reoccurrence of 2011.

Mr. Briese: This wasn't Mother Nature. This was an artificial flood and I'm speaking only—I'm not speaking to the whole Interlake or the whole west lake; I'm speaking of the inundation zone around the lake. Those ranchers and producers are being unfairly curtailed on their crop insurance. They had nothing to do with what of—applied to them, you know.

I—the minister says he farmed for 30 years or produced livestock for 30 years. I've produced livestock for 40 years, and I experienced all the hardships that were out there and wasn't out asking for anything special to cover it. This was a specific one-time case where these ranchers should not be penalized on their crop insurance coverage going forward because of something that they had absolutely no control over. It was done to them to protect others, and they should not be penalized for it.

Promises were made. They—I'm sure this wasn't even considered when the promises were made, but promises were made, and they've been overlooked and these—and it's not a huge number. There's a few up and down each side of the lake that are getting penalized here and shouldn't be, and I would like the minister to look at some form of mitigation to these

producers. He admitted himself it takes up to five years to re-establish that hay ground. They got the crop insurance waived the first year. They got some payouts, but it wasn't enough to bridge them until they re-established those hay grounds. And if they could—when they—when this happens too, their individual production index goes down because they don't have the production.

So this is something that needs to be looked at. It's a question of fairness. I'm done.

Mr. Kostyshyn: I just would like to relate to, you know, the government's partnership with the producers that were affected by the program. And let me first and foremost refer to the excess moisture component that—I think we can go back to the '90s—that producers were screaming and hollering for that. It took this side of the House to bring forward that program, and we're very proud of that because we heard the agriculture producers and we felt that that was necessary, and today a number of producers really complement the, you know, the crop side of that and excess moisture.

But let me just share some information that I think is very key to the question that's been brought forward by the member from Agassiz. Four hundred and forty million dollars has been provided to Manitoba affected by extreme weather and flooding in 2011. Of this, \$341 million has been a direct support to agriculture producers that were affected in Lake Manitoba, parts A and B in AgriRecovery. And we talk about the spring blizzard conditions. We talk about the ag insurance. Those were dollars that were paid out. And, you know, when we talk about forage restoration programs, there was dollars that were available, a direct payment of 100-and-some-odd dollars an acre, and it was dollars that were brought forward that could be used in eventual time to rejuvenate parcels of land that were affected by the flooded land. And I know that, as I mentioned earlier to the member opposite, that over 3 million acres were unseeded in 2011. A number of those unseeded acres were the highest on record, and, you know, it actually superseded the '97 flood and '99 flood.

So, you know, in 2011, the compensation under BRAP in the rest of the province was really amazing, the amount of dollars that went into it. So I just wanted to acknowledge the fact that, you know, we continue to work with producers and provide some other form of insurance programs to help them out. But, more importantly, the building and recovery provided \$20 million to flood-affected forage and

livestock producers in Lake Manitoba; \$11.3 million was paid out in hay losses; and \$2.7 million were paid out in pasture losses; and \$6 million was paid out towards restoration of the pasture. I know that's not, you know, that's not the end solution to what we're talking about, but this government was there to help out the producers, and we continue to work it.

*(16:50)

Let me just be repetitious of what I'm talking about. As far as the betterment of the Lake Manitoba—and although in inundation zone is to someone that the member from Agassiz keeps bringing it up, the fact is rain got there, moisture got there, so I challenge the fact that Mother Nature was not part of it. I beg to differ on that when we talk about moisture that comes down the Assiniboine River and the Qu'Appelle Valley from another watershed that's beyond it. The true reality is that the sooner we accept the fact that Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg is the bathtub of a watershed, and until we build a secondary outlet to develop that, and this government's been very proactive about developing a system that we need to be conscientious and have a secondary outlet. We've committed dollars in our budget, the \$5.5 billion, and we continue to do that. If the member opposite feels that it's not appropriate, I would beg to differ. Because what we're having now is we're having additional taps being brought into our watershed. Our only choices, in the province of Manitoba, being the bathtub of a watershed, is to have a secondary outlet, and that's what we're talking to be proactive, so we don't have to have the inconvenience for the producers in the Lake Manitoba inundation zone, and for all producers to have a strategy in place so we minimize overland flooding and have an alternative such as a secondary controlled outlet in Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Chairperson, to the Minister of Agriculture, I raise with the minister the issue regarding the PED virus. He's well aware of the concern around that and the impact that it can have on the hog industry. I've asked him whether or not he's had conversations with those in the livestock transport business who are on the front lines of that in many ways, and how they believe they can be part of stemming any spread of the virus in Manitoba. Has he or his staff been able to meet with representatives of the livestock transport industry on the concerns and the solutions around this important issue?

Mr. Kostyshyn: And thank you, for the member from Steinbach, for bringing that question forward. And let me reiterate the importance of the PED spread. And in my earlier comments, last year, when I was down in Minneapolis and met with the Agriculture Department, and the importance of the spread of the PED and how an economic crisis that's really developed in the pork industry in—down in the US side, and then I think to the importance of the isoweans that are moving down into the US from Manitoba has also now created somewhat of a challenge for industry in the province of Manitoba. But it's a true reflection of the isoweans and the province of Manitoba delivering down there.

And the reality is, the PED has been in existence in the US side for two years plus, could be out on my statistics on that, and still haven't been able to bring forward a vaccine. And I think those are the challenges that, you know, we face in the industry. And as I indicated before, the MAFRD staff are working very diligently and we're very fortunate that, you know, today we're sitting with, you know, so far, and I keep my fingers crossed every day that we don't have any more of that.

But it's pretty evident, you know, when we talk to the US industry about the PED spread, and what we share information with the US counterparts of the importance and what have they learned and what is the best mechanism of sustaining the spread of PED, a number of the members—or the industry had said that obviously transportation, you know, is one of the key things that we need to stay on top of. So with me saying that, you know, we continue to talk to industry, and much to the member from Steinbach, we've had some communications, staff has had some communications with the transportation industry in the geographical area that we talk about.

And so, as you would know, that we continue to talk to industry, and we continue to work in consultation with Manitoba pork industry because transportation industry is very key. And I know that, you know, we need to help out industry as much as we can and find creative dollars that is somewhat—it is—you kind of a—general taxpayer dollars that could be used wisely, that it's—can accommodate a number of industries. And I would really appreciate, you know, the member from Steinbach, and I know that he's well aware that we've worked very hard, our staff continues to work to find mechanisms to accommodate.

And—but I also want to remind the member from Steinbach that we're also in consultation with Manitoba Pork because they're truly are—it's—they're the consultants of the pork industry, and to find the appropriate mechanism to address the issue not only from a geographical trucking industry, but a province-wide trucking industry that can accommodate the spread of the PED by means of a transport truck.

Mr. Goertzen: Just very succinctly, because I—there was a lot of discussion in there, and I appreciate that the minister appreciates this is an important issue. Can he just be specific, have members of his staff met with the livestock transport industry, and it's particularly the group that I've referenced to him? Yes or no, have they had the discussion, had a meeting?

Mr. Kostyshyn: As the last time I talked to staff, I understand that there's been direct conversation with the trucking industry that I'm assuming the member from Steinbach refers to and, basically, trying to find innovative infrastructure that can accommodate the dollar requirement to address the issue and meet certain codes of practice to identify of sustaining the importance of sanitation of the transportation truck.

But I—and I may be very straightforward with the member from Steinbach. We've also brought forward, you know, that Manitoba pork industry, because we really think it's key to have consultation with the Manitoba pork industry that represents all of us that, you know, within our department, we want to be very creative to have the dollars used in a wise mechanism that represents all industry regardless of where they are geographically in the province of Manitoba and for the betterment of the industry and minimizing the spread of the PED.

Mr. Ewasko: I thank the opportunity to ask the Minister of Education a question. It would be nice if the minister, considering we went through Bill 63

committee last night, if he could provide me with a list of names or, off the top of his head, who he had consulted with on the creation of Bill 63.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Well, I'm not sure we have enough time to articulate all of the people that we've met with, but, of course I did speak with all of the presidents of the universities and colleges. We did—staff, I know, met with the vice-president's academic from each of the institutions and were fully briefed on the bill. We had the opportunity to meet with faculty representations from most if not all of the institutions. They were certainly invited, and I can't tell you whether everybody attended—tell the member if all attended, but I'm—certainly everyone was invited.

In addition to that, we did meet with union members, as well, from some of the colleges who had interest in what we were trying to do, and so I think—and, of course, talked with students in many different forums, including in my own office where I had the opportunity to talk with members of the Canadian Federation of Students who went and visited each MLA. I don't know if they visited the member. They certainly visited me, and we had a chance to talk about it.

Student union from University of Manitoba, we had a chance to talk about it as well. And so we have had conversations with a wide variety of folks from across the post-secondary education sector, and so it was useful to have that kind of a conversation in my mind—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

IN SESSION

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 27, 2014

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