

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
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

Thursday, June 5, 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: Seeing no bills, we'll move on to petitions.

Tabor Home—Construction Delays

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

And the background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to stop breaking their promises, stop the delays and keep

their commitment to proceed with the construction of Tabor Home in 2014.

And this petition is signed by B. Guenther, H. McAfee, B. Bergen and many other fine Manitobans.

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

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

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

The background to this 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 either to approve or reject an increase to the PST other than 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 the 1st, 2013.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

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

This petition is submitted on behalf of M. Bond, M. Brook, T. Holod and other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any further petitions?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, committee reports.

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development Fourth Report

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Fourth Report on the standing committee of Social and Economic Development.

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 4, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 64)** – *The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le recouvrement des petites créances à la Cour du Banc de la Reine*
- **Bill (No. 72)** – *The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba*
- **Bill (No. 74)** – *The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public*
- **Bill (No. 203)** – *The Nurse Practitioner Day Act/Loi sur la Journée des infirmières praticiennes*
- **Bill (No. 208)** – *The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Support Our Troops Licence Plates)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conducteurs et les véhicules (plaques d'immatriculation « Appuyons nos troupes »)*
- **Bill (No. 209)** – *The Lymphedema Awareness Day Act/Loi sur la Journée de sensibilisation au lymphœdème*
- **Bill (No. 214)** – *The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act/Loi sur le Mois de la sensibilisation à la neurofibromatose*

- **Bill (No. 300)** – *The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le « St. Charles Country Club »*

Committee Membership

- Mr. EWASKO
- Mr. GAUDREAU (Chairperson)
- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Hon. Mr. KOSTYSHYN
- Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX
- Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park)
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO (Logan)
- Mrs. ROWAT
- Mr. Saran
- Mr. Schuler
- Hon. Mr. SWAN

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

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 72)** – The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba:*

David M. Sanders, Private Citizen

*Your Committee heard the following four presentations on **Bill (No. 74)** – The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public:*

Maurice Sabourin, Private Citizen

Mike Sutherland, President of the Winnipeg Police Association

Gord Perrier, Winnipeg Police Service

Kevin Rampersad, Private Citizen

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 209)** – The Lymphedema Awareness Day Act/Loi sur la Journée de sensibilisation au lymphœdème:*

Kim Avanthay, Lymphedema Association of Manitoba

*Your Committee heard the following eleven presentations on **Bill (No. 214)** – The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act/Loi sur le Mois de la sensibilisation à la neurofibromatose:*

Jeffrey Nykoliation, Private Citizen
 Tracy Gregorash, Manitoba Neurofibromatosis
 Support Group
 Shannon Goodall-George, Private Citizen
 Doreen Loewen, Private Citizen
 Annette Lissenberg, Private Citizen
 Christa Degagne, Private Citizen
 Rebecca Penner, Private Citizen
 Nancy Anderson, Private Citizen
 Connie Bart Hamel, Private Citizen
 Kathleen Demers, Private Citizen
 Carol Maione, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 214)** – *The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act/Loi sur le Mois de la sensibilisation à la neurofibromatose*:

Brenda Marion-Gerula, Private Citizen
 Karen Gail DePratto, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 64)** – *The Court of Queen's Bench Small Claims Practices Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le recouvrement des petites créances à la Cour du Banc de la Reine*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 72)** – *The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 74)** – *The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 203)** – *The Nurse Practitioner Day Act/Loi sur la Journée des infirmières praticiennes*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 208)** – *The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Support Our Troops Licence Plates)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conducteurs*

et les véhicules (plaques d'immatriculation « Appuyons nos troupes »)

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

THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended in the proposed clause 60.1(b) by striking out "depicting a yellow ribbon and maple leaves" and substituting "symbolic of the message conveyed by those words".

THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by renumbering the proposed section 60.1 as subsection 60.1(1) and adding the following as subsection 60.1(2):

Use of funds

60.1(2) The minister may direct that all or a portion of the charges collected for the specialty number plates described in subsection (1) are to be paid by the administrator to a registered charity specified by the minister.

THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended in the part before clause (a) of the proposed section 60.1, by striking out "The registrar must make available a" and substituting "Upon receipt of an organization's application that is acceptable to the registrar, the registrar shall make available a specialty";

- **Bill (No. 209)** – *The Lymphedema Awareness Day Act/Loi sur la Journée de sensibilisation au lymphœdème*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 214)** – *The Neurofibromatosis Awareness Month Act/Loi sur le Mois de la sensibilisation à la neurofibromatose*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 300)** – *The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le « St. Charles Country Club »*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

RCMP Shooting in Moncton

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Yesterday, Canadians watched in horror as a tragedy unfolded in the streets of Moncton, New Brunswick, a city that today remains in lockdown. I know all members of the Assembly will join me in hoping and praying for a speedy and peaceful resolution to this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, three members of the RCMP were shot and killed in Moncton. No words can express the heartbreak that the families of these three Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers are experiencing today. They, as well as the two officers injured and their families, are in our thoughts today.

The death of a police officer is among the most challenging a community or a country faces. The loss of a police officer is so rare and yet they hit our communities so hard. The individuals killed in Moncton yesterday have always lived with the reality that they might find themselves where they found themselves yesterday. They went to work every day knowing this. Their daily bravery and courage are truly remarkable and we can never repay them for literally giving all to their job.

As the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said earlier today, this is a stark reminder of the risks taken by law enforcement officers on a daily basis, as well as the commitments and sacrifices made by the RCMP and their families. We need to always remember their sacrifices are made by both officers and their families. Our police officers not only serve and protect us, they're also community leaders, coaches, volunteers, family, friends and neighbours.

The people of Manitoba stand with the family and friends of the officers in Moncton, New Brunswick, and the law enforcement community across Canada. As they work to heal from this tragedy and to find justice for these unspeakable acts of violence, our thoughts and prayers will be with them.

Upon completion of statements from other members I will be requesting leave for a moment of silence in honour of these three officers.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I want to, on behalf of our leader and our caucus, extend our deepest sympathies and our heartfelt condolences to the families of those officers who were killed yesterday in Moncton.

We also keep in our thoughts and our prayers those who were injured and the police officers who are still, we believe, at this moment, involved in the hunt for the person responsible for this horrible crime against our country's finest.

Last night we were in committee considering a bill that would provide police officers some protection from their names being published, a bill that we were pleased to second and support. There were four representatives from law enforcement there, representing the City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Police Association and two officers. They told us about their stories. They told us about how they were sometimes the target of those who would cause them harm just because of their job, just because they're police officers, just because they want to protect us. And even as they were telling us their stories last night in committee, the tragedy was unfolding in Moncton, putting a horrific reality to those stories that we heard.

We cannot fathom what it's like to leave our homes, our families and our children with the knowledge that we are putting ourselves in harm's way to protect others, but that's what our police officers do, and they do it every day; they live with it and they—and their families live with that reality. It's what they do for us.

So when we see the injuries, the loss of life of the three Mounties, our hearts break. We think of their families, we think of their comrades, we think of their community, and we wonder what can we do.

Well, there are things we can do. We can keep them in our thoughts. We can keep them in our prayers. We can give, those who are able financially, to the funds that are established to support the families of the fallen officers. But most importantly, we can thank all of our police officers every day. When we see them in our communities, when we see them in our grocery stores, in our kids' schools or at ceremonies we can say thank you for your service, thank you for what you do. And if we do that, when they're out there protecting us, even though we won't be with them physically, they'll know that each of us are with them in our heartfelt support.

We pray for the safety of our police officers, and may this tragic day never be repeated.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

* (13:40)

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this shocking news of police officers killed in the line of duty and others injured brings home the concerns that were talked about last night in terms of the safety of police officers. And I remember last night asking several of the presenters, you know, what can be done more to protect police officers? And this is an unspeakable tragedy, but hopefully there will be a careful investigation.

It's my understanding that the individual who was suspected of carrying out these killings had shown signs that there may be some problems ahead, some concerns. And maybe we need to look into how we can identify and help such individuals before such outrageous and tragic events occur.

Whatever the answers are, we clearly need answers in how to better prevent these kinds of tragic events. And I hope, as we take a minute of silence to remember what's happened, to extend our best wishes and condolences to their family and friends and to police across the country, that we will also think about, you know, how we can prevent these events in the future.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to observe a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise.

A moment of silence was observed.

70th Anniversary of D-Day

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we commemorate the 70th anniversary of a powerful event that still resonates in the minds of Canadians, D-Day. D-Day was the greatest seaborne invasion in history and an important turning point for the Allied forces in the Second World War.

On June 6th, 1944, more than 14,000 Canadian soldiers landed on the war-ravaged shores of Normandy. Another 10,000 members in 110 ships of the Royal Canadian Navy were at sea, with 15 Royal Canadian Air Force squadrons overhead. To secure victory on D-Day, 340 Canadians gave their lives, 574 were wounded and 47 taken prisoner.

Three Manitoban units took part in the mission: the Fort Garry Horse, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and the 402nd City of Winnipeg Squadron. They assaulted a beachfront, code-named Juno, while Canadian paratroopers landed just east of the assault beaches. The Rifles were among the first to land on Juno Beach, while the 402nd flew Spitfires overhead, covering those below.

Of the many beaches stormed that day by British, American and Canadian forces, Juno was the most successful campaign, with Canadian units taking their objectives and advancing further than any Allied troops, a proud achievement for our country.

D-Day proved to be the beginning of the end of the Nazi regime in Europe. Within two months, all of northern France was liberated, and over the next year, the rest of Europe would follow.

Tomorrow leaders from around the world, including our Premier (Mr. Selinger), accompanied by Manitoba D-Day veterans, will gather on the beaches of Normandy commemorating D-Day and the sacrifices that were made.

Today we remember those who fought, including many Manitobans, on the dangerous beaches of northern France that early morning in June and all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy today. We are incredibly fortunate to live free from the fear and violence of war. We are fortunate to have veterans of the Second World War still with us today, some of whom were able to travel back to Normandy and represent Manitoba. Today we remember their bravery and pause to learn from their sacrifices.

Lest we forget.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the PC caucus, I am honoured today to speak about such a monumental aspect of our history both here in Manitoba and for our country as a whole.

On June 6, 1944, the Allied Expeditionary Force successfully invaded occupied France at Normandy. On this day more than 24,000 Canadians, including

a number of Manitobans, took part in the first large-scale effort to liberate Europe. This included 14,000 soldiers from the Third Canadian Infantry Division who were tasked with securing an eight-kilometre-wide section of Juno Beach under the command of Sir Miles Dempsey. Canada also contributed 109 vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy, including 11 destroyers and two landing ships.

Of special significance for our province, our very own Royal Winnipeg Rifles were among the first to storm Juno Beach. Also, Manitoba's own 402 City of Winnipeg Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force flew Spitfires in the air above to provide cover for the soldiers below.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadians engaged and defeated 7,100 enemy combatants at Juno Beach; 359 Canadians died in the Normandy campaign, with a total of 1,074 Canadian casualties. By the end of June 6, 1944, the Canadians had already met their objective and had advanced further than any other nation's soldiers.

On the 70th anniversary of this crucial turning point in the history of the Second World War, it is important to take the time to remember the perseverance, fortitude and sacrifice of the brave men and women who fought for their country on the beaches of Normandy. Hundreds of thousands of Allied troops from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, France, the United Kingdom and other Allied countries took part in the operation, leaving behind their homes, their families. Canada's soldiers fought valiantly for the cause. We owe these brave soldiers our respect and gratitude and they will never be remembered—they will forever be remembered and cherished.

And it has been a very special year with regards to anniversaries; 2014 not only marks the 70th anniversary but also marks the centenary, 100th anniversary, of the First World War as well as the 25th anniversary of democratic elections in Poland. With so many monumental anniversaries that have had such a profound impact on the world as we know it today, it is important to take a moment to honour these achievements and the brave individuals who helped to answer the call and, in many cases, made enormous sacrifices all for the betterment of future generations.

It is with this in mind I would like to thank all of our soldiers, veterans and any Manitoban, Canadian or citizen of the world who has stood up for what is

right and made a difference in our world. We thank you and you will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave for a moment of silence once all statements have been completed.

Mr. Gerrard: I ask for leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, today we remember and we salute all the members of the Allied forces, including many, many Canadians, who participated in the D-Day invasion of June the 6th, 1944.

The invasion of Normandy marked a major turning point in the war, in the Second World War, and from that point on the tide was with the Allied forces, and it was within a little over a year that the end of the war came in Europe and not long after that in Japan.

* (13:50)

We in particular salute the Royal Winnipeg Rifles who were there and remember their role on Juno Beach. We remember also the Fort Garry Horse and the 402nd Squadron, the City of Winnipeg Squadron, for their roles because they are from Manitoba, were centred in Manitoba and were a Manitoba contribution by many Manitobans toward this effort. There are many here, I'm sure, who have relatives who fought. My father was in the Second World War in the Allied forces, not at—on D-Day but in North Africa and Italy and in the Middle East.

And just from the collective memories that we now remember, we want to learn from these sacrifices and we want to apply what we have learned in the past to ongoing conflicts today in Congo, in Syria, as we were talking this morning, in other areas of the world. Ukraine's still troubled. But let us learn and let us not forget what happened on D-Day. Let us learn for the future and see if we can change and find a better direction.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to observe a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise.

A moment of silence was observed.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any further ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests I would like to introduce.

First, in the Speaker's Gallery today we have with us Debbie Chomiak, who is the spouse of the honourable Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak), and her mother, Jackie O'Brien, from Prince Edward Island.

On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon. *[interjection]* Yes, he better be on his best behaviour today.

And also, seated in the public gallery we have with us from Red River College language training program, we have 15 students under the direction of Ms. Flo Robinson. This group is located in the constituency of the Minister of Multiculturalism and Literacy (Ms. Marcelino).

And also seated in the public gallery, from Grandview School we have 12 grade 8 students under the direction of Ms. Barbara Grexton. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Struthers).

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

And also prior to oral questions, I want to draw the attention to all honourable members, this is the last scheduled shift for our page Maya Janzen. Maya presently attends Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in grade 12, and she plans on attending the Mennonite University in the fall and hopes to work in the area of social development. Maya has attended high school in Germany on—and on exchange program, and she is the first page to be interviewed via Skype while in Germany in the spring of 2013. So we wish Maya all the best in her future endeavours and her future career choices.

And thank you very much for your service to members. Thank you, Maya.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Tax and Fee Increases Government Spending Record

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): We'll miss your smile, Maya.

Last election, of course, the NDP ran on a promise, and it was a promise not to hike taxes, as we know. But these broken-promise tax hikes did

occur, and that is because the spend is the spend and they cannot get their spending addiction under control.

And their tax hikes mean that there is less money for Manitobans to spend, approximately \$500 million per year less money, an average of about \$1,600 per household impacting on an increased cost in—for fuel, beer, wine, benefits, car registration, gas, home insurance, haircuts. If you say it fast it doesn't sound like much, but if you're paying the bills it's a lot, a big difference.

And given that massive, record-setting hike in taxes over a two-year period, that additional half a billion dollars a year in revenue, you would expect that the government should now be able to balance the budget. You'd be wrong, Mr. Speaker. This year, \$380-million deficit; that's more than \$1 million a day of spending above—and above all these tax hikes.

Would the Finance Minister simply admit that the government has a spending problem and undertake to get that problem fixed?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): What I would say to the member opposite is that when the economic crisis hit, this government took a decision, like many other governments across the country, including the federal government, and that was to invest in stimulus funding, to protect jobs in Manitoba, that was to go in a deficit. It was a decision that governments across the country made.

And now we're moving to balance, so we're going to do that in a responsible way, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to put at risk the services that are important to Manitobans. We're not going to put at risk the recovery by slashing jobs and stopping the investments into economic growth, stopping the investments into critical infrastructure and flood protection. We believe that that is a responsible path forward.

I would remind the member opposite that when his party campaigned in the last election, they actually promised to balance the books in 2018, two years later than we're committed to.

Mr. Pallister: Well, sadly, yet again, Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister appears totally unconcerned with her government's rampant overspending, and each day \$1 million more is added to the debt of our children and grandchildren over and above what they are spending—and above what they are taxing.

The minister spoke about a decision. The decision was made by the NDP strategists to run on a promise to the people of Manitoba which was subsequently broken, and that reality remains.

This is the only province that hiked the PST, and \$1,600 per household in broken-promise taxes, on top of what the government knew were among the highest taxes in the country already, is surely hurting our province's employment growth. The impact is clear.

The impact in our province is clear, and government members should be as concerned about it as Manitobans are that I speak to. Their fairy tale of job creation doesn't—isn't selling out there. Their reannouncements of previously unkept promises isn't resonating either, and their phony numbers just aren't adding up.

Will the Premier (Mr. Selinger) admit today that Manitobans are better at creating jobs with their own money than his government ever will be when it takes it from Manitobans?

Ms. Howard: You know—and I know that the Leader of the Official Opposition loves to run down the Manitoba economy, loves to portray doom and gloom, loves to put out that negative image. I want to talk to him a bit about some of the things that have happened as we move through the recovery. Let's talk about some of the investments that have happened, some of the things that private companies have seen here.

We saw, of course, Canadian Tire opening its digital innovation centre in Winnipeg, creating 50 good jobs; members opposite were opposed to any investment like that. We've seen, of course, a data centre by MTS with 30 good jobs, New Flyer, an expansion creating 30 new jobs. We've seen Export Development Canada tell us that Manitoba led the nation in export growth.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know that the businesses, the manufacturers, the exporters that locate here are doing their best to create jobs. We're doing what we can to partner with them to make sure that happens. We know the plan by the Leader of the Opposition would be to sit on his hands and do nothing.

Mr. Pallister: We're very happy with the resilient and strong and diverse Manitoba small-business community and totally supportive of it.

The record of the government, of course, is this: Since the PST came in, average weekly wage

growth—this should concern government members; they might care to pay attention because this impacts on their constituents—ninth in job creation, ninth in average weekly wage growth and leading the country in inflation.

* (14:00)

This hurts our seniors. This hurts the people who are looking for work. This hurts the people who are working. And those statistical truths are, despite the government's objection to Stats Canada numbers, from Stats Canada.

Now, why—why—is this tax-and-spend administration so out of control in their spending?

Well, let's talk about how out of control they are. When this Premier (Mr. Selinger) came to office, our provincial debt was \$18 billion. Today it's over \$30 billion. That's an increase of 67 per cent.

Will the Finance Minister not admit that that is an illustration of a lack of ability to get your spending under control and that it's dangerous for the future of our province to continue in this direction?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, there's so many inaccuracies in that question, it's going to take some time to correct them.

But let's start with his assertion about inflation. I will table for him information from the source he cites, Statistics Canada, that will show when you look at inflation since July 1st, you will actually see that growth in the inflation rate in Manitoba is the third lowest of all provinces and below Canada's increase of 1.8 per cent.

He also talked about wages. I'm happy to give him some more reading. Also from the source he cited, Stats Canada, happy to table these documents that will show that, according to Statistics Canada, weekly earnings in Manitoba have increased by 3.3 per cent since last year, once again above the national average and well above Saskatchewan, who ranked dead last at 1 and a half per cent.

He wants to talk about statistical truths. Those are some statistical truths.

Provincial Deficit Government Accountability

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): They're \$30 billion in debt. That's a statistical truth.

Here's another one. Interest rates in the 1990s were two and a half times as high on average. How's that grab you? So the government can borrow money at 3 per cent today, but in '95, for example, it cost you about 14 per cent. So you'd think that this ability to pay far less on your debt would actually enhance our ability as a province to be stronger.

It doesn't seem to work, Mr. Speaker. The NDP is actually still increasing our debt by record amounts, depleting our Fiscal Stabilization Fund by billions of dollars and actually creating a situation where we're more and more dependent on moneylenders than we've ever been as a province and where our children and grandchildren will have the services that we have had the advantage of ourselves imperilled in the delivery to them.

So, given that this Premier (Mr. Selinger) is considerably skilled at blaming others, I'd have to ask him: Who's to blame for this record increase in our provincial debt of 67 per cent since he became Premier? Is it global economic circumstance, the weather, or is it him?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): Well, once again, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is simply wrong.

The net debt at Manitoba is about \$15 billion, and that amount, of course, doesn't include all of the assets. The numbers he is asserting includes assets, includes assets that have been built by this government. I know that's a foreign concept to him, building assets, so I understand why he wouldn't count that.

But I also want to say to him, I wonder if he made a similar speech when he was at the Cabinet table. He must have been agog at the debt-to-GDP ratio when he was at the Cabinet table because it was higher then than it is today. He must have been aghast at the debt-servicing costs because they were twice then what they are today.

When he had the chance, did he make a similar speech, Mr. Speaker, or is it one set of rules for him and one set of rules for the rest of us?

Federal Transfer Payments

Mr. Pallister: Faintly humorous, Mr. Speaker. A Finance Minister who has never failed to go into deficit is asking a question of someone who's never failed to balance the books.

Now, I would have to say that the net debt of our province is actually going up and has, in fact, gone

up by 50 per cent—50 per cent net debt increase. So when the Finance Minister of Manitoba stands up and tries to quibble about gross, net, what she's ignoring is the fact that it's out of control either way.

It's out of control at a time of record low interest rates, Mr. Speaker. Our interest rates have never been lower. When Manitobans see lower interest rates on their mortgage, they're happy. When this government sees lower interest rates, they spend more. And then they raise taxes on top of it, and that's what they're doing now.

Now, the spendDP dependency on federal transfers is also at record levels. In the '90s average transfers were \$1.6 billion. Today they're two and a half times higher, \$4 billion. Two and a half times higher, and yet this government still can't get its act together.

Who's to blame for that? Is that the federal government, Stats Canada, floods, or is it the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and his colleagues in the Cabinet of the spendDP?

Ms. Howard: When the economic crisis hit this government, like all governments, like the federal government—*[interjection]* I know they believe that nothing happened, Mr. Speaker. I've heard that over and over from them that everything was fine, nothing happened. Leading economists will tell you that it was the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression.

But when that happened, we decided, yes, to go in a deficit, like the federal government, like governments across the country, in order to protect jobs of Manitobans.

Given this line of questioning, I'm led to believe that were members opposite faced with that choice, they would've done exactly what the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson) said they should do and cut half a billion dollars out of the budget on day one on the economic crisis. That would've led to jobs lost. It would've extended the recession and we would have a much tougher time today. But that is the approach that they would've taken.

We took a different approach, an approach to protect jobs, protect services, grow the economy, get back to balance responsibly.

Fiscal Management

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Finance Minister's so desperate for responses, she has a boom going on

one response and now she's got a bust going on another one.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the difference between us is clear on this issue. We are concerned. The Finance Minister appears not to be. Her colleagues appear not to be concerned. In five responses, not one shred of evidence that this Finance Minister has the slightest concern about a mounting debt in our province, the slightest concern about a massive increase in the money that goes to service past overspending, not one iota of concern in a single response.

That tells me and anyone watching that this government has not admitted its spending addiction and will not address it, and Manitoba will be imperilled as long as this group is in charge. They have doubled our debt in good times, and they don't understand, apparently, that \$800 million this year alone will go to service past overspending and not go to social services or education or infrastructure or health care or any of our highest priorities.

Do they not understand that they are, in fact, in the absence of any admission of a problem, Manitoba's greatest threat to our social security and our ability to compete?

Ms. Howard: I am absolutely concerned about the plan to get to balance responsibly without cutting the services that Manitobans count on.

Let's take—look for—let's take, for a moment, a look at the budgets that the Leader of the Opposition did vote for when he had the chance. He voted for budgets that, over his time in government, cut nearly \$38 million from the Department of Agriculture. He voted for budgets that, over his time here, cut \$20 million from northern communities, a 17 per cent reduction. He voted for budgets that every year cut or froze funding to schools, even in years when he voted for budgets to increase the education support levy and education property tax that this government got rid of. Those are the budgets he favours. Those are the budgets he voted for, cuts to services while you increase taxes. That is his record.

On this side of the House we will balance the budget in a responsible way. We'll protect the services that Manitobans count on. We will create good jobs working with business so young people can stay here and enjoy a good life. We'll invest in flood protection and critical infrastructure. We won't

let them force us back to a day when the way forward was to cut—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable minister's time has elapsed.

Lake Manitoba Water Levels Flood Control Management

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Yes, Mr. Speaker, more NDP promises. They just highlight the NDP failures time and again.

Mr. Speaker, the water levels on Lake Manitoba continue to be just on the edge of disaster due to this NDP government's mismanagement of water levels, and yet this minister does nothing. His answer has been that he's talking with the federal government and tries to assure Manitobans that the provincial government is ready for action.

Mr. Speaker, something did not sound right in the minister's response, what a surprise. So we asked the federal government about the minister's comments, and they had no idea what he was talking about regarding approvals for operating the emergency channel.

Why won't this minister just admit that this government's total mismanagement of Manitoba's waterways and lake levels is at risk, putting Manitobans at risk for flooding?

*(14:10)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): First of all, Mr. Speaker, during the 2011 flood, in a matter of months we put in place the emergency outlet, something that would've probably taken years under normal circumstances. We did that with the full support of the federal government, which gave the required environmental approvals.

Following the flood, we contacted the federal government to see if we could have advance clearance to operate the emergency outlet in the case of any kind of a flood situation, and the response, of course, was that it is an emergency channel and would it require an emergency situation, basically, hitting flood level.

We have, Mr. Speaker, contacted both AANDC, which is Aboriginal and northern affairs, because many of the communities around Lake St. Martin are impacted. We've also contacted DFO as well.

So the member is quite incorrect. We've taken the necessary steps. We've indicated in a proactive way that if we hit flood stage we're asking for the approvals to use the emergency outlet that we put in place in—

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

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, this minister will blame anyone for his mismanagement of water levels in Manitoba.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, Transport Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development: What do all these federal departments have in common? None of them have been contacted by this minister, nor his department, nor did he require any contact.

Mr. Speaker, why won't this minister just admit to this government's total mismanagement of Manitoba waterways and lake levels?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong again. And I want to remind members opposite, we're talking about the management of flood controls in this province.

We've also committed to a permanent outlet from Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba. I want to point out we've already built the temporary outlet from Lake St. Martin.

But I also want to put on the record, if we're talking about flood management, it wasn't members on this side of the House that joked about flooding the city of Winnipeg, wasn't members on this side of the House that stopped the operation of the Portage Diversion last year, putting people downstream on the Assiniboine and Winnipeg at risk. It was the Leader of the Opposition, his leader. That's mismanagement.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, the most up-to-date information on the Province's own flood website shows that Lake Manitoba water levels sit at 813.33–2 feet; 814 is considered flood level.

The NDP has never been able to properly manage waterways and water levels in western Manitoba. Would it surprise you that the Portage Diversion has been in operation for 10 of the last 12 years?

Why won't this minister just admit to his government's total mismanagement of Manitoba's waterways and lake levels?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I—you know, the twisted logic of the member of Brandon West is just incredible.

Yes, the Portage Diversion has been used extensively. So has the floodway. In fact, it's prevented \$38 billion worth of damage. It's been used extensively because previous generations had the foresight to see the need for flood mitigation. And I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, it was a leader in the '60s also raised the sales tax to deal with flood mitigation.

I want to put on the record it's this government that's taken the courageous step for the people around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. We're putting in place permanent mitigation. We put in place 1 cent on the dollar.

Of course, members opposite, what did they do? All talk for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin. They voted against that flood mitigation.

CFS Case Concern Update (Matias de Antonio)

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I suggest that minister make one more call: 911.

Mr. Speaker, the family of little Matias de Antonio are frustrated with the lack of opening—openness surrounding the tragic death of the baby while in the care of CFS. The coroner's report is complete but has not been shared with them. The meeting with the foster family has been cancelled and not rescheduled.

The minister promised this family information and results. It has been over two months since the tragic death of little Matias.

When is she going to keep her promises?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): The loss of baby Matias is difficult for the family, as it is for all Manitobans. I feel the grief that they have when I meet with them, when we have conversations about how they move forward. I personally can't understand how you move forward. I have the privilege to go home and to see my sons. They don't have that privilege.

And the pain that they feel, the comfort that they need, we need to continue to work with them, to share with them the information as we have it, to continue a dialogue to help support them on a journey, a journey I hope that one day will provide them with some healing.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, when the minister last met with the Herriera family, she told them that she felt, quote, her staff had done the right thing in taking baby Matias.

Does she still believe the action of her staff was in the best interest of the child, when we can all see what the results have been?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, when people are on the front lines providing service to families, families that are in crisis and distress, we have to trust that they are making the best decision based on the No. 1 priority, the safety of the child. It is not for me to judge.

We will have—there is an investigation that is ongoing, evaluation of what happened within this case. The information is being shared with the family as we receive it. We will continue to support them with information and help support them as they go through this tragedy and as they grieve the loss of baby Matias.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister has over 1,000 recommendations from inquests into children who have died while under the care of CFS, names like Breana Belanger, Jaylene Redhead, baby Samuel, Cameron Ouskan, Heaven Traverse, baby Amelia and, of course, Phoenix Sinclair, to name only a few.

Will little Matias de Antonio become only a list of recommendations to this minister?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: When there's a tragedy in the child-welfare system, it is our responsibility to investigate, to understand what went wrong, what happened. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why we have worked with a number of independent officers, as well as other judges and justices. And as we've got these recommendations, we have worked hard to implement them. And as we've implemented them, we've strengthened the system.

Do we have more work to do? Yes, we do. But as we're working on strengthening the system, we've hired more front-line workers; 280 more workers are in place. We have developed standards and policies and practices. We have ensured that there is good quality training and assessment tools being provided to the front-line staff. We're ensuring that we are supporting the foster parents by financial support, by providing them with training and information as we move forward.

We will continue to build a system with all of our community partners so we're able to provide protection for all Manitoba's children.

Ambulance Service Fees Impact on Seniors

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, more and more Manitobans are waiting longer for ambulances in an emergency situation, and now they're paying more to do it.

This Minister of Health has increased ambulance fees on Manitobans when they're at their most vulnerable, an increase of over 30 per cent on the most vulnerable Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Minister of Health making Manitobans pay more money for less service?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I would like to remind the member that we've just conducted the EMS review across the province. This is one of the biggest reviews we've done in terms of paramedics and ambulance response times. It's what we're doing to actually change the system right across the province. We're professionalizing the system and we're doing all this so that we can have better response times.

In Winnipeg we have some of the fastest response times in Canada, and we want to do better right around the province.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, their record is tax and fee increases on most vulnerable, fixed-income Manitobans.

When a senior falls in an apartment in rural Manitoba, an ambulance is called to help them. The wait time for someone to get help has grown longer and longer, and now seniors are expected to pay more money to wait longer. When seniors are the most vulnerable, this government expects them to pay more money.

Mr. Speaker, why is this Minister of Health punishing seniors and Manitobans when they are at their most vulnerable?

Ms. Selby: As I said, the EMS review is going to look at how we can make improvements for every Manitoban.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Pharmacare program across this province that doesn't take into account somebody's age, doesn't take into account how ill

they are. It takes into account how much money they earn, and we adjust it according to that.

* (14:20)

When it comes to life-saving cancer drugs, we provide those free for people at home because we know that that can be a difficult time for families.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I did want to address—the member actually brought the name of a gentleman to this House yesterday. He raised some very serious concerns about the treatment he received, and I do wish to look into it. The member did bring a name, but he wouldn't bring any more information, and as we looked into it, there were 21 people with that same name undergoing a similar treatment. We wonder if he could provide us some more detailed information so we could look into that particular situation.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister—excuse me—continues to victimize victims.

This minister and this government expects Manitobans to pay more and get less. That's not standing up for the health care in for—for for Manitobans.

Seniors who are at risk of falling in their own home have to call in—call an ambulance. And at their most vulnerable, the NDP expect seniors to pay more. It seems regardless of your health condition the NDP expect you to pay more and more.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister fuelling her government's spending addiction on ambulance fees on fixed-income, vulnerable seniors?

Ms. Selby: I think it's important we put some facts on the record. We know this party across from us, the Conservative Party, does like to unnecessarily scare people, but let's tell the truth of what's happening.

Despite the fact that we've seen a significant increase in the number of calls in the last four years that our ambulances respond to in rural Manitoba, we've actually seen those median response times improve, Mr. Speaker. We have seen a 25 per cent improvement in the time it takes an ambulance to reach someone in rural Manitoba, but we want to do more. It's why we've undergone an extensive review of how we can provide better service right across this—right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, the thing that's most scary to seniors is an American-style, two-tier health-care

system where they'd have to pay to move to the front of the line. That's what they want to do.

MPI Photo Radar Tickets Policy Concerns

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, recently we've seen reports about the spike in the number of photo radar tickets that have been issued in Winnipeg, and as we enter the summer months we want to encourage everyone to drive safely during the summer break that we have.

The NDP have in the past said that this message needs to apply to everyone, so recently I filed a freedom of information request asking how many photo radar tickets have been issued to Manitoba Public Insurance over the last two years, as they own a number of vehicles, not the least of which are luxury cars given to executives.

I was refused access to these records, Mr. Speaker, so I will ask the Minister responsible for Manitoba Public Insurance: How many photo radar tickets has the corporation received?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): If an individual is caught by photo radar exceeding the speed limit, the owner of that vehicle needs to pay the ticket unless they have a reason to challenge it. If you're driving a fleet vehicle, it's the driver's responsibility to pay that ticket.

I can assure the member that applies at MPI as well. And if there is an MPI executive or someone driving an MPI fleet vehicle that receives a ticket, it's the responsibility of that individual to pay the ticket. We think that's the right thing to do.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, the reason that I was denied access to the number of photo radar tickets issued to MPI is because the NDP government changed the policy. While the photo radar tickets issued to MPI were previously kept on file, I understand a new policy has been put in place by the NDP.

Now when a photo radar ticket is received by MPI, after the payment is made, administrative services is instructed to destroy all records of the ticket. That includes destroying any letters, destroying any faxes related to the ticket. It includes destroying the ticket itself and destroying the receipt of the payment. No records are to remain of the photo radar ticket.

Why has the NDP instructed that all records of photo radar tickets at MPI be destroyed?

Mr. Swan: Again, if an individual receives a speeding ticket, they should be paying that ticket unless they have a reason to challenge the authority of that ticket.

But, of course, I'm quite happy to talk about road safety because Manitoba Public Insurance, as our public auto insurance company, is devoted to road safety, to making our roads safer. And, Mr. Speaker, of course, the police have recently provided information that demonstrate that those combined efforts of law enforcement, of Manitoba Public Insurance and maybe more Manitobans getting the message have paid off.

And, for example, in the city of Winnipeg in 2012 I understand there were more than 20 fatal collisions. Last year, Mr. Speaker, there were only six. Now, that's one year over one year, there's no guarantee those numbers will remain, but I want to thank our police officers and I want members to appreciate the efforts of MPI and all Manitobans to making our roads and streets and highways safer.

Mr. Goertzen: I don't know which question he was answering, but it wasn't my question.

Mr. Speaker, there is no way to determine not only how many photo radar tickets were issued to MPI vehicles, there is also no way to determine who actually paid for those tickets, and the reason that there's no way to determine that is because the NDP have put in a new policy. The policy is that all those tickets must be shredded. The policy is that the receipt of payment of those tickets must be shredded. The policy said that any faxes or cover letters related to those tickets must be shredded and destroyed. There is no record that any photo radar ticket was ever issued to MPI because they're told to destroy all of the records.

Why has this government put in place a policy that calls on MPI to destroy all of their own photo radar tickets?

Mr. Swan: You know, I've got to hand it to the member of Steinbach. He's in a forest and he keeps running into trees.

The member has not once acknowledged, even though he's been told this probably 12 times in this House, that MPI has reduced premiums for Manitoba drivers in the past decade by 14.9 per cent. The member for Steinbach is well aware, although he

won't admit it in this House, that MPI provides the best service and the best value for drivers, better service than any other utility, public or private, in the province of Manitoba.

And I hear the members across the way, again, so grateful for the fact the Public Utilities Board ordered rebates. I know, like us, they must be happy to get those rebates and not have the money flowing out of the province to Toronto or New York or London. I guess the member for Steinbach just doesn't want to remember that.

Freedom of Information Requests Government Transparency Ranking

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, a very thorough audit released yesterday by Newspapers Canada catalogues the appalling record of the Manitoba's NDP when it comes to access to basic information.

Mary Agnes Welch, in reviewing the finding, says, and I quote: Manitoba earned a D grade because it was slow and stingy with information. End of quote. This is the complete opposite of what one would hope for in transparent and accountable government.

Why is this NDP government so slow and stingy? When will this NDP government start being accountable instead of hiding information that belongs to the people of our province?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Mr. Speaker, we take our responsibility for timely release of information very seriously.

In fact, our government received, in 2012, 2,190 requests for access for information. That was an—80 per cent of responses were provided on time, and it's important to note that the number of freedom of information requests is up by 1,637 and—nearly quadruple 553 requests in the year 2000. That's about a 300 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, the people work very diligently and very hard to provide information in a timely way, and we certainly take that responsibility very seriously.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the audit said yesterday this government had a kitchen sink of exemptions. Well, today the minister's got a kitchen sink of excuses.

The National Freedom of Information Audit singles out Manitoba's NDP for claiming, and I quote, it wasn't feasible to provide data from its databases of repair and maintenance needs of provincial highway bridges. Mr. Speaker, it said it would have to print out paper copies. End of quote. Mrs. Welch—Ms. Welch commented that the Manitoba government software is from the Atari age.

When will this NDP government get with the times and stop hiding behind archaic technology as excuse to have such ludicrous secrecy of public information?

Mr. Lemieux: I appreciate the question from the member from River Heights.

Our government enhanced and strengthened the elections Manitoba act by banning corporate and union donations. That member did not support that, from River Heights, Mr. Speaker, and neither did members opposite, quite frankly.

*(14:30)

So we want transparency, Mr. Speaker. We want openness. We want fairness. We want Manitobans to feel that they do have a say in the electoral process. But members opposite belonging to the PC party as well as the member from River Heights never supported that piece of legislation.

So he has some questions to answer to his constituents with regard to openness and transparency.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the minister, as is typical, is wrong again; I did support that legislation.

This NDP is slow and stingy. Mr. Speaker, in a recent FIPPA request, which I tabled—I will table, we were asked to provide \$80,289 for basic information on cases before the courts. Further, we are still waiting for a reply to a request for information put forward on February 25th, and the reply is now not likely to come until after the session is over. It appears to be standard NDP practice to file responses late to make it difficult for opposition members to ask questions during the session.

Why is the NDP government so afraid to let Manitobans actually know what they're doing?

Mr. Lemieux: You know, Mr. Speaker, we've made a lot of improvements with regard to FIPPA. In fact, we strengthened FIPPA legislation to provide better access to government information. And some of the changes that we made changed how long Cabinet

documents, for example, can be sealed, from 30 to 20 years, and protected negotiations between band councils and the Province.

We have done a lot in the province of Manitoba to make sure that there is transparency and openness with regard to information, and I know members opposite would certainly agree that—and I would certainly agree with the National Freedom of Information Audit that gave laurels to the Province of Manitoba, but also Alberta, with providing and releasing briefing notes in advance of, for example, national premiers' meetings.

Mr. Speaker, we've never said we're perfect, but we're making, certainly, clear inroads with regard to providing more transparency with regard to the government of Manitoba, and we certainly look forward to making those improvements and even more in days to come.

SkipTheDishes Corporate Headquarters Winnipeg Announcement

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is a dynamic and growing place for new business start-ups and for innovation and entrepreneurs that believe Manitoba is the best place to grow their business. Just a couple of weeks ago, Prince Charles was wowed as he toured the best and brightest that we have in Winnipeg's Innovation Alley.

Our government is committed to supporting these growing companies through support for training of skilled workers for tomorrow.

Will the Minister of Jobs and the Economy inform the House of today's exciting announcement of new skilled jobs that are coming to Manitoba?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I am absolutely delighted to stand in the House today, over the din of the nattering nabobs of negativity across the way, to announce the exciting—oh, and it gets louder as the chorus goes on—to announce that young entrepreneur Josh Simair and his fantastic entrepreneurial enterprise SkipTheDishes announced today that they will put their national headquarters right here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and we're so excited that in addition to that national headquarters we'll find nearly 193, to be precise, brand new high-tech jobs.

These are A++ students from the U of M, U of W, Red River that will be working here with their proprietary algorithm that works to deliver

food to five—from 500 restaurants in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, to make sure that—

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

Cattle Enhancement Council Status of Funds

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): There is over \$7 million of ranchers' and taxpayers' money unaccounted for in the Manitoba Cattle Enhancement Council.

Now, the minister continues to refuse to release details of where this \$7 million has disappeared, so what is he hiding? What is he—why is he so afraid to release the details of where this \$7 million has disappeared? Seven million dollars would go a long way for ranchers and taxpayers of this province.

Why does he think it's better in his hands than in the ranchers' and taxpayers' of Manitoba?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Obviously, being a rancher for 25, 30 years of my life, we see the importance of the MCEC organization. And I want to compliment the board of directors that sat on there and continue to work towards the premise of what it is.

I've said it before, and I continue to say, the information is provided. It's been done by a charter-audited firm.

And the other thing is I think what's really missing in this component is where was the \$10 million that was promised in the plan that was to move forward? They chose not to contact their cousins in the federal government to support us as we move forward for the betterment of the beef industry in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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

Breast Cancer Pledge Ride

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday, hundreds of motorcycles roared down Manitoba highways in support of breast cancer research. The Breast Cancer Pledge Ride brings together members of the motorcycling community every year to raise funds for CancerCare Manitoba Foundation.

This event is special for me because members of my own family have battled cancer and because my—both my wife and I are motorcycle enthusiasts. Over the ride's 13 years, its donations have gone towards purchasing a third mobile mammography screening unit which helps more rural—women in rural and remote areas get screened for breast cancer. Donations have also been made to direct impacts on families fighting the disease by funding the Breast Cancer Centre of Hope and wig program at the CancerCare Manitoba.

Since the first breast—CancerCare pledge ride, this organization has raised \$636,000 towards curing breast cancer. In 2013, riders raised an incredible \$120,000. Almost everyone knows someone who has braved cancer and has seen the pain it causes our loved ones. This is why we introduced the CancerCare patient journey, a \$40 million first in Canada, cancer strategy that streamlines our cancer services and dramatically reduces wait times for patients between their diagnosis and the start of effective treatment.

We know there is more to do and the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride is a tangible way that every Manitoban can make a difference in the lives of those people with breast cancer. Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to take part in this year's ride. Hope was in the air to help end breast cancer. It was a beautiful, sunny ride to Stonewall, then to Winnipeg Beach. The town closed Main Street for the riders to come together, celebrating both the lives of the loved ones who have battled breast cancer and the lives that will be saved thanks to CancerCare Manitoba.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this event, whether as riders, donors, organizers and volunteers. With your dedication, we are much closer to finding a cure. Thank you.

D-Day, WWI, Poland Elections

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the PC caucus and the Manitoba Legislative Assembly to recognize and commemorate a number of very important anniversaries, both in this province and the world as a whole.

Let me begin by briefing—briefly discussion the 70th anniversary of D-Day on June 6th, 2014. On this day, more than 24,000 Canadians, including a number of Manitobans, took part in the first large battle to liberate Europe in Normandy, France. The overall mission was called operation overload and

the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, most notably, were among the first Allied troops to storm Juno Beach on D-Day. On Juno Beach, Canadians were able to cross the beaches under heavy machine-gun fire and ultimately take the town of Bernières, which became a crucial bridgehead for the Allies.

The next anniversary I would like to touch upon is the centenary—100th anniversary of the First World War. The First World War was a monument to war in many ways. It marked one of the largest wars in history and it was instrumental in creating a Canadian identity, independent of Britain. Canada played a crucial role in this war in numerous pivotal battles, most notably Vimy Ridge, to lead to the Allied victory. This came at a great cost to our country, with roughly 67,000 casualties and another 250,000 wounded soldiers.

I personally had the honour of attending a memorial service on the—on May 31st, put on by the Henderson Highway Legion No. 215 at the cenotaph in Birds Hill. Lieutenant-General Raymond Crabbe of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry gave the address. The event was well organized, and I commend the Legion for their great work.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the 25th anniversary of free and democratic elections in Poland, Mr. Speaker. Poland's elections help to spread democratic revolutions post-World War II into Soviet-dominated eastern Europe. Poland's transformation from a Communist regime to a free democracy was the result of a series of worker strikes that led to the round table agreement which ultimately led to democratic elections in Poland.

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I'd like to acknowledge all of these acts of courage, perseverance and monumental change that occurred in our world. It is important that we, as Manitobans, honour our heritage and history.

50th Anniversary of École St. Avila

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to congratulate members of École Saint-Avila community who are gathering today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their school.

The St. Avila school district was formally established in 1902. The current school was built in 1964 at 633 Patricia Avenue in Fort Richmond. In 1990, the decision was made that the curriculum at the school would become French immersion; the school would be known as École St. Avila.

* (14:40)

The building has seen many physical changes through the years and is again in the midst of renovations with the addition of a new gym. Once completed, this new space will provide increased opportunities for the school, the local residents and community groups.

École St. Avila is a school that goes above and beyond in supporting creative learning opportunities for its students. Their down-the-drain project, for example, has earned them a spot on the list of the top 10 environmentally friendly school grounds in Canada. The success of this project demonstrates the effectiveness of teamwork involving staff, students, parent council members and numerous community partners.

Despite numerous changes to the building and curriculum throughout the years, some things have remained constant, 50 years later École St. Avila continues to provide quality education and life experiences to its students through innovative programming by dedicated staff, support from hard-working parent councils and involvement with the community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the diversity of the students and their community has embraced creating a respectful and inclusive environment allowing students, staff and community alike to thrive. It is no surprise that École St. Avila inspires loyalty in the people it touches.

Congratulations to the community of École St. Avila on 50 years as a vibrant, caring place to learn.

Thank you.

Controlled Environments Ltd. (Conviron)

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I am pleased today to rise in the House to recognize a Winnipeg company celebrating its fifth decade of success in the plant growth technology industry.

Controlled Environments Ltd., Conviron, is an international leader in the development of plant-growth chambers. Their technology has been used by researchers around the world in the effort to produce higher quality, more specialized crops. It is Conviron's mission to assist their clients in project consultation and design, to manufacture and install the equipment required to train their clients in the use of the equipment and, finally, to provide ongoing support of the equipment for its entire operating life. This working partnership allows researchers to focus

on their task at hand, enhancing crop viability and thus increasing the production of crop-based food products.

In 1964, Richard Kroft convinced his father to invest \$35,000 so that he could embark on a brand new venture to develop small chambers for growing plants. From this humble beginning, Mr. Kroft managed to build Conviron into the internationally recognized brand it is today. To date, he remains chairman of the board of Conviron while his son, Steve Kroft, is president and CEO after purchasing the company in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating the Kroft family and the employers of Conviron—the employees of Conviron on their 50 years of success and on their significant impact on the agri-food industry locally, nationally and internationally.

Thank you.

Walleye—Provincial Fish Designation

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has its own incredible legacy that draws people from all over the world to enjoy our natural environment. That is why, with the help of public consultations, we have selected the walleye as the provincial fish of Manitoba.

Known to most Manitobans as pickerel, walleye are found throughout most of the province. The Interlake has some of the best fishing spots for walleye in all of Canada, and we boast many resident guides ready to lead visitors on a fishing adventure. Whether summer or winter fishing is your preference, the Interlake's abundant and tasty walleye will welcome you back time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's fisheries play a significant role in our lives, our culture and our traditions. The province has more than 80 native fish species, and our fisheries' resources generate over \$230 million a year for our provincial economy. Hunters and anglers in Manitoba contributed about \$312 million to the provincial economy, which translated into about 7,500 jobs in 2010. A significant percentage of this revenue is the result of tourists enjoying our world-class walleye fishing opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, tourism helps our economy thrive. Manitoba's fishing and hunting lodges draw visitors from beyond the perimeter of Winnipeg to discover what other parts of our province have to offer. Many

visitors come to—for Manitoba's walleye fishing experience, our pristine and inviting wilderness, and the exceptional variety of other fish and game.

As our provincial fish, the walleye will have its own annual stamp-painting competition. The winning painting will be showcased as the stamp on the 2015 provincial fishing licence.

Mr. Speaker, in choosing the walleye as our provincial fish, we have officially recognized an animal that has helped put food on our plates, clothes on our backs and given us countless opportunities and adventures to share with our family and friends.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Could we start by calling for concurrence and third reading, Bill 48. We'll then move to report stage amendments on Bill 63 and then concurrence and third readings of Bill 63, Bill 10, Bill 21, Bill 33, Bill 53 and Bill 54.

Mr. Speaker: We'll be calling bills in the following order, starting with concurrence and third reading of Bill 48 and then we'll move to report stage for Bill 63 and then we'll move to concurrence and third readings of Bill 10—or pardon me, Bill 63, Bill 10, Bill 21, Bill 33, Bill 53, followed by Bill 54.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 48—The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act

Mr. Speaker: So we'll now start by calling for concurrence and third reading, Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson), that Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act; Loi sur la gouvernance de la nation dakota de Sioux Valley, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): It's indeed an honour to rise and speak to Bill 48. Indeed, it's an honour to do that today.

And I wanted to also reflect for a couple of minutes on the unfortunate incident that occurred down in Moncton, New Brunswick, because it reminds me of the many men and women that put on uniforms for this country in defence of this country in years gone by.

And I had the opportunity earlier today to review a speech I made in this House in 1994, and you were here at that time, Mr. Speaker, when we declared and recognized November 8th as Aboriginal Veterans Day. There's a list of veterans from the Sioux Valley area and the Dakota Nations of—in Manitoba.

And let me begin my comments by first of all saying that in years gone by the Dakota people have been a nation of people in Canada that have been regarded as refugees by our national government, and, in fact, that's the furthest thing from the truth. The Dakota people have always been here, way before there was even a country known as Canada, way before there was a province even known as Manitoba, Saskatchewan and so on. The Dakota people have always gone back and forth to what is now known as Manitoba, North Dakota and of course the northern states. The area now known as Manitoba was one of the traditional hunting areas of the Dakota people.

And, in defending this country, per capita the Dakota people from the old Sioux Village located near Portage la Prairie where the Dakota people once lived, on a per capita basis, they enlisted in the great wars of years gone by. And earlier today we observed a moment of silence for the veterans that lost their lives and also the brave men and women that had Canadian uniforms on in defence of our freedom as Canadians. At the same time, also many Dakota people wore uniforms in defence of this country and that often goes unnoticed and not recognized in the history books of this country and what is taught in the history books of our schools.

*(14:50)

In that speech back in 1994, I mentioned some veterans from Sioux Valley. They included Samuel Dowan, Manus Merrick, George Blackface, John Taylor, Tom Kasto, Rufus Williams, Frederick Essie, Herbert Happa, Norman Chaske, Zeph Sioux, Charles Happa, Johnny Noel, John Doota and Gilbert

Moore. In World War II and also in Korea, John Sioux, who I had the good fortune of meeting—he was one of our leaders in the First Nations community in the old Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, the forerunner to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. He was a veteran that served with honour in World War II, and he was, regrettably, a prisoner of war, but with the experience that he learned being a soldier and a veteran, and a Hong Kong veteran at that, he taught many of us up-and-comers at that time about the honour of being selected to be a leader among your people. So I am grateful for that.

There was also Lawrence Antoine, Alfred Antoine, Herman Essie, Frank Happa, Henry McKay, Ralph Merrick, Abe Mini, William Mini, Stanley McKay, Alfred Tacan, Morris Tacan, Allan Pratt, Peter Whitecloud, Albert Elk, Joseph Runearth, Solomon Hall. This is just a partial list of the men and women who served in the years—great wars of—in years gone by.

Why I say that is because these people put on Canadian uniforms to defend the honour of our country, the honour of Canada. It was my father, who did not read and write but went to the Brandon residential school in the 1920s, who taught me and told me about the friends that he made among the Dakota people at the old Brandon—at that time it was called the Brandon Industrial School, which was, for all intents and purposes, a residential school. And my father came back to Norway House and never learned how to read and write, but he knew how to write his name. And I think I've said that in this Chamber before that. But he became a good farmhand and knew the theory of—behind farming. And I often think about the things that he taught me as a son. He always used to tell me in our own language, which is Cree, he used to say, Son, the herd of one is the herd of all, and the honour of one is the honour of all.

And I use that in this current day because, to the best of my ability, that's the only way I can translate what I felt this morning about the three officers of the RCMP that were gunned down in Moncton. And I, too, offer my prayers for the recovery of the other two, and I hope that a resolution will soon be found in the current difficult time that they're going through in Moncton, New Brunswick.

I was deeply honoured the other night when I heard the presenters in committee, when I heard from the current chief, Vincent Tacan, talk about the community and the challenges that it has come

through over the years. I was also moved by the words spoken by Donna Elk, who was a former chief and now works with the self-government office in Sioux Valley, and a man that's been working with them as the consultant and, I believe, lawyer for the First Nation, Bruce Slusar, who was there to present as well.

But it was also good to hear from this young man by the name of Antonio Johnson-Wombdiska and along with his mom, Carol Johnson, because they represent the future and the present of our reality as a First Nations people.

I was also moved by the words spoken by Wayne Wasicuna and Marge Roscelli, who represent the elder component of the community, because they possess the knowledge of the past, the songs, the oral history of the pride of the Dakota people.

And I wanted to thank Ivan Ironman who's been a long-time leader in the community and a man that possesses a lot of knowledge about the history of the Dakota people.

These people spoke in detail about some of the work that has had to occur. Now, there's a long history to this. Of course, we all know that, we've spoken about it in this Assembly. It goes back to the early 1990's, the discussions on self-government. And I think that we should all be excited in this Chamber because we are now going to passing a bill that's a companion bill to the federal one that is being—that has been—that has gone through the channels it has to go through in Ottawa, through the House of Commons and, of course, the Senate committee and all the steps that it has to take there.

This is going to be the first ever self-government agreement in the Prairies. It may be a model for other First Nations in our province. Actually, the negotiations began back in 1991, and Manitoba came to the table in 1993. This is not a land claims agreement or a treaty. Sioux Valley Dakota Nation laws will continue to apply on the reserve and will operate in harmony with provincial and federal laws within the Canadian constitutional framework. However, Sioux Valley will have the authority to make laws affecting its community, its reserve in over 50 subject areas, such as governance, economic and social development, housing, education and so on.

There are two main agreements. First of all, Mr. Speaker, the first being the governance agreement between Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

and Canada, because it recognizes the Sioux Valley Dakota Oyate government and establishes a government-to-government relationship between the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and Canada. The second is a tripartite governance agreement between Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Canada and Manitoba, and it formalizes Manitoba recognition of and concurrence with the governance agreement and makes Manitoba a party to the self-government arrangements.

Elements, of course, of Canadian law in general, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, will continue to apply and the Criminal Code of Canada will continue to apply.

It's been a long and tedious piece of work that has involved our government, the federal government and the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. When all was said and done and it was brought to the people, 64 per cent of the population of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation agreed in favour in ratification.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's, indeed, an honour to stand in this Chamber with colleagues from across the way and my colleague, the member from Agassiz, the member from River Heights, who were also in committee the other night to hear the presentations made by the presenters. And it's, indeed, my honour to stand here in support and sponsoring Bill 48, the Sioux Valley self-governance agreement, and I would urge that we all support this bill in an unanimous fashion.

And I thank you for the opportunity to give me this—for allowing me the opportunity of speaking to this bill in this Chamber. Thank you.

* (15:00)

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I'm pleased to rise today and make a few comments on the—on Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act. I don't know how much more there is to say. The minister covered a great deal of it, and I want to give him credit for bringing this bill forward. It coincides with a bill that is, I believe, been passed already at the federal Parliament. And the two levels of government, by passing these bills, allow the Sioux Valley First Nation to proceed forward to the proclamation of self-governance in the very near future, and it's a day we all look forward to.

Certainly, it has been a long process, and the minister referred to that, and I want to give credit to the chief—the present chief, but also a number of former chiefs. There's been a—quite a number of

chiefs through this process, but the members of the community—everyone that worked so hard to get this done. It goes back to 1991; that's over 20 years ago when this process first started. So it's been a long and sometimes tedious process, and I heard one of the elders the other night talk about that. He said sometimes it moved along fairly quickly and then other times it kind of went into a lull, and so there were—but there always were some members of the community that kept the ball rolling, and finally they've attained what they set out to do.

There's many more things to do, of course, they—this is the first step in their own self-governance. The next steps are going to be to put the laws in place in their jurisdiction, and the minister referred somewhat to them, but they can now pass their own bylaws on membership in cultural matters, elections, education—there's any number of things, even property ownership. And talking to Vince Tacan, I—one of the things he was interested in was property ownership, and he talked about the farming roots and farming backgrounds and the—maybe the ability to get more agricultural activity going on the Sioux Valley First Nation, which I understand they have some fairly decent land, but I think a lot of it's rented out, and maybe it would be a good move to develop those processes there.

I see this as a step that will enable other First Nations of Manitoba—this is the first one in Manitoba—enable other First Nations in Manitoba to proceed to a self-governance model. There's, I believe, five of the Dakota Nations in Manitoba and none of them were ever covered by a treaty, and this will allow them to move into the self-governance, and I expect it will be expanded over time to cover other First Nations as well. I've been told that the Long Plain First Nation, I believe it is, are looking at—started into this process.

So, I just want to congratulate, and I know there's some of the First Nations people in the gallery today, and I just want to congratulate them on staying on the track and proceeding, getting this monumental movement done, getting the governance acts in place so that they can be more in charge of their own destiny moving forward. I think it's a great step for them in this province, and I look forward to this going through royal assent and becoming law.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act, now in third reading. I

welcome those who have come to listen to the discussion and the debate.

And we had quite a—in some ways, extraordinary, committee meeting the other night, with many people who came from Sioux Valley First Nation, including a number of chiefs and former chiefs. And we heard a lot of the history that has led to this Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act.

Certainly, what was very clear was the passion and the enthusiasm of presenters for change and new opportunities. The stories that were told of the attempts at farming and the restrictions under the Indian Act, which made it extraordinarily difficult in terms of the government and the government agents controlling a lot of aspects of the growing and the sale of crops in ways that made it, you know, virtually impossible to do economic farming in many First Nations communities. And, certainly, this was a community in Sioux Valley that made a significant effort not just initially, but later on with cattle. And I think it is a story that one day will be told more fully so that more people understand the limitations that were put on First Nations people and the difficulties and obstacles that were put in their way.

Certainly, you know, the stories from Ivan Ironman who is a former chief; of Marge Roscelli, who is a sister to former Chief Robert Bone, who was involved back in 1991; the former Chief Donna Elk; and the current Chief Vincent Tacan, these stories are now in the record of Hansard, or will be when they're transcribed. And they tell important aspects of the obstacles not only that were there historically, but the obstacles which were put in the way of the people of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation in order to get this far, that this was not an initiative that was always supported or always helped along the way, that there were many people who opposed this and put the obstacles in the way.

Nevertheless, it is to be remembered that when the final agreement was there and on paper, that it was submitted democratically to everybody in the community, and there was a very significant majority of people who voted to move forward and have self-government. And there have already been, I think, a lot of pride in the community about how things are moving forward and anticipation of, you know, celebrations which may be coming in July or later this summer.

So it is with honour and with pride that I stand here with others today in support of this legislation, look forward in the very near future to it being not

only passed, but getting royal assent and then being implemented.

So I want to congratulate all those of Sioux Valley First Nation on their efforts, and we look forward to this providing a better pathway to the future and a lot of opportunities for the people in Sioux Valley.

Thank you. Miigwech.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 48?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question? The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act.

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

Mr. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker, could you canvass the House to see if there's leave to declare this historic bill being passed unanimously by the Manitoba Legislature?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to consider the passage of Bill 48 as unanimous? *[Agreed]*

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Bill 63—The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed under concurrence and third readings to call Bill 60—or, pardon me, report stage of Bill 63.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross),

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 3 of Schedule A (The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act)

(a) in the part of the proposed subsection 2(1) before clause (a), by striking out "lead" and substituting "facilitate"; and

(b) by striking out "and" at the end of the proposed clause 2(1)(b), adding "and" and at the end of the proposed clause 2(1)(c) and adding the following:

(d) respects the appropriate autonomy of educational institutions and the recognized principles of academic freedom.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Education and seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services,

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 3 of Schedule A (The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act) and

(a) in the part of the proposed subsection 2(1) before clause, in quotations, (a), by striking out "lead" and substituting "facilitate"; and

(b) by striking out "and" at the end of proposed clause 2(1)—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense. Thank you. Thank you.

The amendment is in order. I thank the honourable members.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, section 2(1) of the bill defines the role of the minister in broad terms and, as the bill was tabled, intended to bring together the planning, co-ordinating and facilitating roles of the minister and COPSE under existing legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment also clarifies that the minister's role in developing a system in Manitoba is one of facilitation. Faculties and institutions raised concerns that the minister may be able to be overly prescriptive in his or her leadership of the system. While the intent of this section was to allow the minister a more clearly active role in the system, the point was well taken and we were happy to accommodate faculties and institutions in their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, following presentations at committee, we heard from faculties and intuitional administrations about their desire for more clarity regarding academic freedom and institutional autonomy. As section 2(1) deals specifically with what the minister's broad role in the system should be, we felt that there was no stronger place we could accommodate this request than here.

This amendment makes one of the minister's specific roles to ensure that the post-secondary education and advanced learning system in Manitoba is one that respects institutional autonomy and academic freedom. This is among the strongest language and protections for academic freedom and institutional autonomy ever legislated. We were

pleased to work with faculties and administration to ensure that established principles like these are maintained and safeguarded.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It's interesting for the minister to stand up today and put some amendments on this, on Bill 63. I am very much aware of the amendments brought forward to section 2(1) in regards to respecting the appropriate autonomy of educational institutions and the recognized principles of academic freedom.

Mr. Speaker, it's sort of interesting that this is brought up as amendment. You would've thought that this would have been brought forward when they were first drafting or bringing forward the bill, and that's all I have to say to this.

It just still seems that there's some holes with the bill, and I think that the minister, some of his collaboration that he has said that he has done with the various stakeholders, I'm not sure if they all have actually had their chance to say.

So, again, I would encourage the minister to withdraw Bill 63 and start over with some of the stakeholders.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few words on this amendment. There were many who spoke up when Bill 63 was presented, when it came to committee. I asked, you know, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) significant questions about this bill in question period some time ago, and, clearly, as it was originally presented, Bill 63 was not acceptable.

So I am indeed pleased that the minister has recognized the importance of academic autonomy. This is a fundamental aspect of the way that universities and colleges need to run in our society. That there needs to be the academic autonomy, the autonomy of educational institutions and the principle of academic freedom, are absolutely vital.

And it is not to say that we don't want institutions to work together for the good of making sure that Manitobans can get a very strong education, but rather that the principle of academic freedom is fundamental to ensuring that there is a strong post-secondary education system.

And so, in this change that is being made here, and in the recognition and the reversal of the initial direction that this bill was going, I'm pleased to be able to support this amendment.

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Mr. Allum: I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Mr. Bjornson),

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 3 of Schedule A (The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act) by replacing the proposed subsection 2(4) with the following:

Mandates

The minister is to advise and assist each university and college in developing a clear mandate to ensure that

- (a) Manitoba's post-secondary education and advanced learning system is coordinated and appropriately integrated; and
- (b) unnecessary duplication of effort and expense within the system is avoided.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development,

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 3 of Schedule A—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense. The amendment is in order.

Mr. Allum: In order for our post-secondary system to work cohesively and in the best interests of students, faculty and administration, institutions need to have a clear mandate within the system. The bill as tabled reflected the desire for the minister to be able to take a more active role than—responsibly that COPSE previously had in order to work within his or her role in facilitating a more streamlined system.

To this section, institutional administration, faculty associations and students all raise concerns that the particular language meant that the minister could simply impose a mandate from above with little regard for the concerns of those within the institution. While the intent of two—section 2(4) was for this process to be consultative, we accepted that recommendation from all involved and changed the language to that which existed in the previous COPSE act.

The minister's job now is one of assistance and advice, and we look forward to working with the institutions to help develop those mandates as we move to have a more integrated, streamlined system here in Manitoba.

*(15:20)

Mr. Ewasko: Again, it's interesting that the minister is bringing forward these amendments. It is great, Mr. Speaker, that we saw at committee last Monday on the—or sorry, two Mondays ago on the 26th, when various stakeholders had arrived to committee, expressed their concerns with the bill. The fact is that the minister had put on the record that he has consulted with various stakeholders in the drafting and then, of course, presenting the bill, and it seems to me that we're in—the minister is in reactive mode as opposed to proactive.

So I'm sort of questioning why the minister didn't do some of this consultation beforehand. Basically, I, again, Mr. Speaker, applaud him to a point for bringing some amendments forward, but that being said, it would be nice if the initial consultation was done ahead of time so that, you know, to use an adage, as far as poking the hornet's nest, if he would've done some of that homework ahead of the time, than maybe we would not have had some of the major concerns that were expressed at committee.

So, again, my suggestion is to hold Bill 63 and take a look at the—go back to the drawing board, talk to stakeholders, because, I mean, Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure what the hurry is with Bill 63. So thank you for that.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, in the case of this amendment, I am once again pleased that the minister's done a complete about face from what the original one was and that we've moved from the original one which read that the minister was the one to develop the mandate for university or college and then just consult with the university or college and the faculty and the students, but now where this language makes it clear that it is the college and the university who are to develop their mandate, and that the minister is to have a role in advising and assisting in the development of this mandate.

What troubles me to some extent and, in fact, considerably in this is that the remarks of the minister this time around indicate that his goal is to have the most integrated and streamlined

and, presumably, given this—clauses with the least duplication of—it sounds like any system in Canada.

And, you know, my view of post-secondary education would be this, that we have the highest quality of a learning environment for students and that we have an affordable system for students that will not put in place undue financial obstacles that will mean that students will not be able to go, and that the excellence and the high quality must come, you know, first and foremost, and that sometimes where you have, you know, courses in biology, perhaps both at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba that, of necessity they may emphasize different things and that give students a choice.

Indeed, when I was working at the faculty of medicine and involved in research of looking around to hire students, there were significant and interesting differences between the students trained at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba who came forward to work in my research laboratory, and I think that these are, to some extent, subtle differences, but they are important differences. And that in getting the most, you know, streamlined and the least duplication, that it doesn't mean that the only place that French is taught in a post-secondary education institution is at the Université de Saint-Boniface. I suspect that probably is not what the minister is looking for, but, you know, there is the concern that, you know, as we have, you know, different courses, that we are not, you know, without understanding that there is some reason to have some general courses and that there may be some overlapping between them. That's not to say that it's not important to have universities and colleges with the ability to specialize in certain areas. I have frequently talked, for example, about the importance of, in the university of—college of the North, having some particular special learning and knowledge in the area of mining and mine reclamation. And it's been clear, for example, when I was, a number of years ago, at Lynn Lake, and there was a discussion and 'volvement' of mine reclamation, that people in Lynn Lake had to look to the University of Calgary because there wasn't experts at that point. There wasn't University College of the North to the same extent that there is now.

But we do need to be able to allow areas of particular expertise develop, to some extent, naturally, in this post-secondary education system. But I would put the emphasis on the areas of

excellence, not so much on some other aspects as the primary goal of the mandate.

And so, you know, I'm not actually going to support this one, Mr. Minister, for that reason, and I would put on—that on record here today.

Thank you.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment will please signify by saying nay.

An Honourable Member: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Declare the amendment carried.

* * *

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross),

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 8 of Schedule A (The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act) as follows:

(a) in the proposed subsection 9.7(1), by adding "involving money granted under section 9.1" after "facility";

(b) in the proposed subsection 9.7(3),

(i) in the part before clause (a), by adding "under subsection (1)" after "approved", and

(ii) by adding "and" at the end of clause (d), striking out "and" at the end of clause (e) and striking out clause (f).

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, you know that institutional autonomy must be respected for our post-secondary system to thrive. But you also know that the minister responsible for the post-secondary system has a responsibility to ensure that public money is spent prudently within that system. Section 9.7 deals with how programs approved by institutions are then approved by government.

Institutional administration, faculty and students all raised concerns regarding the ability of the minister to oversee all aspects of the institutions and whether it extended too much power over institutional autonomy. We have listened to these concerns and have limited the role of the minister to only those programs, services or facilities that involve public monies. Even without this amendment, this section was intended to ensure institutions had to initiate the process to make changes, introduce or cease programs, and the minister's role was only after it had gone through their internal processes.

The minister's role, as it should be, begins when the institutions have decided changes should be made and those changes involve public money. We were pleased that the—we were able to work with institutions, faculty and students to clarify this section and look forward to continuing to collaborate with our partners as we develop the regulations that will determine the program approval process going forward.

* (15:30)

Mr. Ewasko: Going over this amendment to nine—to clause 9.7(1), it says: Subject to the regulations, the university or college may establish, make significant modifications to or cease to provide a program of study, a service or a facility involving money granted under 9.1 only if the action is approved by the minister.

Well, as the minister had pointed out, that you know about the autonomy to post-secondary institutions, but I'm not quite sure if the minister knew that, especially when he was coming and drawing up this piece of legislation.

When we're talking about public money to post-secondary institutions, colleges, universities, all of the above, Mr. Speaker, I believe that all programs and all buildings have a great deal of public money involved. So, with this amendment, I'm not quite sure, I'd like to ask, you know, the minister, where

exactly was he going with this without having this in play, and also the fact that I don't see a huge amendment being made here. I see a little bit of smoke and mirrors and with clause 9.7(3), by striking out letter (f), which had said in the original Bill 63, was "any other matter that the minister considers to be relevant." Well, by striking that out, basically, that's covered by subsection (e) anyways. So I think that's just basically putting a little bit of fluff to this one.

And, again, I'm not quite sure as we move Bill 63 forward—as it's going to be probably moved forward—Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure, again, what the hurry is to Bill 63, and how this is going to affect students' learning—how is the bill going to make students' learning better?

And I would also like to request, when the minister is talking about the next amendment, Mr. Speaker, I'd like him to also touch base on—in between the committees on the 26th and today, with him bringing the amendments forward—I would like him to put on record who he exactly met with, talking about the amendments after the committee, and just to put that on record, list the stakeholders who he had actually met with or had shared the amendments with prior to bringing this today.

Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, just a few words on this amendment.

This amendment is clearly an improvement over the original in that it refers to those circumstances where the money is making—or the government is making money specifically available, presumably, but it probably should have been even clearer. This is related to when there is new money not in the base budget for a new course or program, and that the minister would have input into the new money being allocated under such circumstances.

But, you know, it's not entirely clear, and as the critic for the opposition has said, the concern is that, you know, because the government provides so much money and it could refer to all courses, that, you know, there—this could easily be interpreted in a much broader way than one might. I think, clearly, one needs to be very careful about having a—giving a minister power of prescriptive over courses in a major way. And this was something that came through very clearly in the submissions that we heard at the committee stage, that there should not be powers of the minister to decide, you know,

changing of courses within universities and things like that, that the universities needed—and colleges needed the autonomy to be able to deliver what's actually needed for people, and what is in the best interests of a high-quality education for students in Manitoba and for their learning environment.

So this one is, you know, a bit iffy. It's certainly an improvement over what it was, but I think it could have been clearer. And, you know, hopefully, the meaning of this might, you know—in his remarks on the whole bill, the minister might clarify better in terms of what he specifically means, in terms of this clause and how it would be applied and how it should be applied so that those remarks would be there in the future. Put those words on the record with respect to this amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on the amendment? Seeing none, House is ready for the question.

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

Mr. Allum: I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 11 of Schedule A (The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act) by replacing the proposed subsection 10.11(4) with the following:

The advisory committee is to consist of at least eight persons appointed by the minister. In appointing members, the minister must ensure that post-secondary students, post-secondary faculty, post-secondary administrators, kindergarten to grade 12 learning, adult education, labour, business and industry are each represented by at least one appointee.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Education, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights,

THAT Bill—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, the advisory committee that is to be established in this legislation sets the table for the minister to sit with stakeholders in the broader education system to discuss the strategic direction of the sector.

Our government has always been committed to work with students, faculty, labour and administration to determine membership of this committee and ensure proper representation. We heard from students, that they would like to have a guaranteed seat at this table, to ensure that all future ministers would have to have a place where they could hear student voices.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that it was certainly always our intention to have a student voice at this table, but we understood the concern of students in this regard. I'm pleased that we were able to work to clearly define who, at minimum, should be on the advisory committee, and I am pleased to say that students, along with faculty, administration and many others, will have a table to sit and have the ear of the minister. I will look forward to striking this committee and getting down to working out a strategic plan for a post-secondary system in the near future.

Also want to thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for seconding this particular amendment, Mr. Speaker. I know that he advocates for students as he advocates for many causes here in the House, and his support on this particular amendment is welcome and appreciated.

Mr. Ewasko: Again, thank you for the opportunity to put a couple words on the record in regards to this amendment. Interesting that the member from River Heights seconded this amendment.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, if anybody attended that committee on that Monday, it's surprising to me that the original piece that the clause that was in Bill 63, 10.11(4), the minister is to appoint at least five persons to the advisory committee, I mean, it was very loud and clear that people at the committee on that Monday, the 26th, obviously were not consulted in a manner that they felt was appropriate or if—or respectful.

So, with the minister coming back with the composition of the advisory committee and basically striking out the whole section of 10.11(4), as far as appointing five persons, he has now, again, to take a quote from the member from River Heights, has done a complete 180 and has now upped the amount of people that are going to be appointed by the minister, which is a minimum of eight persons, and then listing off—and I'm not going to repeat the clause, Mr. Speaker, but appointing those people who are going to be representing those various other stakeholders on that committee. And I think that's a

great move on his part. I don't know how he could not have done that amendment, especially after the major concerns that were brought forward on—during that committee.

* (15:40)

So it is a great move. A couple questions that I might have. Again, he didn't answer the last question in his speech on this amendment, but who has he really talked to since May 26th when we had that committee that evening as far as the amendments being brought forward to this bill? I'd like him to put that on the record, because I really do feel, Mr. Speaker, that I'm not quite sure if this bill is going in the right direction and whether this bill is actually going to improve students' learning in this great province of ours.

So, with that, thank you for allowing me to put a few words on the record.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for being ready to listen. There were clearly problems with the original bill and these were brought up at the committee stage, and it is absolutely essential to have input from students and faculty and other points of view on this advisory committee if it's to work successfully. So I welcome the opportunity to second this motion and to support this.

I think the operation and the influence of the advisory committee will depend critically on the ability of the minister to work with the advisory committee and to call the advisory committee on a regular enough basis so that it will have an impact. We've seen other circumstances where this government has set up committees which have not met very often, and we don't want that to happen here. We've seen problems with the consultation of the leadership council in the child and family services area. But I'm hopeful that the minister will be effective and, hopefully, future ministers will be effective in calling and using the advice of the advisory committee in terms of moving forward.

So I think this is a very positive step to make sure that there is representation from post-secondary education students, from faculty and from the other groups which are listed here. So this is, I think, a really important step forward.

I think the decision now needs to be taken as to how individuals will be chosen to represent each of these groups, and my advice to the minister is that he ask the administrations to make their own

appointment, he ask the post-secondary education students to decide who will best represent them, and in that way that there really is, you know, meaningful input from all through their representative, as opposed to a single person being appointed to represent. But we will see how that works and we look forward to seeing how this works compared with COPSE and what happened before.

Thank you.

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

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

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Mr. Bjornson),

THAT Bill 63 be amended in Clause 13 of Schedule A (The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act)

(a) by replacing the proposed section 11.1 with the following:

Conflict

11.1 If there is a conflict between sections 10.1 to 10.10 and a provision of an Act that establishes or continues a university, the provision of this Act prevails.

(b) in the part of the proposed clause 11.2(1)(a) before subclause (i), by adding "involving money granted under section 9.1" after "facilities."

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Allum) and seconded by the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development

THAT Bill 63—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, in 2012, our government brought in strong protections of tuition fees in Manitoba. Under the protecting affordability act, we have frozen tuition to the rate of inflation and ensured that fees can be monitored and regulated.

We heard concerns from faculty and institutions that section 11.1 of Bill 63 could potentially be used to do so—for more than ensure that those protections stay intact. These concerns were directly addressed

by ensuring that the language of this section only allows those provisions on protecting affordability to override institutional enabling statutes. We are glad that the sharp eyes of university administrators and faculty association caught this potential issue and we're happy to address it directly.

Mr. Ewasko: Taking a look at the—this amendment, again, I mean, we have a total of, I don't know, seven or eight amendments here on this Bill 63. Again, it's showing the lack of consultations and, I would say, misdirection to exactly what the post-secondary institutions and the students' associations are really wanting with this bill.

And, again, I'm not hearing the minister standing up and basically answering the question to how is this bill going to be improving student learning, Mr. Speaker. And, with that, it seems to me that this is still a top-down approach.

And I think this minister has to go back again to the drawing board, pull Bill 63, spend some time over the summer and make sure that his i's are dotted and the t's are crossed with this bill, make sure that all stakeholders have been consulted this time, as opposed to taking some amendments from committee, which was a partially great move, but it didn't necessarily have to get to that point.

I think a lot of the stakeholders were upset with the bill. And by showing various amendments that he has brought forward to this bill, I think he's showing and acknowledging also the fact that the bill is a bad bill. And so I encourage him to go back and have those chats with the stakeholders, Mr. Speaker.

So thank you for the time.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this amendment, which I'm pleased is coming forward, is intended to address one of the major concerns with the bill as it was initially written, and that is that there was uncertainty in terms of whether this bill or The University of Winnipeg Act or any of the other acts might have precedence when it came to certain areas which are the purview, for example, of the senate at the University of Winnipeg. I think it was President Lloyd Axworthy who brought this question up and mentioned that the people in the senate at the University of Winnipeg were unsure, under the original bill, as to where the priority would lie in terms of where—what the role of the senate was—put down under The University of Winnipeg Act.

This at least makes it clear that we are talking about, in this act, only a priority to this act where there's specifically issues involving money granted under section 9.1. And so I think that this is a very considerable improvement.

There is the question which was raised earlier that, you know, whether we're talking new programs or all monies and—but I think at least the fact that this is brought forward is a recognition that the problem was raised by President Axworthy is a real one and that there needs to be—when it is determining the role for the senate, that the senate of the University of Winnipeg's role really will not change, is my understanding, from what it has been, and that there will not be all of a sudden the minister jumping in and saying that you can't do this or you can't do that.

* (15:50)

And, once again, the minister might clarify this in his remarks on—when he talks about the whole bill, but I see this as a step forward and I'm ready to support this.

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question.

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

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(*Continued*)

Bill 63—The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Housing and Community Development): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Allum), that Bill 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, reported from the second—or, pardon me—reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Mr. Speaker, Bill 63, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act, COPSE, was designed to eliminate red tape, streamline program approval processes and help remove the prescriptive haze that lay over the COPSE process. Our intention was to ensure that our system could work together better to ensure that it continues to deliver a quality, affordable, accessible education to Manitoba students.

Our government is proud of its record on post-secondary education; we invest in education and provide training and skill opportunities for students to build their future here in our great province. Bill 63 was designed to help create a more nimble, responsive system that recognizes the need to see our education system as a continuum from kindergarten to career.

We believe that there should be no wrong doors in education and we're trying to make sure that our institutions work more seamlessly for our students. By eliminating COPSE and removing a level of bureaucracy, we're allowing program approvals to be more streamlined and making it so institutions can more easily adapt to align and modify their programs.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, Bill 63 has elicited some healthy debate at committee. We heard from students, faculty and administration about changes they would like to see to the bill in order to clarify the legislative intent. I would add that the concerns that were raised were valid and we introduced amendments earlier today to address these concerns. We have worked closely with faculty, students and administration to make changes and are pleased that we are able to demonstrate once again our government's commitment to open, transparent, collaborative and responsive government.

Going forward, Mr. Speaker, we will be working with institutions to develop program approval regulations, in fact, this work has already begun. As it has always been, institutions will retain their ability to develop and propose programs and will only come to government when those programs involve public money. I think it is important that government have a role in ensuring public money is distributed appropriately. Before, the process for which government would make these decisions was obscure and housed within an arm's-length body.

Now, institutions will have a direct relationship with the department and the regulations for program approval will be clear, comprehensive and public. I'm glad that we were able to work with institutions to develop these regulations.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 63 also sets up a strategic advisory committee to the minister. Here we can get a group of smart people together from all parts of the education system to discuss the future of our system. This table will include students, faculty, administration, K-to-12 representatives, adult education, labour, business and industry. This is a fine group of people to sit down together and plan for the future of education in Manitoba and ensure the future of every student in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 63 demonstrates that the system works. We have listened to and worked with our partners in the post-secondary system to strengthen this bill and ensure that the integrity of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are preserved.

Our government is always proud to work with our partners and I have an open-door policy in my office and have always welcomed feedback, advice and criticism, as the case may be. I look forward to strengthening our relationship with students, faculty and administrations throughout Manitoba going forward. Mr. Speaker, Bill 63 makes sense for Manitoba, and with the help of our educational community, we have all worked together to make it stronger.

Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand up and speak to Bill 63 in a third reading.

As I've said already in—on the record in regards to the amendments brought forward, I'm looking at Bill 63, the minister's been talking about consultations and sharing and having those vital conversations with stakeholders and the partners and, Mr. Speaker, from what I've been seeing since I've become—or have had the privilege of being elected as the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, I'm seeing everything but the collaborations and the consultations being had with partners or stakeholders throughout this province.

We, on this side of the House, truly do feel that post-secondary institutions, as well as student groups, are partners in moving forward to better our education system, not only at the post-secondary

level but also basically the kindergarten to career. And I feel that sitting down and having those very important conversations with all stakeholders are necessary to move things forward, move our education process forward, and our ultimate goal is to create and to nurture the best and the brightest in our province. But with that, Mr. Speaker, is by showing that we're open and willing to collaborate and to have those conversations. We're also showing those students and those post-secondary institutions, whether they're the professors or faculty staff or administration, all of the above, that we want to instill that trust factor. And so, when I or other members of this side of the House are saying something, that they can actually take that to the bank and can trust us, that we are going to carry forward with our promises.

And with that, I want to try to encourage the students in this province at the K-to-career level, all the way through, that we do want to work with them and we want to hear what they have to say and basically encourage them, not only to carry on with their schooling here in the province but also once they do have their certificate or diploma or degree or master's or doctorate, we want them to stay in this fantastic province of ours because, ultimately, that should be the goal.

And, when the minister stands up and starts to talk about collaboration, I mean, there's oodles of examples of times when this government has not stood up—and I know that the member from Gimli is thrilled with my choice of words, as far as oodles—but I will get into a couple examples, then, of the times when some members across the way, just within the last two and a half short years, where they've gone and told Manitobans one thing and yet have come out and basically broken—whether it's the promises or not carried through with what they've said.

* (16:00)

And I think this Minister of Education, I think he's going to actually have a sit-down possibly with the Premier (Mr. Selinger), when the Premier comes back from Europe, Mr. Speaker, and talks about the collaboration process on how he saw, at committee on the 26th, on how upset stakeholders actually get when you don't do the proper process, and that's with the collaborating beforehand, creating the legislation and then bringing it forward and presenting it.

We know that we saw that with the forced amalgamations. The member from Dawson Trail was

the minister at that time, and he basically was—talked down process, I guess, going down to municipalities. And with that, I believe that had something to do with him not being the minister of Local Government anymore, and now he's Sport, Culture, Heritage. And, I mean, I have no doubt he's going to try to continue on with that role and make that portfolio stronger. He's going to try. But, again, hopefully, he doesn't take those collaboration techniques that he learnt in Local Government onto his new portfolio.

So with that, with the forced amalgamations, we saw quite a few presentations come to committee and those people, those stakeholders that come to committee and basically said their piece. They shared their own personal stories with the various municipalities, and this government went and they basically railroaded over those committee presentations.

So now for the Minister of Education to stand up today and say that, you know, he's showing that this process works, I don't quite understand why it necessarily has to be reactive. I think some of these issues that he had with Bill 63 could have been prevented—or, prevented, sorry—if he would have done that consulting before he brought this bill forward. And by the looks of the presentations and the various letters that were tabled that evening going, basically speaking, against the bill, it shows me and proves to all Manitobans that this minister did not do his due diligence as far as consulting on the bill.

I know that the member from Gimli probably wants another example of the lack of consultation process, but I think it—with Bill 20. So we talk about the PST, the 14 per cent increase in the PST, that and other—that's another example, Mr. Speaker, of when hundreds of people came to committee and, again, sharing their stories, and the government not listening to those people. They didn't bring forward any amendments. They just rammed the bill through without having to go through the referendum part that was legislated in this great province of ours and, basically, another broken promise.

So with this minister standing up today and saying that we should—or students or post-secondary institutions should just trust what he is saying. I mean, we look at the original Bill 63. We look also on the seven or eight amendments that he's brought forward to this bill. Again, a couple of the amendments, you know, a very nice effort, but I

think—I don't understand, again, why we have to be so reactive, why we could not have been proactive. Take the time, take the summer, pull the bill. Do some more consulting, because I'm not even quite sure if these amendments that he has brought forward—because he didn't mention any of the groups that he had met with between May 26th and today when he brought forward the amendments. He said that he talked to faculty, to administration, to students since that May 26th, and then these are the amendments that he's brought forward. Well, he didn't table or mention any of the specific groups that he met with, and from May 26th I've got many examples of the people who brought forward, not only amendments, but concerns, whether they actually came to committee or they submitted written letters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I'm going to mention a few of the people who actually submitted letters or actually showed up and put a few words on the record in regards to their displeasure of Bill 63. We've got Mr. Jim Turk, who's the executive director of the Canadian association of teachers. I mean, he already mentioned—and I've mentioned this in question period a few times—on how appalled he was that a government would try to bring legislation like this through. And also we talked about Professor Kucera from the—who's the president of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association.

Again, the consultations were not happening, and pretty much with every presenter that showed up on May 26th, I had asked them if they had the time to—or were they invited to consultation process with the minister, and they had all said originally they were told that this bill would be possibly coming through, but it would—it was more of a top-down, ram-it-through-effect process, Mr. Speaker. There was no time for consultations or any questions or concerns.

So I'm not quite sure why Bill 63 has to be passed so quickly, and even more so when the minister has to go back to the drawing board and make all of these amendments, and then expect for—expect all the post-secondary institutions and all the students' associations throughout the province all of a sudden be happy with this bill, I don't know that, Mr. Speaker. So I can't say that these amendments are what the post-secondary institutions and the students want.

So, with that, I would encourage the minister to take a little bit more time, go back to the drawing

board. The amendments are a great step forward. They do show some progress, but, Mr. Speaker, when it's a bad bill to begin with, basically what you should do is start again.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 63. This bill, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act, it's important that we are discussing the future of universities and colleges, and we should be.

What's, I would say, sad, is that in the last 14 and a half years there's not been articulated a clear, overall vision for the direction of post-secondary education and the post-secondary education system in Manitoba.

And it was, you know, the minister himself who was talking about COPSE, as the former—interestingly, the minister was the former chair of COPSE. And the minister articulated that the problem with COPSE was that it was too tied up in small details and was not doing enough strategic planning. And I see the minister's nodding his head on this. And this, of course, was one of the reasons for getting rid of COPSE.

You know, it's a sad testament to COPSE as it was run under 14 and a half years under the NDP, because one would have hoped that starting in 1999 there would have been put forward a strong vision and a strong strategic planning process for the future of post-secondary education.

And I—you know, I welcome that the minister is going to start looking at this. But, you know, it was obviously a frustrating time for him being chair of COPSE. And it's still not entirely clear why, as chair of COPSE, the minister wasn't able to do more strategic planning, but I won't go into that further at this point.

*(16:10)

I think that there has been, along with this lack of vision under the present government, or the lack of strategic planning, some things that have—and decisions that have been made which have undercut the commitments made by this government. For example, Lloyd Axworthy, as president, came to the government and pointed out that the per-student funding for the people at the University of Winnipeg was, for the students at the University of Winnipeg, was much lower than other

universities. And after some discussion, and in view of that and other concerns at the University of Winnipeg, the government committed to making a significant increase in terms of the funding for the University of Winnipeg, to provide a little bit more balance; not to put it in a par with the University of Manitoba or Brandon University, but to provide, you know, a little bit more.

And my understanding is that there was part of that commitment was made one year and that by the next year the government had decided in another direction, and so that they reneged on the commitment and it was never carried through. And it makes it difficult to plan if you have a commitment and you don't, as a government, carry through with your commitment.

And then this happened again in 2012. The government announced, I believe it was in the Throne Speech and then in the budget, that it was going to provide a three-year planning horizon for universities and colleges, so that they would have their budgets known and could plan better for three years in advance. Now, this is something that Liberals have believed strongly in for many years and have argued for. In fact, I would not be surprised if it was the Premier (Mr. Selinger) listening to Liberals arguing for the importance of this that had led to them looking at this change.

But, the problem is that the commitment was made in 2012, it was carried out for one year and then it was changed for the next year and the following year, in terms of what the three-year funding was going to be. If you have a partner, a government, who is totally unreliable in terms of carrying out its commitments, it makes it very difficult for institutions to be able to plan well and to, instead of, you know, planning well, they have to rejig their budgets each year because they're not allowed to plan well several years in advance.

And so this environment of instability and uncertainty has certainly created difficulties in universities carrying forward with a vision, with planning, and moving forward as institutions and doing as well as they could be doing as institutions, in terms of providing very high quality education.

So, certainly, one of the missions that we would like to see here fairly well-articulated is that the universities and colleges should have, as part of their mission, the highest possible quality of education and learning environment, and that their education and learning environment includes not just learning

and knowledge, which is already out there, but it includes the generation of new knowledge. And that includes, of course, research and inquiry because that spirit of learning in an ongoing fashion and inquiry, critical inquiry, is very important to advances. If you—the moment that you accept, on an ongoing basis, the dogmas of the past, then you are trapped there and you need to make sure that you are moving forward and constantly seeking advances in and new knowledge and being creative in doing that. And that is part of what universities and colleges need to be, and that is one of the reasons why it is extremely important that there be a highly recognized degree of autonomy, of academic freedom, in universities and colleges and our post-secondary education environment.

I think one of the important goals, as well as high level of excellence of learning environment, is that this system be affordable for students, that there not be high financial barriers that would make it difficult for Manitobans to go to post-secondary education.

And this can be addressed in a variety of ways. And—but, I mean, one of the traditional ways has to be made sure that there's strong levels and amounts of scholarships and grants, and it's been 'despressing' over the last few years to see that the significant decrease in the amount of money provided by the Province for scholarships and grants. Now, some of that money, you know, sadly, has reflected reductions in transfers for the federal government, and so it's not just the Province which is at fault here.

But this is such a critical area that it should have been prioritized. We should not have seen this fall in the support through grants and scholarships, because what has happened is that we've had very significantly increasing levels of student debt. And, with that, the students having not only to struggle with financially but, of course, having a more difficult time learning because they're always having to be thinking about where the next dollar is coming from and not having as much time to focus on their studies.

And so this clearly should be an important, you know, principle of—that we take forward. I think both of these principles could have been more clearly put in this bill. And certainly we're very strongly opposed to the removal of the three-year planning horizon, which was in the COPSE bill, and I want to make that very clear, although we will support this bill overall as a step forward and give the

opportunity to the minister to show that he can make the advisory council work. I am very pleased that we have got student representation and faculty representation and representation from other groups because—including the university administrations because this is really fundamental.

The challenge, to some extent, will be in making the advisory council work because the—you know, the vision and the mechanism and the processes, both around selecting people and in terms of precisely what they were going to be doing and how often they meet, are not as clearly defined as they might be. But, clearly, that will be up to, in part, the minister and the people on the advisory council. And we hope that this will work, and we're very pleased that there will be that representation from students and from faculty and from university administration, as well as from other areas.

The—this bill, of course, came under some very severe criticism at the committee level. Mr. Grant from the University of Winnipeg pointed out that, you know, this was hastily and badly written, and he wasn't sure if maybe there was some insidious agenda. But, you know, it was clear that not only Mr. Grant but others who came to present had some major concerns.

The—Mr. Eric Johnstone of the University of Winnipeg, the vice-chair of the board of regents, he was very concerned about the ambiguity and the interpretation of the mandate and the role of the minister and the scope of the minister's authority. We welcome some changes which have clarified this. We hope that they're going to be sufficient. They're certainly better than what the original was.

*(16:20)

Mr. Thomas Kucera of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association emphasized the need to have autonomy in academic decisions, that there needs to be the autonomy for institutions to establish their own mandates, develop programs and allocate resources, and autonomy in terms of faculty and academic freedom as well. And, of course, the powers of the Manitoba act gives to the university of—centre a range of powers over academic affairs, the powers to consider and determine all courses of study and all matters relating thereto. And it's important that when you have such institutions and the university senate, that there be these powers recognized and continued to be represented and, indeed, that you have the ability to retain and to

recruit very strong faculty because the faculty is at the heart of the whole learning activities at the university.

The students who presented, Bilan Arte of the Canadian Federation of Students, emphasized the need to have a clearer vision respecting accessibility of post-secondary education and is—Mr. Zach Fleisher, and it—this particular legislation does not address some of the issues that students like Rorie McLeod recommended, that the legislation should be expanded, both to protect international students and students pursuing professional programs. There could have been, certainly, a clearer focus and a clearer recognition and a clearer statement of the aims and goals under which the advisory council should work and, clearly, as I've already stated, one of those should be a recognition as the students and including Lauren MacLean of the Red River College Students' Association emphasized again and again in their presentations.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are my remarks on this bill. It is not a perfect bill. It is much, much better than the original bill that was presented, and I'm glad that the minister has listened to people. I think that there remain some ambiguities. I'm concerned about the lack of three-year planning in this bill and the clarity which could've been there, in terms of the goals of universities for excellence in learning environment and accessibility in terms of students and—but I'm—we'll certainly support this on this occasion, recognizing that there's been some rather dramatic improvements since it was initially presented. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 63, concurrence and third reading?

House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 63, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act, as amended.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please signify it by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote.

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

Order, please. The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 63, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act.

* (17:00)

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Martin, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 30, Nays 15.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 5, 2014

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		SkipTheDishes Corporate Headquarters Wiebe; Oswald	3191
Tabor Home—Construction Delays Friesen	3177	Cattle Enhancement Council Pedersen; Kostyshyn	3192
Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Reversal and Referendum Rights Eichler	3177	Members' Statements	
Committee Reports		Breast Cancer Pledge Ride Gaudreau	3192
Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, Fourth Report Gaudreau	3178	D-Day, WWI, Poland Elections Schuler	3192
Ministerial Statements		50th Anniversary of École St. Avila Irvin-Ross	3193
RCMP Shooting in Moncton Swan	3180	Controlled Environments Ltd. (Conviron) Stefanson	3193
Goertzen	3180	Walleye—Provincial Fish Designation Nevakshonoff	3194
Gerrard	3181		
70th Anniversary of D-Day Howard	3181	ORDERS OF THE DAY <i>(Continued)</i>	
Schuler	3181	GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Gerrard	3182	Concurrence and Third Readings	
Oral Questions		Bill 48—The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act	
Tax and Fee Increases Pallister; Howard	3183	Robinson	3195
Provincial Deficit Pallister; Howard	3184	Briese	3196
Lake Manitoba Water Levels Helwer; Ashton	3186	Gerrard	3197
CFS Case Concern Wishart; Irvin-Ross	3187	Bill 63—The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act	
Ambulance Service Fees Graydon; Selby	3188	Allum	3205
MPI Photo Radar Tickets Goertzen; Swan	3189	Ewasko	3206
Freedom of Information Requests Gerrard; Lemieux	3190	Gerrard	3208
		Report Stage Amendments	
		Bill 63—The Advanced Education Administration Amendment and Council on Post-Secondary Education Repeal Act	
		Allum	3198
		Ewasko	3199
		Gerrard	3199

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>