

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 10, 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: Move on to petitions.

Tabor Home—Construction Delays

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) Morden's population has grown by nearly 20 per cent in the past 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 of 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 L. Andrew, J. Bartleman, J. Motheral and many more 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—
Effects on Manitoba Economy**

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Good afternoon. I wish to present the following petition as follows:

The Premier of Manitoba is on record of calling the idea of a hike in the PST ridiculous.

(2) Economists calculate the PST hike has cost the average \$437 more in taxes only after six months.

(3) Seventy-five per cent of small business in Manitoba agree that provincial taxes are discouraging them from growing their businesses.

(4) The Canadian restaurant and food association services estimates that 1 per cent in the PST will result of a loss to the economy of \$42 million and threaten hundreds of jobs in that sector.

(5) Partly due to the PST, overall taxes on new investment in Manitoba recently stood at 26.3 per cent whereas the Alberta rate was 16.2 per cent and the Ontario rate was 17.9 per cent, according to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

(6) The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce are concerned that the PST hike will make an already uncompetitive tax framework even more attractive to job creators in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to reject or approve any increases through the PST referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of D. Pottinger, J. McLeod, J. Campbell and many other fine Manitobans.

**Beausejour District Hospital—
Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability**

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and the primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority region.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by L. Nightingale, R. Haywood-Relf, S. Maclean and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests I would like to introduce.

With us today in the public gallery we have Gary Wowchuk, who is the guest of the

honourable Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (Mr. Kostyshyn).

And also seated in the public gallery today we have from Inkster School, we have 55 grades 3, 4 and 5 students under the direction of Ms. Karen Tayfel and Annie Kosanouvong, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Mackintosh).

And also seated in the public gallery today we have from The Laureate Academy 16 grades 9 and 10 students under the direction of Stino Siragusa, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

**Tax and Fee Increases
Impact on Manitobans**

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): It's June 10th today, and that means it's tax freedom day in Manitoba. It's the day that the average Manitoba family has earned enough money to pay the total taxes it owes to government.

Unfortunately, in Manitoba tax freedom day comes later than it does in other provinces. It's later than BC, it's later than Alberta, it's later than Saskatchewan, later than Ontario. Mr. Speaker, when it came to tax freedom day, we used to be the best in the West, but under this NDP government we're now the worst.

It's later here because even at a time when government revenues are up, when transfer payments are up, when interest rates are low, they hiked the PST. They broke their word and they take more money out of the pockets of hard-working families for everything they buy.

Will the NDP just admit today that their financial mismanagement and tax hikes are costing Manitoba families more?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member quickly skipped over the fact that Manitoba remains one of the most affordable places to live in Canada: lowest hydro rates, lowest auto insurance rates, lowest electricity rates as a bundle; lowest small-business tax rate; very significant benefits for seniors in Manitoba, including new relief from

education property taxes. All of these things contribute to an affordable quality of life.

And at the same time, we're investing in infrastructure. We're investing in what Manitobans have told us is their No. 1 priority: good roads, protection from floods for people. Those are big bills. An additional billion dollars has been recommended for flood protection in Manitoba, and we're moving on that flood protection in the same way we did in the Red River Valley and around the city of Winnipeg: flood protection, good roads, good jobs.

The Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald) this morning announced a new set of opportunities for young people to go to trade camps. Over 230 people will be able to go to trade camps this summer and learn about the good opportunities to live and work in Manitoba.

Mr. Friesen: Well, Mr. Speaker, yes, this is all about affordability. Last year tax freedom day in Manitoba—[*interjection*] Good, good, and I'm glad the members agree. Because last year in Manitoba the tax freedom day fell on June 7th, but this year it falls three days later on the 10th, and that means that families are working longer for this NDP government and less for themselves and less for their families.

This government grabs an additional \$500 million each year off the tables of Manitobans because of the PST, but the First Minister fails to mention the fact that Manitobans are also paying more for fuel tax, more in vehicle registration fees, more for beer and wine, more for new taxes on colour and cut services, more for home insurance policies.

* (13:40)

Will the First Minister also admit that his knee-jerk tax hikes are costing Manitobans more and more?

Mr. Selinger: The member talks about tax freedom day. He forgot about being No. 1 for affordability. That was March 6th, Mr. Speaker, when we dropped the budget. He might've forgotten that.

I refer him to page C9, The Manitoba Advantage in the budget papers. A family of four earning \$76,000, a two-earner family of four, their savings are \$5,418. They're No. 1 in the country for affordability—No. 1.

Mr. Speaker, I ask him to look at that page. I ask him to reflect on that and I ask him to consider this: When members opposite were in government, they paid thousands of dollars more, Manitobans paid thousands of dollars more. Their taxes went up. Under us, their taxes have gone down. A family of four is paying on average \$2,500 less taxes today than when they were in office.

Mr. Friesen: This report clearly indicates that the average Manitoba family of four is paying more than \$1,600 more a year because of this government's tax policies.

Mr. Speaker, there's another dimension to this. This is the year that the NDP government promised that they would eliminate the deficit. But instead of a balanced budget, what did Manitobans get? They get stuck with another \$400-million NDP deficit.

Now, Manitobans understand that today's deficit has to be paid for at a later time through taxes. So if you factor in the NDP's current \$400-million deficit, then tax freedom day in Manitoba is even later, June the 14th, and that means even more money going to this NDP government and even less going to Manitoba families, Manitoba seniors, Manitoba students and those with marginal incomes.

Will the NDP just admit today that their dismal record on financial mismanagement and taxes is hurting real people?

Mr. Selinger: We are indeed taking a balanced approach to the budget.

Members opposite, when they were in office, cut education funding every single year except when they froze it. Members opposite cut the ag budget. Members opposite cut the health budget, and I can give him specifics if he wishes to do that.

We have maintained—we have maintained—improving money and improving investments for health care. We've improved our investments for education so young people have a chance to have good jobs and opportunities for the future. We've made significant new investments in agriculture, including various insurance programs to support them, including the community pastures program.

But, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we're addressing the No. 1 priority of Manitobans: infrastructure. We're building roads, we're building flood protection, we're building personal-care homes, we're building schools, and we're doing it in such a way that we're creating thousands of jobs for Manitobans

and ensuring that in the future when we produce goods and services they will have the roads that will lead them to the markets that will ensure prosperity for Manitobans.

Mining Industry Investment Ranking

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, mining has been a very important part of Manitoba's history and we are hopeful that it will be an important economic driver into the future. The industry, it currently faces significant challenges and is getting very little assistance or guidance from the NDP government.

Clearly, investment money in this industry goes where it is wanted and, apparently, it's not wanted in Manitoba, because we have dropped from No. 1 to No. 26 in seven years under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Why does the NDP refuse to address this decline and this very important industry indicator?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I'm glad members opposite have actually discovered mining. For the years that I've been in this portfolio, this may be the fourth or fifth question that they've ever talked about mining.

But I remind members opposite that the largest component of costs in a mine is hydroelectric power. And the most recent submission we've seen for the exploration of a mine is a company that says that 50 per cent of their costs is hydroelectricity and they want to come to Manitoba because it is the lowest hydroelectricity costs in all over the world—in all over the world—which is why they want to come here.

So one of the many Manitoba advantages, in addition to our labour force and in addition to the supports, is hydroelectricity is the lowest in the country for mining to come here.

Mining Exploration Permit Process

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, exploration is the lifeblood and—for the future of mining in Manitoba.

Thirteen years ago Manitoba represented 5.6 per cent of the total exploration investment across Canada. Today that figure is only 2.4 per cent. Clearly, the money is going other places, and then—

part of this is due to the provincial permitting process.

As the minister knows, or should know, under federal exploration incentives, work has to be completed within 12 months or less. Unfortunately, delays in the provincial permitting process are hampering companies wanting to take advantage of those incentives.

Why is the NDP government not doing anything to fix those delays in permitting here in Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, the member is outright wrong.

Firstly, the procedures that are put in place in terms of mining consultation are the same procedures that members opposite during the dismal, awful, cutting years of the 1990s, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, one of the most important issues is Aboriginal consultation with—now, as a result of the Constitution. We have a committee of chiefs, of mining executives from all of the companies that are sitting down and working out new procedures to deal with consultation, and we're very close to putting together a package that will be the envy of the country.

And, in fact, we presented in Toronto and we were told that the task and the process we're on is probably the most enlightened and the—probably the best in the entire country going forward, like Manitoba does under the NDP, goes forward.

Mining Industry Conservation Areas

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Well, Mr. Speaker, after 15 years it's good to see the NDP have finally got a committee together.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be competitive with other provinces. Mining investment will go where it's wanted.

In the latest mining company survey, Manitoba was ranked 67th out of 112 in the category of uncertainty concerning which areas will be protected as parks or wilderness areas. There is a clear policy lack here in this area, and this creates uncertainty for investors and uncertainty in the industry.

I'm going to ask the Minister of Mineral Resources: Is he discussing this important issue with the Minister of Conservation?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): You know, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of funny. Members opposite who want to stop all hydro transmission, stop it in its tracks, which will grow this economy, are now asking about things like transmission and the environment. They don't give a hoot about the environment. They don't give a hoot about transmission capacity.

What we're doing is we're building Manitoba. You know, when I opened the company in Brandon on Friday, where members opposite, none of them were there, what did the company chairman say? He said he came to Manitoba because of strong housing and labour market propelled the company here.

That's why Lalor mine is the largest in Manitoba history. It's open now and producing. Reed Lake is open and producing, Mr. Speaker. That's two more mines than they had during the deep, dark, cutting, awful Tory years.

New Report Cards Consultation Process

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): The minister could not travel the extra 60 kilometres southwest to see what the flooding is happening in the southwest.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has failed to consult with people who would be affected by their tax-and-spend policies. The Minister of Education, with his mishandling of Bill 63, is carrying on with the NDP way of no need to consult.

It's not a surprise, as his predecessor did not consult on report cards, as evidenced by the failing grade given by the Manitoba Teachers' Society on the new report card.

Mr. Speaker, why did this government fail to consult, and why did they deal teachers a bad hand with the new report cards?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I can tell you that when it comes to the K-to-12 sector here in Manitoban, parents, students, teachers and administrators trust this government to speak directly to the benefits of a public school education that benefits all students here in Manitoba.

Just this—in the last few days, Mr. Speaker, I've been out at Collège Béliveau to announce new science labs. I was out at Dalhousie School to talk about a new breakfast program for students. I was at École Taché to talk about an expansion of that school.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to standing up for students, you will find it on this side of the House. When it comes to cutting budgets, you'll find it on that side.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, the Highlights Report for the 2014 Manitoba Teachers' Society AGM on new report cards seems to be anything but highlights. In fact, the teachers highlighted the weaknesses of the new report cards, which outweighed the strengths four to one. Teachers said, and I quote: "Teachers felt left to fend for themselves." End quote.

* (13:50)

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education: Is he going to table amendments on the report cards before the end of session, or is he once again leaving teachers to fend for themselves?

Mr. Allum: Of course, there was plenty of consultation about the report cards with all parents, with teachers, with administrators.

We want to speak directly to parents so that they can be sure that their children are getting a quality education and make sure that they get the kind of supports and assistance they—that they need to be successful students and to go on, live here in Manitoba, get a good job and raise a family here.

That's the vision of this side of the House. When it comes to the member opposite, what he does is he votes against the budget every time we try to do something for students in Manitoba.

Mr. Ewasko: The list of broken promises by this NDP government continues to grow: broken promise on taxes and increased PST—broke promise on taxes and increased the PST by 14 per cent; broke funding promise to universities; took four years to develop new student financial aid software, which is still not done, and they've lost \$15 million somewhere; created Bill 63 without proper consultation and angered post-secondary institutions and students; received a failing grade from the Manitoba Teachers' Society on the new report cards.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister of—and his government more interested in ribbon cutting, which he announced again today, and taking the vote tax than the voices of teachers who want to improve the education system?

Mr. Allum: The member put together a long list of disconnected points that make no sense to us on this side of the House.

The point of fact, Mr. Speaker, is that Bill 63 was intended to streamline the decision-making process of the post-secondary sector here in Manitoba, but also it included very important protections for student affordability and very important protections for credit transfers for students.

But when the member opposite voted against that bill last week, I could only assume that his agenda is to defund universities and colleges, deregulate tuition and slam the door on credit transfers.

That's their agenda for education going forward. Ours is to continue to promote a quality, affordable, accessible—

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

CFS Case Concern Update (Matias de Antonio)

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, the family of little Matias de Antonio has been looking for information about his death ever since his passing on March 27th. Information has been promised, but they have received nothing from this government and this minister. Accordingly, they have reached out to other sources, including the Colombian consulate.

Has the minister been doing her due diligence in keeping the family and the Colombian consulate informed about what happened to Matias de Antonio while under the care of CFS?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): The tragedy that occurred when baby Matias passed away has touched all of us. Whether we're parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, fathers or mothers, it's impacted us all.

We have been working with the family, sharing all the information that we have to share with them and offering support to them when they need it. We have an open-door policy. I've had the opportunity to sit with the family to share their grief and to talk about how we move forward.

We need to continue to investigate what happened, to learn from the events and make sure as we move forward that we build a strong system that is going to protect all Manitoba's children.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't seem to be moving forward very fast.

It turns out that little Matias de Antonio has dual citizenship under Colombian law, as his father is Colombian and his mother is not yet a Canadian citizen. It appears that the minister and her staff took into custody a child who is by law a Colombian citizen.

We must then ask the minister: Did she notify the Colombian consulate of their plan to seize little Matias before they took into their care a Colombian citizen?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Every day on the front lines in Manitoba we have social workers that are providing their support to families, their encouragement and information to provide good parenting to their children. In some instances, in situations, because of the need for protection, children are apprehended and placed in our care. We need to work with the social workers, we need to work with the families and the communities to ensure that we are providing a supportive environment and a safe environment for them to continue to grow.

What we need to make sure is that we're always—always—within the child-welfare system, putting the child's welfare, the child's safety, as the No. 1 priority, and that's our commitment, and I support the front-line staff.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the welfare of the child was what turned out for the best in the family's case this time around.

But the minister is obligated to follow international law too. Both the family of little Matias de Antonio and the Colombian consulate want to know what happened to little Matias that led to his untimely death while in the care of CFS. They also want to know from this minister and this government why they felt it was necessary to take him into care in the first place.

Why is this minister not more transparent about what happened to Matias while in the care of CFS? What is this minister trying to hide?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The death of Matias has touched us all. It is very important that we follow protocol and standards and do the investigation, and that's just what's been happening, evaluating what happened.

And as we're doing that and gathering information, we are sharing it with the family. We know the family wants answers and needs answers, and that's why we're doing the investigation. That's why we have open communication, and as we're sharing

the information we're also extending our support to them. If they need services, we're there to provide it to them. We are encouraging them to reach out.

We are going to continue to gather information and continue to work to provide them with that information while we're protecting all of Manitoba's children.

RM of Edwards Road Closures

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, when we were at our meeting in Pierson, Manitoba, with local ratepayers, the local government has indicated that over 65 kilometres of road closures in the RM of Edward.

A local resident of Edward, Cheryl Arndt, indicated to us that she was a school bus driver. The challenge for her is to get all the schoolchildren to Pierson with so many road closures.

Mr. Speaker, does this government not care for the education of our children in this province?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): There's some challenging situations in the RM of Edward and the RM of Albert as well. The RM of Edward declared a state of emergency on June 5th, the RM of Albert on June 9th.

And, Mr. Speaker, what happens in any flooding situation, and certainly in the RM of Edward, where 40 local roads were closed, is we work with EMO and the local municipalities.

We want to be there in terms of the recovery stage as well. Municipal infrastructure is eligible for coverage under DFA. There's been significant coverage over the last number of years.

And I want to indicate to the member opposite, we take very seriously the emergency situation in the southwest and, indeed, we will work with the RMs in terms of the recovery stage, including looking at the establishment of a DFA program. We certainly encourage the two RMs that are affected and any individuals to put forward submissions in terms of DFA—

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

Mr. Piwniuk: I was in contact with the RM of Edward and they haven't heard nothing from this—from any of these ministers, and there is so many people are affected.

Mr. Speaker, the RM of Edward experienced over 40 washouts in their local roads. A local councillor has been quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press that the RM of Edward has become the Souris watershed ghetto.

Many of the schoolchildren in the southwest are in the midst of writing exams.

Mr. Speaker, why is no minister of this government in touch with the local officials regarding the state of emergency and the safety of these children?

Mr. Ashton: I want to indicate that the first line of response is, in terms of any emergency, is with the municipalities, and I want to put on the record the fine work that the municipal workers and the officials in Edward and Albert have been doing.

EMO—well, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's interesting. Members opposite a few minutes ago were heckling when they asked a serious question on CFS. They're heckling when they're asking what I assume is a serious question being asked by the member opposite in terms of the flood situation in the southwest.

* (14:00)

We have been in contact with the municipalities. As is the normal protocol, we've offered any and all assistance, but I do want to indicate, not only do we have faith in the municipal leaders and the staff in that area, we will be there in terms of coverage.

And the members opposite can heckle all they want. We take floods very seriously and our staff has been working 24-7 since the state of the emergency was declared last week, and we'll be there during the recovery stage as well.

Mr. Piwniuk: What my constituents have is no faith in this minister.

Cheryl Arndt has stated that one day she was picking up couple of schoolchildren one morning, but when she returned that afternoon to drop them off the road was washed out. Mrs. Arndt had to back her bus up over a mile to get to the major route. This was too dangerous for her to turn around because our ditches were filled with water.

Mr. Speaker, does this government not care of the safety of the Manitoba schoolchildren?

Mr. Ashton: Well, one—Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member opposite may want to consider the following

fact: We've had more than double the normal precipitation in April and May.

We've had significant rainfall on the two affected RMs; roads have been closed because of that significant amount of water in the area. This is no different than the situation we faced in 2009, in 2011 going to 2012, when hundreds of municipal roads, 80 bridges and many provincial highways were impacted. Mr. Speaker, the government didn't press a button and create the moisture that was there; it was significant rainfall, and there are concerns with drainage coming in from Saskatchewan.

What government does is work with our partners in the municipalities in dealing with the flood situation. We're there in terms of the recovery, there in terms of DFA, which is a federal-provincial program.

Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised the member opposite would try and make politics out of the very serious situation people in the southwest are facing.

Provincial Parks Cottage Fee Increases

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, according to the Province's own numbers, they allocated 3 and a half million dollars of park service costs to cottagers in 2012, representing about 60 per cent of total service costs. Also according to provincial figures, cottagers paid \$2.3 million in land rents, \$1.7 million in service fees and a quarter million in park passes for a total of 4 and a quarter million.

For 2014 the government's own numbers estimate cottage service fees to be \$4 million. They will receive much more than 4 and a quarter million dollars from cottagers.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister can move away from his fairy tale of, quote, massive subsidies, end quote, and explain how a 750 per cent hike in rent is fair and transparent.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Well, the—to repeat, Mr. Speaker, what is well known, indeed, to park cottagers and others in Manitoba, there has been a freeze on both the service fees and the land rent that has been charged to park cottagers and, in addition, a 10-year phase-in of an adjustment is under way. So in other words, there's an adjustment over the course of 20 years.

And that is based on independent analysis about the actual cost of providing services, whether it's the great road network that we have in our parks, whether it's the tremendous access to fresh drinking water, whether it is the treatment of waste water, whether it is the handling of solid waste, whether it is docks, whether it is lighting. I'm not even talking about natural resource officers and law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, people who live in parks should be paying their fair share like people outside parks.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, the minister is demanding cottagers pay massive hikes in part because rents do not reflect increased land values, land that cottagers do not own or can sell.

His staff on CBC confirmed the—that the NDP, through their 750 per cent rent hike, will be collecting more from cottagers than services received, end quote, that money would go into general revenues, end quote, where Conservation would—and I'm, again, I'm quoting the minister's staff—get some of that money back to run parks, end quote.

Can the minister define for cottagers what some equals? Will half of the rental hikes be diverted from provincial parks, two thirds? Surely the minister must know.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member continues to advocate for, apparently, free land rent in parks. I don't know how he's going to explain that to the farmers who rent Crown land at fair market value, or anyone else in Manitoba. I don't know how he can explain to the first-time homebuyer scraping together that down payment why that person should be paying for their down payment and someone's park cottage as well. There has to be fairness and that is all we seek, that they pay their fair share for the services in each particular cottage district.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have in place an appeal. Anyone can bring a certified land appraisal in and we will accept it at face value. We will also defer any increase.

Mr. Speaker, we have received no appeals. We have received no requests for deferrals.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that those same first-time homebuyers aren't getting—are getting gouged from this minister's land transfer tax.

Mr. Speaker, The Provincial Parks Act requires the Province consult when cottage—with cottagers when it comes to rents and fees. The minister

suggests that meaningful consultation took place. In reality, junior government officials attended cottage association meetings, gave a very basic presentation on the planned upcoming hikes and refused to take questions.

How does this minister suggest that this meets anyone's standard of consultations? And, more importantly, will this minister commit to personally meeting with the association throughout the summer to ensure that the process is both fair and transparent?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I've never seen a list of transparency like this, because when the opposition brought in changes when they were in government to park cottage fees, there was nothing like, for example, a proposed park strategy that everyone in Manitoba could comment on, and many did.

The estimated service costs and rent was posted online for feedback. Everyone got a personalized letter. There were open houses all across Manitobans where hundreds of park cottagers attended. There have been meetings on an ongoing basis with associations and individuals. There was an outside independent office—audit by Grant Thornton, Mr. Speaker, and today there's about 1,000 pages online of all of the breakdown.

But would the member please apologize to this House for supporting wrong information, Mr. Speaker, that was being proposed—or was being put out publicly? All he has done is defend it. I would suspect that the member would want to clarify his position on the record today.

Manufacturing Industry Manitoba Sales Figures

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, when the NDP were first elected in 1999, Manitoba's manufacturing sales were \$10.9 billion that year. That was 176 per cent ahead of Saskatchewan at \$6.2 billion.

Today, due to slow growth, Manitoba's manufacturing sales have fallen behind Saskatchewan, as is visible in this graph I table.

Mr. Speaker, how could the NDP have so mismanaged our fiscal situation that Manitoba's stronghold on the manufacturing economy has slipped away? Manitobans can understand falling behind Saskatchewan on oil and potash, but

manufacturing and its jobs? That's been our strength. Why has the NDP done so poorly?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for River Heights from the question.

I'm sure he's aware of the fact that the latest report from Export Development Canada indicates that in 2013 Manitoba's exports increased by 10.7 per cent—10.7 per cent—more than double national growth—more than double national growth—of 4 per cent. They are also predicting for 2014 that Manitoba will see another 10 per cent increase in exports from Manitoba. So this will lead the nation. We will see record exports coming out of the province of Manitoba. Manufacturing is central to that.

We recently just made an announcement with E.H. Price, another 175 jobs in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We've been to New Flyer. We're very supportive of their new initiatives, which are exporting more buses. They have the best electric bus in North America. Recently, the transit authority for New York just bought 295 electric buses from Manitoba. Those are exports.

Request to Remove Payroll Tax

Mr. Gerrard: Excuses, excuses.

Mr. Speaker, if this NDP government had managed our economy well over the last 15 years, for example, by removing the payroll tax, it's likely our manufacturing sales would've grown equivalent to Saskatchewan and reached, today, \$27.6 billion in sales, \$12 billion more than Manitoba sells today. This province would have had more than enough new income to replace the payroll tax and we'd have a lot more people employed here. NDP mismanagement is squashing our economy instead of freeing it to go.

Will the Premier stop squashing the growth of employment in our manufacturing sector and remove the archaic and economically obstructive payroll tax now?

* (14:10)

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I refer the member again to the budget papers where it shows that Winnipeg and Brandon, for cities of comparable size, are No. 1 in the nation for the cost of doing business when you're in manufacturing, and the member needs to know that manufacturing employment has increased in Manitoba by 3.23 per cent; for the rest of the

country manufacturing employment has gone down 1.98 per cent.

We're going up, Mr. Speaker, more jobs, more good jobs for Manitobans, a more competitive regime than anywhere else in the country. Those jobs will stay in Manitoba. Manitobans will get good training for those jobs. I'm talking about aerospace. I'm talking about farm equipment manufacturing. I'm talking about value-added food manufacturing. I'm talking about new media and films. All of those things are strong industries in Manitoba and we'll keep them that way.

Employment Numbers

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, time and time again this NDP government has made bad decision after bad decision with respect to Manitoba's economy.

Every month for the last eight months there have been fewer people employed than in the same month a year earlier in Manitoba, while Saskatchewan has seen employment growth in comparison, as this graph I table shows.

The result of the NDP's poor expenditure management, poor taxation planning and poor fiscal management is that manufacturing in our province is growing much slower and we have fewer jobs.

Why has this NDP government stifled economic growth by allowing growth in manufacturing to stall and to take Manitoba jobs with it?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the R & D, the Research and Development Tax Credit in Manitoba, 20 per cent with refundability, better than any other province in the country, better in Manitoba, good for manufacturers. That's why manufacturers are providing and creating good, high-quality jobs in Manitoba. Designers, engineers, CI-information technology specialists, all those people are doing their work in Manitoba.

Capital tax completely eliminated in Manitoba. Manufacturing investment tax credit just renewed in the budget. All of these opportunities create Manitoba as one of the most affordable cities—Winnipeg and Brandon—most affordable places in the country for manufacturing. We're seeing the employment grow while it's shrinking in the rest of the country.

Will the member opposite acknowledge that Winnipeg is the manufacturing hub of western Canada and will continue to be so?

Building for Tomorrow Summer Program Skilled Trades Experience for Youth

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, when I was younger and looking to become a tradesman, there were no supports under the Filmon government that they're all so proud of. In fact, unemployment hit an all-time high of 10 per cent underneath them. It's no wonder the Leader of the Opposition wants to run from his record; at 10 per cent, I'd want to run from it too.

Our government supports connecting youth with skills trades. We want every Manitoba youth to have the opportunity to get hands-on experience with choices for their future by connecting them with potential educators and employers.

Can the Minister of Jobs and the Economy please tell us about a fun, innovative way that we are connecting our youth with skilled trades in this—in the announcement that she made today?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): So great to get a chance to stretch my legs.

I'm delighted, Mr. Speaker, to say to members opposite that we invested today, in partnership with Red River College and Assiniboine Community College and WASAC and the University College of the North, in summer camps for kids so that they can not only have fun but have experience in getting to learn about the trades.

In particular, we highlighted a camp that's going to go on at Red River collegiate specifically for girls in the trades. These girls will get to learn all about different kinds of trades that they may want to pursue. They get to build a go-cart, Mr. Speaker, race it at the end.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we're adding 15 apprenticeship opportunities within the context of the Manitoba government during the summer that can count towards their level 1 apprenticeship.

We're investing in our young people because they want—we want them to get great jobs right here at home.

Surgical Services Patient Wait Times

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, a constituent approached me this weekend to share concerns related to his 68-year-old brother's health. His surgeon informed him that he needs his hernia

repaired, but that he should expect a five-month delay before it could be done. To quote my constituent: In the meantime, my brother has to live with the pain of a hernia that is getting progressively worse. End quote.

Why does this Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) believe five months is an acceptable wait time to access surgical services?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Acting Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker—[*interjection*] I was under the erroneous presumption that members opposite wanted an answer.

Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question.

Certainly we know that we don't want any of our loved ones to be in discomfort or pain as they await a surgical intervention or other medical intervention. We certainly also know that medical experts work very hard, not just here in Manitoba but across the nation, to set medically recommended benchmarks.

We want to ensure that this particular constituent of which this member speaks is getting the care within that time, and we commit to him to do a further investigation of that case.

Mr. Martin: When the surgeon was asked about the unreasonable delay noted, he noted that he could do it sooner, but while the Province has put a new operating theatre in Ste. Anne they only fund its availability for three days a week. The surgeon noted, quote, the rest of the week the operating room sits idle, end quote.

Can the minister share from her briefing binder the note explaining why this—the operating theatre is closed almost two thirds of the week?

Ms. Oswald: Yes, again I would say to the member opposite—I'm not certain that he was able to hear me at first—that if he has some details concerning this case, particularly as he mentioned this individual is waiting in—[*interjection*] He has made mention, and I take him at his word, Mr. Speaker, that this individual is waiting in discomfort. I would propose that there needs to be a reassessment. Clearly, we would want that to happen.

Further on the subject of surgical availability in Ste. Anne or at any facility across Manitoba, we work with the regional health authority to ensure that staffing is in place to enable them to perform surgeries and other clinical procedures across Manitoba, and we'll continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Mr. Speaker: And before we move on to members' statements, I want to draw to the attention of honourable members that the two pages that we have with us here, this is their last regularly scheduled activity in the Chamber here.

And I'd like to start first with Nicolas Connor, who will be in grade 12 next year at Centre Scolaire Léo-Rémillard. And this year his grade point average is 85 per cent and he hopes to attend the University of Manitoba when he graduates high school and then on to Asper School of Business. Nicolas participated in the Franco-Manitoban youth parliament and was on the student council and participated in hockey.

Austin McWhirter is in grade 12 at Dakota Collegiate, and with a grade average of 95 per cent, he wishes to study political science at university and also to obtain a law degree. Outside of school, Austin is a great piano student as well as a teacher, and he also plays the saxophone.

So both pages wish to thank all members of the Assembly for their kindness and support over the past year, and both have greatly enjoyed their experience.

And we wish them well in their future endeavors, and especially in their education. Thank you for your services. We sure have a good group of pages.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ukrainian Election

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise before the Manitoba Legislative Assembly today to recognize and celebrate a pivotal moment in Ukraine's history, the democratic election of President Petro Poroshenko.

This election is so important for Ukraine because it represents the fruition of a hard-fought resistance against the Yanukovich regime and the occupation of Ukraine by Russian forces.

The crisis in Ukraine began in November 2013 when President Yanukovich abandoned an agreement that would develop closer ties between the EU in favour of closer ties with Russia. By early December, more than 800,000 protesters occupied the Kiev city hall.

Protesters continued throughout Ukraine, and by February of 2014 the situation became dire as Ukrainian government used the police force to quell the non-violent protest, culminating in the worst day of violence in Ukraine in over 70 years. On February 20th, 88 protesters were killed, many of them by uniformed foreign military snipers.

Rather than back down and be silenced, it fueled the courage of the Ukrainian protesters as they continued to stand up to the regime that was violating their democratic rights.

*(14:20)

The situation worsened on February 27th and 28th, as anti-Ukrainian gunmen seized key buildings in Crimea, beginning the foreign occupation of Ukraine.

Against all this adversity, Ukrainians have stood up for their democratic rights, and this election moves towards a united, free and democratic Ukraine.

Here in Manitoba we have a large and active Ukrainian community who have been very supportive of their friends, family and countrymen. Ukrainian Canadian Congress has worked diligently to provide humanitarian assistance, as well as awareness for the protesters in Ukraine.

As a Legislature, we have also worked hard passing a unanimous resolution condemning all violence and anti-democratic acts perpetrated against Ukrainians, as well as congratulating Ukraine on their democratic elections. We also had an active debate about the possibility of banning Russian products from MLCC stores.

Moreover, Manitoba sent an election observer from our own Manitoba Legislative Assembly to observe the free and democratic elections. I was humbled to have been chosen for this truly unforgettable and eye-opening experience. I did my best to represent our great province to its fullest and to observe the election in an unbiased, professional and fair manner.

On behalf of all members, I want to congratulate Ukraine on its successful election. I want to thank all those who played a vital role in making this happen: protesters, election observers, foreign governments, humanitarian groups, and many different individuals and groups came together under one cause. Each component has a contributing factor to this important milestone.

I offer my 'sincerens' condolences to the fallen, injured and lost in hope that this election is the beginning of many good days to come for our families and friends in Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries Family IMPACT Award

Ms. Christine Melnick (Riel): Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are many ways to give back to the community in which you live. We all know the incredible importance that the arts play in our world, be it visual arts, dance or, in this case, music.

By combining a love of music with a commitment to community, the Poulter-Friesen family have found a unique way to volunteer and are a grand choice for the Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries impact volunteer award which they received at the 31st Annual Volunteer Awards hosted by Volunteer Manitoba this past April.

For the past 20 years, the husband-and-wife team of Pamela Poulter-Friesen and Kevin Friesen have co-ordinated the Winnipeg Folk Festival's on-site first-aid crew. During that time, Pamela, a registered nurse, and Kevin, an emergency physician, have dedicated countless hours recruiting teams of doctors and nurses to join their crew, sourcing donated first aid and medical supplies and helping visitors enjoy the five-day festival.

The Poulter-Friesens run the little field hospital for the duration of the Folk Festival, and the goal is to help patrons on site, whether it's treating headaches, dehydration or occasionally something more serious. Both Pam and Kevin give credit to the medical volunteers with whom they work, stating it's a fabulous crew.

In addition, to promote local artists and keep the Folk Fest in the minds of Manitobans throughout the year, the Poulter-Friesens host several in-house parties featuring Manitoba artists, whose music reflects the varied choices one finds at the annual festival. These intimate parties provide both the artists and guests an opportunity to interact on a personal basis and continue to grow the music scene here in Manitoba.

As for the—as far as the Friesens are concerned, everyone in their household has a duty to help make their community better. Both Pam and Kevin's parents raised them to play an active role in the

community, and it's important for the family to continue the legacy.

And so the torch of volunteerism is being lit by their four sons: Aaron, Thomas, Cole and Jonas. At this year's festival, both Cole and Jonas will be volunteering, and Thomas, who is studying science at the Canadian Mennonite University, will enjoy devoting his energy to coaching basketball.

In response to receiving this award, the Poulter-Friesen family stated that they were honoured and humbled, especially in a place like Manitoba where so many families would have been so worthy.

Mr. Speaker, I hold that we in Manitoba are honoured and humbled to have the Poulter-Friesen family in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Riverheights School

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the Manitoba Legislature today to recognize a grade 5-6 split class at Riverheights School in Brandon. I was invited to answer questions from the class last Friday, June 6th, 2014, by teachers Debbie Morrisette and Lynda Nay-Kamann.

The students had been learning about elections and had held a mock election with a representative from Elections Manitoba. I felt very honoured to discuss the role of a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the students had a list of prepared questions but quickly added more questions as the discussion moved from what is an MLA, to wanting to know if it was a fun job. There was a very good involvement from the entire class, and we ran out of time before we ran out of questions. I hope I was able to answer them in a way that made sense. The class had a very good understanding of the roles of the government and the election process.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to the grade 5-6 class at Riverheights School and to the teachers Debbie Morrisette and Lynda Nay-Kamann. I was greatly encouraged by the interest shown by the students, and I think the class enjoyed the discussion. There was a great deal of interest shown in how you become an MLA and what education might be required. We are thankful that we live in a province and country where all those students have many opportunities for education and many options for

career choices. We know those opportunities are not available in every country around the world.

Thank you.

Gary Wowchuk

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Gary Wowchuk has dedicated his career to preserving the archaeological history of the Swan Valley. He has had an exceptional impact on the—both the local and the wider academic community. He is an incredibly deserving recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Historical Award.

Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant Governor's award of Historical Preservation and Promotion was established in 2010 and is presently annually in consultation with the Manitoba Historical Society, recipients are recognized as because of their prolonged mentoring service in the preservation and the promotion of the province-rich history. This year, Gary was one of the five recipients to receive this award.

Mr. Speaker, Gary is well known as a resident archeological specialist in the valley. Some of his main interests include the pre-contact archaeological of the plains, the parkland, the boreal forest in western North America in the 'Pablo-Indian' colonization of the Lake Agassiz basin. His local research, which is rigorous and 'mented' as deeply enriched in the scientific knowledge of the antique history of local, regionally and nationally.

Gary has played a very active role in preserving the local record through participation on several boards. He has been a council member for several years and is past president of the Swan Valley Historical Museum.

He is also known for encouraging and helping his graduate students with their research and studies and has promoted the donation to the Manitoba Archaeological Society to help offset cost to the students that can attend the provincial conferences.

Mr. Speaker, Gary Wowchuk is a very passionate, energetic, knowledgeable and archaeological and a keen mentor to those in the following his footsteps. He has been a valuable asset to the heritage movement in Manitoba, and I'm delighted to see that we can select this award to Mr. Gary Wowchuk.

Thank you.

Village of Wawanesa 125th Anniversary

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I rise today to say to the House the village of Wawanesa is celebrating its 125th birthday July 4th to 6th, 2014.

Wawanesa does have many reasons to celebrate. Wawanesa was originally called Sipiweske, which means light through the trees. In 1890 the name of the town was changed to Wawanesa, which is believed to be Cree for whippoorwill.

The first Europeans settled in the late 1800s. In 1890 the Northern Pacific Railroad, later the CNR, moved through the area and with it came the construction of grain elevators and service centres. The village grew and Wawanesa was a flourishing rural community at the turn of the century and the community is now deeply rooted in agriculture.

The village is home of the Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company created in 1896 by Alonzo Fowler Kempton. The head office is still located in the village of Glenboro—of Wawanesa. The mutual has grown to one of the largest general insurance companies in Canada.

Nellie McClung, famous author and activist of the 20th century, was one of Wawanesa's most noteworthy citizens. Born Nellie Mooney, her wedding to Robert McClung was the first to be performed in Wawanesa's Presbyterian Church.

The Souris River winds its way through the village and the valley created by its banks offers a visual experience unique to most areas of the Canadian prairies. The village was impacted by major floods in 1976 and 2011. The entire community pulled together to protect the village on both occasions.

The Sipiweske Museum will be open during the 125th celebrations. Housed in the original office building of the Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company which was built in 1901, the Sipiweske Museum not only highlights the history of the Mutual, but several other areas of the community's past. The village was incorporated in 1909 and has a very active and progressive council. Current mayor, Bruce Gullett, and council will welcome visitors to the 125th celebrations.

*(14:30)

Wawanesa is, in fact, home to Manitoba's first geothermal subdivision started in 2003. The community now boasts a newly renovated Lions Park following the flood of 2011, and the community

also recently opened a \$1-million outdoor water park and winters are enjoyed in the community recreation complex. Both the local K-to-12 school and daycare facilities are full, which bodes well for the future of the community.

I am honoured to celebrate and participate in my hometown's 125th this July. Many events, including a parade, tours, social events and the annual Pound Pail Paddle boat races will take place.

Congratulations, Wawanesa, on your 125th.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, could you please call concurrence and third reading of the following bills: Bill 10, Bill 21, Bill 33, Bill 49, Bill 53, Bill 57, Bill 58, Bill 60, Bill 66, Bill 74, then Committee of the Whole on Bill 73 and concurrence and third reading of Bill 73.

Mr. Speaker: As has been indicated, we're going to start with concurrence and third readings of the following bills: Bill 10 followed by bills 21, 33, 49, 53, 57, 58, 60, 66 and 74, and then we'll move to Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 73 followed by concurrence and third readings of Bill 73.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 10—The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: So we'll start first by calling bill—under concurrence and third readings, Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Braun), that Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la prévention des incendies et les interventions d'urgence, reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I am pleased to rise for a third reading of The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act. This bill strengthens the act's penalty provisions in an effort to help with enforcement of the act and its main regulation, which is the Manitoba Fire Code.

The amendments contained in this bill will significantly increase maximum penalties for offences under the act, as well as bringing the ability for the Fire Commissioner to issue administrative penalties in cases of noncompliance with an order issued by the Office of the Fire Commissioner or a local authority. Manitoba's Office of the Fire Commissioner has primary responsibility for administration of the act while municipalities and other local authorities are responsible for the majority of Fire Code enforcement across the province.

This bill raises the maximum penalties under the act and allows for the Fire Commissioner to hand out administrative penalties to ensure compliance with the act and regulations and ensure that orders are obeyed on a timely manner. These administrative penalties will allow the Office of the Fire Commissioner and local authorities to enforce compliance without lengthy process of a conviction or maximum fines. The maximum penalties will be raised significantly for both individuals and corporations for both first and second offences.

As we all know, fires can be devastating—can have devastating consequences. Given that the purpose of the Manitoba Fire Code is to reduce the likelihood of fires and to mitigate the damages when they do occur. Improving compliance will help save lives and property. Mr. Speaker, this is the goal that is shared by all members of this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Just to put a few words onto the record prior to this bill proceeding past third reading and the expectation that it'll get royal assent in a couple of days.

We've said before—and we certainly appreciate and support the efforts that we can do to ensure that those individuals who are protecting us and those individuals who might be in harm's way as a result of fires are able to receive protection, are able to receive support. To the extent that this bill improves that, we support it, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just to speak briefly on this legislation, I think that the legislation clarifies a number of important aspects as well as making sure that there's a significant financial penalty for those who are not following the fire requirements and, certainly, as the AMM have recommended, the information and description of the changes in the bill need to be communicated very clearly to all municipalities and to all fire departments. I hope that this will be done expeditiously in advance of the bill coming into effect. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 10?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Amendment Act.

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

Bill 21—The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act

Mr. Speaker: Now, I'll proceed to call under concurrence and third reading Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act; Loi sur la Société canadienne du Port arctique de Churchill, reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I just want to make a few final comments on this legislation, and first of all, I want to indicate, again, this is a very important piece of legislation that moves Churchill and the Port of Churchill to the next level. It is based on some of the experience with CentrePort, and there are some similarities, obviously, some differences, but some significant similarities. I want to put on the record that this is legislation that's intended to work in co-operation with the owner and operator of the port, and that, of course, is OmniTRAX now, and they have operated since 1997. I want to indicate as well that as was discussed in committee, there will be

some significant consultations on the regulations that will flow from the passage of this legislation, and that will obviously involve discussions in terms of the makeup of the board and various other items.

And I do want to stress, as well, there are many opportunities with the Port of Churchill. We see it as sustaining, you know, an important grain port, played a useful role. The last couple of years it's played a useful role in terms of transportation of grain, particularly at a time when we saw, certainly last year, a real crisis, lack of facilities. We have identified issues such as storage, and not just in Churchill itself, but also in other areas, and I include the town of The Pas. We—part of discussions with both OmniTRAX and other potential stakeholders—and again, the new legislation does provide for various options in terms of those kind of initiatives.

I want to stress, as well, again, that with climate change which is a reality, one of the few areas where you will see some positive changes potentially will be in terms of the shipping season of Churchill. So this legislation is very much again predicated on the significant opportunities that could be ahead. I would point to the fact that the Northwest Passage could be opened for shipping in a very short period of time. There's already some shipping going through it. We certainly have worked on some of the insurance issues directly with Lloyds of London, and I know OmniTRAX has done that.

There are many other opportunities, and I just want to put on the record again, these include a lot of goods related to food production which, again, is important to western Canada. That includes potash; it includes fertilizer; it includes a variety of products that could be brought in, and it's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that historically the Port of Churchill has had significant shipments, both import and export. In fact, the Dalgleish lines for many years operated a direct import-export from their base in Newcastle, in England, and connected into the Port of Churchill.

*(14:40)

One of the key elements of the establishment of this entity, again, is to provide other options, and, again, this is working in partnership with OmniTRAX. And I do want to note on the record that we do have a track record of working in partnership with OmniTRAX. The Province was a very important contributor to track upgrades. There's still some funding that's available for the port. We've actually put in \$21 million as part of the \$68-million

agreement between the federal and provincial governments on OmniTRAX.

And I do want to indicate that we are already in discussions with OmniTRAX as well, on the transition for the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation, Mr. Speaker. It's provided a useful role over the last period of time. And as we transition to this new entity, we are engaged with discussions with OmniTRAX. And, again, the passage of this bill really allows us to move to the next step, which will be in terms of consultation.

So I do recommend it to the House and again put on the record the tremendous opportunities that we have in Churchill. It's a great asset for Manitoba. It's a great asset for western Canada and Canada as a whole. And we want to take it to the next level, and that's what this legislation is all about.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act and, indeed, the benefits of having a port of national and international significance in northern Manitoba.

I listened to the minister's comments, and it's not exactly what we saw in committee. Indeed, people were talking about the lack of consultation prior to this particular piece of legislation. That's what we have heard from people. But it now seems that it's the government's role to introduce legislation in vacuum without talking to anybody and then, as the minister said, then they're going to consult and find out what people want, and then they're going to hide it in the regulations so that it's not clear and transparent to everybody ahead of time.

So, trust this government, is what the minister's saying. And we know that Manitobans have trouble with that trust. There was something in the last election—let me think now—they went around and they knocked on every door and they promised no tax increases. And that's what every NDP candidate promised to Manitobans. And they said, read our lips, trust us, that will not happen.

And then, well, what happened, Mr. Speaker? We saw a broadening of the PST. We saw an increase of 14.3 per cent to the PST. We saw other fees and taxes so that Manitobans are amongst the highest taxed in Canada. And this minister has the audacity to stand up in the House here and say, trust us, we know what's best, we will consult, promise.

Well, we know NDP promises just highlight NDP failures, Mr. Speaker. And that is the concern

with this bill. Trust us, there's not much in there. We tried to make amendments so that it would be clearer to Manitoba what the membership of the board might look like. No, minister didn't want to talk about those things, didn't even want to have a discussion of who might be on the board. It's much better they're appointed in confidence.

So—and then we talked about consultations and how that might go forward and who might not be allowed to be on the board, like MLAs. And no, no, we don't want to talk about that, either, Mr. Speaker, this government said. We want to do this all the way that the government plans without talking to anybody, and then, now that we have their attention, we're going to—well, maybe we'll tell them, this government will tell them what they're going to do.

So it's very, very strange, Mr. Speaker. And time and again, the minister compared it to the CentrePort act, which has its flaws. But then when you go and look at things that are in the CentrePort act, they're missing from this one, but they're going to be handled in regulation, trust this government, trust them; very important there that this minister says that.

And we heard from people at committee and we hear from others as we talk about this particular act, that there has been no consultation. And now the minister has the audacity to stand up in the House here and said they will, they will. They, you know, trust, just trust us. We're going to talk to people and—but will there be proper consultations where they're actually listen to people, Mr. Speaker? And that's the critical part in a consultation. It's not one way. But that does seem to be the way for this NDP government; it's a one-way direction and one-way street.

And here we have a company that's been doing its best to try to develop the port, working with communities and—around them and working with governments and trying to make the business run. And they're doing a good job of that, as far as I can see, Mr. Speaker. There's lots of opportunities. The minister did mention those. There are lots of opportunities there, both importing and exporting. But, again, this government wants control of that whole thing.

Well, if you want control of it, this may not be the way to do it. You know, the best—past practices—NDP government is that there's, you know, it's the concern about the details. There's not enough detail in this bill for people to really understand what's

going to happen, but promise—the government promises it'll be in the regulation, you know, that'll be all clear then. Well—

An Honourable Member: Clear as mud.

Mr. Helwer: Clear as mud, yes.

The area to be determined as a Churchill Arctic Port area, yet to be defined, somehow defined in the regulations, maybe, as well as many other important measures of this particular legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has a very long history of deceiving Manitobans. So, as I say, whenever they say, trust us, or that they promise something, then that—the flags go up. Manitobans now know that we need to proceed with extra caution. You know, it's—what is most shocking, I think, about this piece of legislation is that this NDP government feels they're better positioned to go it alone rather than work with local stakeholders and businesses, no clear parameters, a large portion of the bill to be determined. Just seems like another backdoor to 'explort'—exploit the interests of Manitobans. Surely, if this government had nothing to hide, they would've let it show in the initial tabling of the bill, but, no, that's not there. Trust them, they say.

And then there's the flip-flopping by this government on shipping products. They seem to want approval of particular products. Some of them aren't palatable to this government, and they want control of that it seems, Mr. Speaker. So their ever-evolving priorities and backtracking on commitments does nothing to help the development of Churchill, its port or the north of our 'promince' in general. There's opportunities there in terms of inland transshipment opportunities that we can look at, and you can develop those areas, not just on the port but inland so that other communities in northern Manitoba have some opportunities.

But those are things that this act does not talk about, does not reflect, because they have not consulted, again, with the business. Business partners, they want assurance, Mr.—government—Mr. Speaker. They want stability, and they're look at establishing and investing in our province, they want the rules to be clear. But when we look at this legislation, is it clear? Well, no. We don't know who's going to be on the board. We don't know who they're going to report to. We don't know how any of that is going to work. We don't know what the consultations are going to be. But again the

government says, trust us. And that's the problem, one of the many problems.

Businesses, as I said, they need stability. When you talk—the minister talked about insurance companies. That is by far one of the things that insurance companies need and desire is stability. When they have surprises, Mr. Speaker, people that support that insurance company are not happy because the insurance company's got to deal with it. And there's all kinds of things that this government likes to surprise people with, but that is not what business wants to see. As I said, they need stability. They need the rules to be clear. They don't need the goalposts to change and disappear into the horizon, as we see time and time again by this government.

So how can those entities have more confidence in this government than any Manitoban who's been tricked time and time again by a government that just cannot seem to keep its word? Mr. Speaker, there must be clear, continuous and comprehensive consultation with all those who'll be affected by this bill, and there should've been leading up to it, before it was created. It is incumbent upon this government to do so, but did they? Again, not. And you hear the minister promising that there will be consultations.

So we look forward to this further comments from this further minister or other NDP members who might give us a little hint of plans for this legislation other than the vague terms, trust us, we're going to consult. It leaves a large portion of the legislation to regulations, and something that all Manitobans, especially the residents and stakeholders in around Churchill, should be very wary of, and Manitobans are very wary of the promises of this government.

So it yet needs to be seen, Mr. Speaker, where this legislation's going to go. We understand that the minister promises to consult. As I said, should've been done long since, but now he says it's going to happen. So we'll wait and see and, again, things will be hidden in the regulations.

*(14:50)

I'll see if there's others that wish to speak to this interesting piece of legislation. Had some opportunity, could've been a great piece of legislation, but it's all hidden, Mr. Speaker, as what most of the promises of this government are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Goertzen: In anticipation of a possible additional concurrence today or a time for concurrence, I'd like to table a list of ministers to be questioned concurrently, namely, the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby), the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Ms. Oswald), and the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross). It's a very official list here. Here you go.

Mr. Speaker: It's been announced that should we move into concurrence, that the ministers that will be required will be the Minister of Health, the Minister of Jobs and the Economy, and the Minister of Family Services—[interjection]—questioned concurrently.

* * *

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to speak on this bill which deals with the Port of Churchill.

The Port of Churchill is a very, very important port and very important to the future of Manitoba, particularly with what's happening with global warming and the expectation of a longer shipping season, that there is a lot of potential for development. There is a lot of potential for the Port of Churchill to play a significant role going forward.

What is astonishing, Mr. Speaker, is the horrible lack of communication between the minister and the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation and OmniTRAX, the corporation which has the railway and the port. The relevant NDP minister seems to have been most forgetful of his duty in terms of making sure that when he brings in a bill, in such an important area as this, the future of the Port of Churchill, that he handles things well, consults well, and doesn't leave any stones unturned in making sure that there is a smooth transition.

But on this occasion, the minister, who could have just walked five minutes down the road to where the chair of the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation has been working at the University of Winnipeg—and I'm sure the minister would know where the chair is working and that he's there—but it would appear that the minister, instead of walking, has got in his plane or maybe it's his broom and just flown up, and as he's way up high in the sky, waves down and said, I don't need to talk with you, I'm just going on north. And then has kept on going.

And there's the line, the Churchill below, before he gets to Thompson, and he waves down there and says, oh, that's where the OmniTRAX line is. I don't need to go down there and talk to anybody. I just need to keep on going and be up here in the sky.

So, sadly, as we saw that there has not been a lot of communication and virtually none. In fact, as Mr. Axworthy explained, the funding ended on March 31st. There is, understandably, poor staff morale. The ongoing contracts with shippers and traders around the world are, sort of, in uncertainty because this transition hasn't been handled well.

As Mr. Axworthy said, and I quote: "You have to be very careful about the legislation you write because it does come back to kind of hit you in the back in the head at times, and you want to make sure that nothing is done that is going to impair the ongoing development of the port." I think that's very clear, Mr. Speaker.

And, as Mr. Axworthy said, that, you know, people in the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation are ready to, you know, transition, that OmniTRAX is looking forward to investing and working, but there's been no communication, which is rather startling, rather unsettling, rather disturbing.

As Mr. Axworthy said, and I quote, my major concern is that there isn't enough in this bill to tell us what it's going to do, how it's going to be governed and really what are going to be the policies or directions that emerge from this. Surely we should have—had some sort of a vision as well as detailed policies.

The certain situation here is that people with the Churchill gateway corporation and OmniTRAX, as Mr. Axworthy says, that there's a lot of experience, a lot of contact, a lot of connections that have been made. But there's no sort of a transmission bill which can be clearly sorted out in terms of moving responsibilities to the new authority.

Continuing on, he says there's nothing in the bill that really sets out what the relationship between the new port authority will be and the one and only primary owner of the port and the railway. CentrePort deals with a whole lot of different players, but in Churchill you really have only one major player, although there are a lot of shippers and others who are involved, but, certainly, these are not exactly the same and one needs to be careful that you have a situation which is designed and works for the

people in Churchill, for Manitobans and for those who want to ship goods through Churchill.

I'm going to quote a little more from Mr. Axworthy. I'm not opposed to the bill, he says, but I'm saying it needs a lot of explanation—was lacking so far. It needs a lot of direction. I don't think everything should be left up to regulation because so far there's been no consultation with us or with OmniTRAX about what those regulations will look like.

Astonishingly, the minister admits that he hasn't drafted the regulations or doesn't seem to know exactly where this is going, and, you know, that in spite of the fact that things are kind of in limbo at the moment and he should have been clearly a lot more on the ball given the importance of Churchill and the Port of Churchill and its future in Manitoba's future.

There are questions about, again, as Mr. Axworthy said, what is going to be the actual relationship and the transition itself between the Churchill Gateway Development Corporation and all the assets and liabilities and investments that it has and how and when will the port authority come into being.

There are ongoing questions: what the relationship will be; is the private owner going to be on the board; what happens if, in fact, investments are made by the port authority that isn't agreed to by the private owner; who reconciles the differences; who makes these kinds of choices, because, in fact, it has a great deal of impact on what the eventual success of the ongoing efforts to develop Churchill will be. There are many questions, and, certainly, there should have been much more consultation and discussion, particularly given that the period of transition is now and the period, as a result, because of the lack of consultation and the lack of action by this government, is a lot of uncertainty.

There needs to be not only a clearer consultation and discussion and agreement in terms of how things move forward, there needs to be a lot of issues that have to be discussed and agreed to in terms of the relationship with the port authority, what's going to be the position of OmniTRAX, how people are going to work together. And, certainly, there's a lot of work to do.

I'm, you know, supportive of this effort but in—certainly in general terms, but it would have been highly desirable if this bill could have been filled out, if there could have been consultations, if there

could have been discussions, if there could have been a much more effective transition than has happened to date.

* (15:00)

So it is, you know, with some concern, as I've expressed this, that I continue to support this, but that concern is all about the inaction and the poor action of this NDP government and the poor consultation that they have done. And I think it really is part of their terrible and ongoing record of poor management, and we can't support this kind of poor management, even as we have to move forward in some fashion, but it would have been far better if this could have been moved forward in a much more coherent, much more consultative, much more planned transition than we have had, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on Bill 21?

The House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division. Record will show that it was carried on division.

Bill 33—The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call for concurrence and third reading of Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts).

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Jobs and the Economy, that Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts); Loi sur les occasions d'apprentissage en milieu de travail (marchés de travaux publics), reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Just briefly, I'll remind the House that the legislation itself will require that all public works contracts, issued by the government of Manitoba and any other public sector entity designated in the regulation, to provide opportunities for apprenticeship training on government contracts if the work itself utilizes tradespersons.

So the intent of this bill, of course, is to begin with public works contracts issued by the government of Manitoba in an effort to provide additional opportunities for us to grow our workforce, grow our tradespeople right here at home.

And, Mr. Speaker, just—I want to make a few comments. I was reflecting on the discussion that we had at committee and some of the concerns raised by the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), the opposition critic. And I just wanted to, I hope, put her mind at ease on a couple of these issues and ensure that she has a fulsome understanding of not only the process but of the bill itself.

The member suggested, you know, she made two assertions that I would like to correct, if I may. First, she said that we have a shortage of apprentices here in Manitoba. And second, she asserted that we did not consult with employers or stakeholders.

I would like to clarify for the member that there is, in fact, not a shortage of apprentices here in Manitoba. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that she misspoke, and perhaps what she meant to say is journey-person, that we need to grow our workforce of journey-persons, and I would agree with that statement.

But to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have a shortage of apprentices here in Manitoba is just not quite right. And I can assure this member that any employee who is working in the trades who is not already an apprentice or a journeyman can register as an apprentice if there's a journeyman available to supervise them. All it takes is an employer who is willing and able to take them on.

And, really, we know that the only way that we can create more journeymen, which, I believe, is what the member intended to say, is to have more employers take on more apprentices, Mr. Speaker. And we're helping them to do so with incentives we've announced recently, like streamlined tax credits and a first-time hiring bonus.

The member for Tuxedo's (Mrs. Stefanson) comments are also a little bit confusing, Mr. Speaker, because Bill 33, in fact, would require companies who want to build—bid, pardon me, on government contracts to come to the table and employ more apprentices. With more companies coming to the table, more journeymen are available to train apprentices, and we—in fact, we'll see more young people getting their hours and getting good jobs right here in Manitoba.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to let the member know, regarding her comment that there was no consultation on this bill, that, in fact, in December a news release was issued on the government's intention to go forward with this proposed legislation at a very public event, well-attended by employers, including speakers from the Winnipeg Construction Association.

A consultation questionnaire was posted on the Apprenticeship Manitoba website for the duration of the consultation period which took place this spring, and it was available to all members of the public. Apprenticeship Manitoba sent a letter to the following employers and associations concerning the legislation, offering an in-person meeting or inviting a write-in response. That would include the Winnipeg Construction Association; the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association; Heavy Equipment & Aggregate Truckers Association; Construction Association of Rural Manitoba; the Association of Manitoba Municipalities; Merit Contractors Association; Construction Labour Relations Association; the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters; Manitoba Building Trades council; the Northern Manitoba Sector Council; Operating Engineers of Manitoba, Local 987; the International

Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; plumbers and pipefitters, local union 254, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

Responses were also received, Mr. Speaker, by the IBEW 2085; Manitoba Building and Construction Trades Council; Merit Contractors Association of Manitoba; the Operating Engineers of Manitoba, Local 987. There was also very significant consultation when this bill existed as government policy back in 2011, and, indeed, that included participation from WCA and MHCA, HEAT and CRAM, and they are all, indeed, very supportive of these 'matters'—measures.

So it would be my hope that there is a more fulsome understanding, perhaps most fundamentally, of the difference between an apprentice and a journeyman, and indeed a more fulsome understanding that, in fact, consultation did take place.

We know very well, Mr. Speaker, that one individual piece of legislation is not going to grow an entire workforce into journeymen, but we know that a combination of a variety of incentives and increasing our opportunities for young people to pursue their dreams in the trades will only go much, much further to help achieve that goal, and that is the intent of this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's a pleasure to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 33, and it's important when we speak about any bills regarding employment in this province to talk about the great shortage that we do have in Manitoba and this government's inability to meet that shortage, Mr. Speaker. And when we talk about how we address the issue of shortages around—whether it's skilled trades or other occupations, and I know that there are many occupations where we see a shortage.

I had the opportunity on the weekend to speak to those in the industry of the trucking industry, something that's not only near and dear to my own heart from many of my own family members who participated in that industry, but certainly in the Steinbach area many trucking firms have done very well and have established themselves as international leaders in that industry in the Steinbach constituency, Mr. Speaker. And they talked about the shortage. They talked about the shortage of workers that they have within their own industry and that it continues to be a struggle for them.

I've talked to others in the agriculture industry. I've talked to those in manufacturing. I've talked to those in the business communities, certainly those in the high ends looking for journeymen, whether that's in the fields of electrical work or plumbing or other sorts of trades, and there's a tremendous shortage, and this government has known about that for a very long time. They've been in government for more than a decade and they've had the opportunity to address this issue, and they've failed to address the issue.

*(15:10)

Certainly, their high-tax policy is nothing that was going to make the situation better. In fact, I would argue, and I think many would argue, that it will make it worse, Mr. Speaker, not better. And so when we hear the government bring forward legislation—and I do believe that there was not proper consultation. I understand that the government can throw things up on websites, but it doesn't necessarily replace the kind of industry consultation that you need on particular pieces of legislation.

And we've not seen the government consult properly on a number of different things, whether it was the bill that we just discussed, the Churchill port authority bill, or other pieces of legislation where there seems to be a lack of consultation. And the government comes in and says, well, everything's okay. Don't worry. Everything's all right. We heard that about the real estate bill. Now, that bill isn't going to pass this session. It'll go to committee. But we heard from the government, after introducing the bill, they said, well, don't worry, everybody's on side, the Real Estate Association's all happy with this, and there aren't any concerns. And then the phones started ringing, and we heard from agents around the province who said, well, there were some good things in the bill, but there are some things we're concerned about and we'd like to have a discussion about.

So it's not enough to take this government's word anymore because we've heard so often where it's just not the case. We hear that there's consultation, then we find out, in fact, that there really wasn't true consultation, that there was something less than that. And this is an important thing.

When we look at the increase of the PST in the province, and today we heard questions in question period about how the tax freedom day has been pushed back in the province of Manitoba compared to other provinces and, certainly, compared to where we were last year and years prior, Mr. Speaker. That

means that people are working longer to pay for the taxes that government takes from them, for the services that are provided. Now, some of those services are, of course, needed services and are supported services, and we wouldn't want to see changes to those services, but the government hasn't, of course, looked internally for their own savings and their own ability to try to find savings within government.

But, when you increase the taxes on individuals, whether that's increased PST or not raising the basic personal exemption so that those at the lower end of the scale are able to do more work without having to pay taxes, when you tax professionals on their consumption, when you have high income taxes, all of those things cause people to leave the province, and we've seen that. When we look at our net loss of individuals who are leaving the province of Manitoba, we know that good, high-skilled young Manitobans in many cases are leaving Manitoba and going to Saskatchewan and going to Alberta and going to other jurisdictions, and that hurts us. That hurts our province. It hurts our economy, Mr. Speaker.

So those are certainly concerns that we have on this side of the House, and we've raised them in many different forms and in many different ways, Mr. Speaker, and tried to get the government to consider coming up with policies that aren't simply looking at increasing taxes on individuals and potentially driving people out of the province of Manitoba.

Now, we certainly respect Manitobans who are looking for the opportunity to enter apprenticeship programs. They're wonderful occupations to learn the trades and learn practices, Mr. Speaker, and that is something that we know is important, and we need more of those individuals. And I've already talked about the fact that we do have a trades shortage. We're facing a shortage of 16,000 workers in that particular sector over the next decade.

We know that requiring everything and everyone to develop new procurement policies, that there will be a great deal more unnecessary paperwork in the hundreds of government agencies, boards and administrations, red tape, Mr. Speaker, and we know already that the province of Manitoba and businesses tell us that they are overburdened with red tape, that it's difficult to operate businesses here in Manitoba.

In fact, the government continues to talk about an announcement at Price Industries, and at that very

announcement, now, they talk about the announcement where the government decided to provide a subsidy, and it's certainly the government's right to do that and, of course, any business person will probably take a subsidy if offered it, I suppose, but Mr. Price, even at that announcement, said that Manitoba's a difficult place to do business. Even, on the one hand, while the government was there signing a cheque on behalf of the taxpayers of Manitoba, Mr. Price, who has, I think, had to have a number of his operations and employees move to the United States, said that Manitoba is a difficult place to do business. It's a hard place to do business, and legislation like this would just increase the costs of—whether it's government projects or the costs of those who are on the other side doing the work, Mr. Speaker. And that means that we're going to have, I think, people who are disqualified as contractors from participating in the procurement process. That drives down competition, and that ultimately drives up cost.

And we have seen, Mr. Speaker, where this government has entered on contracts without a competitive bid, just sole-source contracts, and we don't believe you get value for money when you sole source those contracts, and, certainly, the Auditor General expressed her concerns in her most recent report about the fact that government is sole sourcing contracts regardless of the service.

Now I know that an air ambulance is important to many Manitobans and it's important service, and I wouldn't dispute that and I have not disputed that. But that doesn't mean that you can't have a bid. That doesn't mean that you can't actually have a competition just because something is good. An air ambulance is something that's good and important in Manitoba; doesn't mean you can't do it the right way, Mr. Speaker; doesn't mean you can't actually do something the way the rules say you should have to do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, for those reasons, we have a number of concerns regarding this legislation—our critic has raised them—regarding the increased red tape that this is going to cost, the fact that it's going to disqualify individuals and companies and contractors from participating in procurement where already we have situations where there aren't competitive bids. And it's going to unfairly disqualify contractors from bidding on government projects and which will, of course, do nothing to address the shortage of skills that we have in the province of Manitoba.

So we're very concerned that this government will do the opposite of—sorry, that this—well, we know this government will do the opposite of what it says, but we also know—we're concerned that the bill will do the opposite of what it says. The bill, instead of actually ensuring that there are more highly skilled individuals could result in there being less, because of the inability for contractors to be able to bid on work and the inability to get competitive bids on contracts.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, we won't be supporting this legislation.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the importance of improving the situation with regard to apprenticeships in Manitoba has been clear for more than 15 years, and this government is finally coming to the realization that this is something that they should pay attention to, and I think that there are some concerns about this legislation, but, you know, that being said, this area of ensuring that there are apprenticeships is one that is of significant importance.

But, at the same time, as I was discussing in question period today, that there is a big problem with the way the NDP are running the economy in our province. For the last eight months, the number of people employed has been lower than it was in the year previous in the same month, so that we're just come through May, and May of this year, the number of people employed in Manitoba was fewer than in May of 2013. That's really astonishing, giving the number of young people entering the workforce, given the number of new immigrants coming into Manitoba, and the problem here is—that needs to be addressed—is making sure that we've got a thriving manufacturing and other industries in this province. And the problem is that the NDP have not been paying enough attention to this, and the result is that, you know, instead of seeing the growth in manufacturing that Saskatchewan has seen, we've gone along slowly, almost in stall mode, during the time of the NDP being in government. And it's not good enough.

This is not acceptable that we've got Saskatchewan going from six—just over \$6 billion in manufacturing sales to now almost \$16 billion. And Manitoba, which was at just about \$11 billion, if it had been on the same trajectory, we would have had sales of something around 27, 28 billion. And, in fact, we've got \$12 billion less than that. You know, there's \$12 billion in manufacturing sales

opportunities that's been missed because we have had an NDP government which is not focused on creating the right environment for the growth of our manufacturing industry. It's very sad, and it's sad for all of us. It's sad because, you know, we want to make sure there are jobs here, and it's good to be talking and moving on improving the situations for apprenticeships, but it's not good when this government is not making sure the fundamentals are right to attract and build on our manufacturing base.

* (15:20)

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) was talking about Manitoba being the centre of manufacturing in western Canada. The fact is that now Saskatchewan is doing more manufacturing than we are. You know, he's out of date, and it's very sad, and time is passing by, and we're losing out here in Manitoba because we've got a government which is not providing the right kind of climate for growth in manufacturing in other areas, and that's the sad part, and that's what I want to say, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 33?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please signify it 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.

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

* (15:40)

Order, please.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 33, The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts).

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Friesen, Goertzen, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Rowat, Schuler, Wishart.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 30, Nays 14.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 49—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call for concurrence and third readings, Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister for Municipal Government (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): This bill contains a number of amendments to the Manitoba Public Insurance act. This bill will strengthen the personal injury protection plan, protect Manitoba Public Insurance customers against the fraudulent claims of a few, allow for the creation of a low-interest winter-tire loan program and clarify there is no coverage for self-propelled vehicles such as golf carts or Segways unless in an accident with an MPI insured motor vehicle. It'll also deny coverage to those driving on a closed track not for police, fire or first responder training.

The proposed amendments will also expand coverage for catastrophically injured Manitobans as well as increase death benefits for collision fatalities and extend coverage to temporary workers. This legislation will allow Manitoba Public Insurance to continue to provide excellent service, strengthen road safety initiatives and keep Manitobans' car insurance rates the lowest in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in committee we did hear a presentation from an individual who raised an issue of hardship with someone he knew, a situation where a non-employed primary caregiver of children was killed in an automobile accident. While there are certain payments, in every case no less than about \$60,000 to the surviving parent, we appreciate that there may be some further issues of hardship that need to be addressed. And I've asked Manitoba Public Insurance to examine this to see whether future amendments are appropriate.

While MPI coverage is never intended to replace life insurance, which covers death for all causes, not just those involving car accidents, we will indeed see whether it'd be possible to further expand coverage.

So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly believe in a strong Manitoba Public Insurance. We believe this act will modernize and improve the operations of the corporation, and we look forward to it passing. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the minister's comments regarding the bill. It is a bit of a catch-all bill in that there's a number of different provisions related to Manitoba Public Insurance within it. I wouldn't call it an omnibus bill; it doesn't deal with a variety different acts. It deals with one specific act, but it does cover a lot of different ground.

We are supportive of the vast majority of the bill, certainly the issues regarding closing the loopholes for a no-fault insurance that we support. We know that there are—it was never the intention to have certain things classified as motor vehicles as we would normally call them, such as golf carts or perhaps children's operated small little toy cars we would call them, Mr. Speaker, and we wouldn't consider those to be motorized vehicles for the purposes of insurance under Manitoba Public Insurance. But we do know that the courts in some cases have interpreted those things to be caught under the MPI act.

And so we are supportive of the changes that relate to those things, Mr. Speaker, that close that loophole and make it clear what is insurable and what isn't insurable in terms of activity.

I do appreciate the minister raising the issue of the individual in committee. We did bring forward an amendment that was voted down by the NDP and—but we thought it was a very reasonable thing, even though I recognize it would be a somewhat significant change for MPI.

Where you have somebody who is the primary caregiver, or a caregiver but unemployed, not employed in the workforce and they are at home, so they are stay-at-home spouse and they're taking care of children, the loss of that individual because of a vehicle accident can have a significant impact on that home, on that household because there is value that that person, that individual was providing to the home. Now I understand there's a death payment that's paid out for the individual who is in that situation, to their spouse, but there isn't an ongoing indemnity that's paid to that home.

So we brought forward an amendment on behalf of a constituent who raised this issue, not my constituent, but a Manitoban who was dealing with a client where they had a stay-at-home spouse who was a caregiver for her children and they were involved in a vehicle and they died. And they were—the spouse was provided with a one-time payment, but the hardship continued much beyond that because they had to somehow make up for the value that that individual was bringing as a stay-at-home spouse, Mr. Speaker. And that is not covered under Manitoba Public Insurance, and I think we need to recognize that there is value in that. There is value in an individual who is providing care within the home, even though they're not working in the workforce.

I think we are a modern enough society that we could consider there to be value in that, that somebody isn't necessarily working outside of the home but they are providing value in the home. And I'm disappointed that the government didn't see that. Even though I know that they'll look at it, I think it's disappointing that the government doesn't see the value of stay-at-home spouses who are taking care of children, Mr. Speaker.

So, for that reason, while we certainly support a good portion of the bill, we were disappointed that the government voted against those individuals who do provide value at the home but they're not value seen in the work that they do in this bill, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just briefly on this bill. I think this bring-bill brings forward some reasonable improvements, and I look forward to them being implemented.

As Mr. John McDonald said at the committee stage, that there are still some areas that need to be looked at. It's a little disappointing that the government didn't pause long enough to have a careful look at that. And, you know, we provided leave to bring in report stage amendments on another bill, a little late, and we certainly could have done that here, Mr. Speaker, but it will have to wait now for another year, I expect, maybe two years. Who knows? But those are my comments. Thank you.

* (15:50)

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on Bill 49?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question? The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 49, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: 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 by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On division.

Mr. Speaker: Carried on division.

Bill 53—The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call for concurrence and third reading Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution).

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister for Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche et la Loi sur la conservation de la faune (dédommagement), 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.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and put a few comments on the record in relation to Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act.

The presentations during the committee stage were most valuable. I significantly appreciated actually the comments from Mr. David Carrick who made some, actually, very good observations about the role he has played and that the Fisheries Enhancement Fund has played in returning some of those fishing-licence dollars. I think it was \$15 million, I believe, was the number he suggested, that's gone back into improving and enhancing fishing opportunities for not just fishers today but, obviously, on a go-forward basis, Mr. Speaker.

What obviously is concerning, though, Mr. Speaker, were comments by the Manitoba Wildlife Federation when they correctly observed that the big—he says we're actually living in a time of crisis for big game right now. We have moose, elk and deer crisis. Deer probably because of the winter—our winters have been really bad in the last four years—but with moose and elk, we've got a real problem right now.

Mr. Speaker, the wildlife federation went on to—the Manitoba Wildlife Federation went on to talk about how that in many instances, he, as a seventh-generation moose hunter, can't afford that opportunity to his own young son in many areas of the province where he previously hunted moose. The populations have so been dwindled, in large part, government inaction.

I've risen in the House on a few occasions to ask about the status of the moose big game population in game hunting area 19A. We're well aware that the minister has those numbers, Mr. Speaker. The numbers from the survey would suggest that there's less than 70 animals in GHA 19A, and yet the minister just dances around and releases 30 hunting tags for later this season, which will effectively ensure that the population is eliminated from that area of the province.

It's also interesting, Mr. Speaker, that during that same time, the minister, for whatever reason, decided to bring up game hunting area 26 and commented that the population, in terms of moose population, has increased by 50 per cent, which is totally absurd. The trend is up but there is a wide overlap in the confidence intervals. And all one can say, with any level of confidence when it comes to game hunting area 26, is that the trend does appear to be up, but to really extract that correlation that the number is as solid as the minister suggests is a bit of a fallacy.

But we know how important the fish and gaming industry is to the province of Manitoba, to our economy. It's a \$470-million contribution to our GDP, not an insignificant sum, Mr. Speaker, that one could almost suggest if the government put more effort into enhancing that component of our ecotourism, that they may not have needed that illegal PST hike.

Mr. Speaker, most hunters act as conservationists, biologists. They—their boots are on the ground and they share a lot of information with the department in terms of concerns they may have. Just information about wildlife they may spot, wildlife that may not have been there before. We've had, you know, some sightings of cougars and such, or wildlife that simply isn't there anymore, in talking about some moose populations and that.

And, by and large, Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming majority of hunters and fishers in this province are responsible individuals that ensure that they go through the licensing process, that they pay the necessary fees, they hunt during the allocated

times and that they only hunt or fish what they're allotted and what is deemed to be sustainable to those populations as a whole.

But there are, obviously, individuals that, whether it's hunting and fishing or in society in large part, that don't believe that the law applies to them, Mr. Speaker. And, in this case, it's unfortunate that there are those individuals who, by their actions, threaten the sustainability of some of our wildlife and fishing throughout the province of Manitoba.

And so, I mean, the idea is a very good idea. I know it's an American idea, actually, Mr. Speaker, the idea of putting a value on our wildlife and fishing. It exists in a number of US states. So there is a certain irony that the same NDP government that talks about the Americanization of this, that and the other thing is borrowing this concept from American jurisdictions that our fish and wildlife do have a restitutive value that should be placed against individuals who are convicted of poaching.

And we're in agreement of that, any additional measures that can be taken, obviously, to protect our fish and wildlife, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that those individuals that flout our laws and licensing and threaten the long-term sustainability of that wildlife and fishing, do pay an appropriate restitution. Now, we're not, obviously, aware of exactly what that restitution will be, but, again, as which much of the NDP's legislation, we'll find out that information in the regulations.

I was a bit disappointed that one of the amendments that we put forward that I thought would actually enhance this bill and that would actually increase the length of delay that an individual would have their licence, their hunting or fishing licence, suspended as a result of poaching, Mr. Speaker, by 12 months—as it currently stands, your hunting or fishing licence is simply suspended until such time you pay the aforementioned restitution. So, for the sake of this argument, if you paid your restitution within, you know, five days, you could be out on the sixth day back hunting and fishing again. So we thought, you know, a 12-month delay in being able to return to fishing and hunting, again, to show the value that we as a province have towards our fishing and wildlife, would have been more appropriate, but the government, for whatever reason, decided that those kinds of additional measures weren't necessary.

It's also worth noting that, although the bill, on the surface, I mean, it has—obviously, it is supported

by a great many of the speakers who did present to it. But we're really talking, at the end of the day—I remember in the briefing with the minister that there's probably less than a dozen individuals on an annual basis who are convicted of poaching in our province. So the good news is, or potentially good news, is that it's not a significant problem.

But, on the flip side, I know, in talking to a number of hunters and fishers that abide by the rules, that it's actually a bigger problem than we realize, but it's this government's cutbacks and reductions in terms of front-line Conservation staff that is having the—that corresponding impact that the number of actually poachers being caught is dwindling, Mr. Speaker, not as a result because there is actually less poachers, it's just there's less front-line staff as a result of NDP cuts.

But, again, Mr. Speaker, what we could do as a government and as legislatures to support fishing and wildlife, especially big game, to reinforce to those individuals that would say that these licensing rules don't apply to me, that seasons don't apply to me and I can take what I want to take, that there is a value that we place as a society on those animals and that that restitution will go into the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund, again, to offer opportunities so that we can redirect those monies to make sure.

Again, we talk about that sustainability, that sustainability so that the—when the Manitoba Wildlife Federation executive director talks about wanting to take his young son out moose hunting, to know all those areas that are now closed, Mr. Speaker, to moose hunting, that, hopefully, through these revenues, that they'll be available.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing this bill continue on through the legislative process. Thank you.

*(16:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, while being generally in support of this bill, I have a few comments.

First of all, I'm rather surprised that there were no evidence that the government had any consultation whatsoever with First Nation, Metis and Inuit hunters. I would have thought with the—for example, the Metis harvester card system that has been implemented, the concern with Metis people about conservation, that the minister would have at least sat down with Metis people to have a discussion about this bill and what was being proposed and to

get any input that they might have had because of the issues that have arisen in the way that this government has handled relationships with the Metis people in the past, particularly over hunting issues.

Second, I have, you know, some concerns that the government is not more clear, not more specific about how they will ascribe value to wildlife. There is some discussion about ecological value of wildlife, and we had that at committee stage, but, you know, how that will be determined and what the plan of the minister is with this respect, it leaves quite a bit of uncertainty about what the values will be and even what range of values they will be.

The third area of concern deals with the big game populations. You know, as we heard at committee stage from Mr. Olson, we're living at a time of crisis for big game right now, with moose, elk and deer populations of great concern in the province. And, of course, when I asked him how did Manitoba get into this mess, to make sure that we don't get into it again, Mr. Olson said, well, one of the problems is that, you know, we don't actually know how many moose and elk we have and how many are being harvested. And, you know, this is a government which is flying blind because it doesn't have good data to work with, and that's a big problem when you're managing wildlife.

Well, they may have more data than they are talking about, but, you know, there is clearly a need to have good data and to share that with people because, you know, this is a—you know, a resource which needs to be managed co-operatively and that we need to make sure that, you know, the public is aware of the situation and that there's public support for measures that are being taken.

Certainly, you know, one of the comments was made that, you know, the government hasn't done enough to clarify what the numbers are and to make it clear that we actually do have a crisis and those sorts of—being honest about things, which I know is tough for this government, is something which needs to be done when you're dealing with crises in order to make sure that we've got good solutions and public support for those good solutions.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on—oh, the honourable Minister of Conservation.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I want to, first of all,

commend Fish Futures and the Manitoba Wildlife Federation for coming down to committee and waiting for their opportunity to put their views on the record, Mr. Speaker, and I was very heartened with their very strong support for the legislation.

I think the legislation comes at an important time. We've just come through three to five very difficult years that have affected the deer population as a result our winters, and, indeed, the last two winters have had a profound impact on our deer populations. Of course, weather and climates are the biggest single stresses that can do their work on healthy populations, and so we have had to introduce new measures. And, of course, as the wildlife federation said, this is an important measure that comes at a good time that provides us with an additional tool to manage our big game populations.

And, of course, we have population pressures when it comes to moose management. I understand that the populations, as a result of conservation efforts on the east side, have increased by something in the order of 58 per cent, which reminds us that conservation efforts can make a difference. But on the west side, we're continuing to see pressures, and, indeed, a recent aerial survey in 19A has indicated that we have another area that requires conservation efforts, and, indeed, we have committed to introducing aggressive conservation measures for moose populations in 19A.

The efforts that are needed to enhance our data collection, Mr. Speaker, have been recognized over the years, and, indeed, I understand that back in the year 1999-2000, I think about \$120,000 was being invested in aerial surveys. I think this last year we've seen a record investment of over \$500,000, actually, as a result of efforts which now include Manitoba Hydro, and rightly so. But we've got to continue to ensure greater data is available for population management, and that's why we've now formed a new working group with the Manitoba Wildlife Federation to pursue more robust data from landowners, for example, and we are now canvassing new efforts with treaty-based harvesters so that we can achieve some greater participation and partnership in terms of information from them as well.

Mr. Speaker, the application of the legislation, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) should know, is—was not—will not interfere with treaty rights, of course. That is the law of the country, the Charter rights that are set out by the supreme law of

the country. But, nonetheless, when conservation efforts are made, when conservation closures are in place, when safety laws are in place that apply to everybody, the legislation will nonetheless apply. And, indeed, in speaking to the president of the MMF about this legislation, we shared that understanding.

Mr. Speaker, the value that must be attributed in regulation to the wrongful taking of wildlife and fish will of course be challenging. It's inherently challenging. In some cases I might admit that it is somewhat arbitrary. And to achieve a fair value we will certainly consult with the American authorities where they have had some extensive experience with ascribing values to wildlife. For some species, though, it is easier and, for example, when it comes to fish populations, there can be economic values attached, but there are other considerations that have to apply. So we will be consulting with those that are in the know, organizations that have a particular interest and concern, an insight, and we will come back with the regulations as soon as we can achieve some level of consensus.

I think, in conclusion, I'm pleased to hear about all-party support for this legislation. It is the first of its kind in the country, and, of course, the idea came from experiences in the justice system where the victim fine surcharge goes to help out with the restitution that is owing the recovery, the setting someone—setting—or helping people deal with the trauma of crime. And so we're applying it now in a somewhat comparable way when it comes to wildlife so that people understand that a fine is not the only consequence for the wrongful taking of wildlife and fish. There is a loss, there is an economic loss, there is an ecosystem loss and there has to be making right of that wrong. Poachers have to know that they have to contribute to that loss in an economic way.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased the opposition is supporting this because, as people in this House know, in the last session there was no support whatsoever for ensuring that endangered species and endangered spaces were protected adequately by our natural resource officers and, indeed, opposed an increase in fines.

* (16:10)

We had to reject an opposition amendment that was brought in. It looked like it had been written on the back of a doily, Mr. Speaker. They were suggesting that, even if you were one fish over your licensed amount, you would have your licence

suspended for a full year. So, if they think that's proportionality, then they can defend that publicly.

But, Mr. Speaker, it was not only about fishing licences. The legislation was written in a way that appeared to apply to all licences, in other words, any licence issued by the Province of Manitoba, whether that is a licence to practise dentistry or a licence to drive. There certainly had not been the necessary work that went into the drafting of that amendment, even though we are always supportive of efforts to ensure that we send a strong message. But the suspension of fishing or hunting licences is dealt with under The Wildlife Act and the fisheries legislation, and that is where it should remain.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to all-party support of this legislation. I want to see it go to work and send a clear message to would-be poachers that, if you're going to wrongfully take wildlife and fish in this province, there's going to be a price to pay, and it's going to be the real price. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 53?

House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House in concurrence and third reading of Bill 53, The Fisheries and Wildlife Amendment Act (Restitution).

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

**Bill 57—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act
(Countermeasures Against
Drug-Impaired Driving)**

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call for concurrence and third reading of Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Drug-Impaired Driving).

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the minister for natural resources, that Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Drug-Impaired Driving); Loi modifiant le Code de la route (conduite avec facultés affaiblies par la drogue), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

(Countermeasures Against Drug-Impaired Driving), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Manitobans are entitled to be safe on our roads and our highways, and we certainly support the ability of our police to take steps to ensure that drivers who are impaired by drugs, whether it's prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs or illegal drugs, are not putting themselves and others on our roads and highways at risk.

Now, this bill will allow police to proceed directly to an enhanced test, the drug recognition evaluation test, which is recognized in the Criminal Code when appropriate conditions are met and have Highway Traffic Act consequences apply. Sanctions can include immediate roadside driver's licence suspensions as well as vehicle impoundment. Sanctions for drivers who refuse a police demand to participate in drug testing will be adjusted to match alcohol-impaired drivers who refuse demands for testing.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, this bill is another important tool for our law enforcement officials to help keep our roads safe. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, we've had the opportunity to speak about this bill at second reading at committee. We support the legislation. Certainly, we support efforts to ensure that our roads are safe, that those who are driving on the roads are doing so in a responsible manner. We support our police officers who are out there enforcing this legislation. They've said this gives them another tool. We support that.

We certainly hope that we have the adequate resources within our police forces to ensure that this—it's not only a deterrent in law but that there is a deterrent with actual police officers on our streets and our highways who can enforce this legislation because we know, when it comes to drinking and driving or drug-induced driving, that the greatest deterrent is the reality that people believe they'll get caught. And so we need to ensure that we have police officers that are out there, that are able to be patrolling and able to do the job that the legislation allows them to do.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly supportive of making sure that we have safe roads and that we are paying attention to

individuals who may be not able to drive as well as they should because they've been on drugs of one sort or another.

I do want to raise a concern here in terms of prescription drugs because there are a wide, wide variety of prescription drugs which could be implicated in having side effects which might impair an individual's ability to drive, and I think that the criteria need to be applied with some care when we're dealing with prescription drugs. I also think that it's important that the government communicate with physicians around the province so that patients who are put on prescription drugs where there may be effects on driving are notified, not only of the impact on the driving but of the impact relative to this law.

I think the end result could be a safer situation on our roads, but I do think that it's imperative that this be implemented wisely and well and that the tests be handled in a way that is rigorous and that, you know, where there are drug testing being done, you know, there may be criteria for certain drugs in terms of what would be a level that is impairing of a person's ability to drive, but in a variety of drugs, I'm sure, because it's not standard procedure when you're assessing new drugs to test whether they're going to impair somebody's ability to drive and it's not standard procedure to know what level this would have an impact on it.

Now, these may be all good things to know, but I think that it's very important that we are applying this in a common-sense way when it comes to prescription drugs and that there be ability to understand and measure prescription drugs and determine whether those measures are, in fact, indicating that there is a level that might be of concern or may not be. And, in fact, we may be finding out some new things in terms of the impact of prescription drugs on driving as we go along. But let's apply this well and carefully and rigorously. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 57?

House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 57, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Drug-Impaired Driving).

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

Bill 58—The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act

Mr. Speaker: Now proceed under concurrence and third readings to call Bill 58, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning, that Bill 58, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act; Loi sur le Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, 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. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I'm delighted to get up and put a few additional words on the record with respect to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology going forward.

Of course, this act builds on the incredible foundation of the Winnipeg Technical College that has served students in our city and community very well over the past number of years. It was known for its agility, its ability to create partnerships with industry, its flexibility in ensuring that a student can come in, get the kind of training that they need that either positions them for additional education going forward, perhaps at a college, perhaps at a university or positions them, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, for employment or a job right away.

* (16:20)

Now, Mr. Speaker, we wanted to build on that model when it came to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, and we wanted it to be more than just about—for folks here in Winnipeg, for—because, for the most part, that's the people who attended, but more than that, we wanted to build on the notion that you could have a hybrid institution that on the one hand was a high school, but on the other hand was a college, and in that manner you would be able to make the most out of dual credits and other opportunities to ensure that a student is, in fact, is superbly well positioned to go on, get some good training, get a certificate or diploma, as the case may be, find themselves even more well positioned to go on and get further education and, we hope, go on and get a good job.

So this is, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, one of—and may well prove to be one of the best pieces of legislation that I will have some attachment to, going forward, because I believe it is groundbreaking in creating this hybrid institution that serves a wider range of students, a wider range of age groups than it previously had in the past. It will be open to partnerships with school divisions all across the province in addition to the traditional ones that they had with Pembina Trails and Louis Riel, but all school divisions will be able to take advantage of the great offerings at the—what we're calling MITT, and, further than that, we will continue to make additional partnerships with industry with those who require immediate assistance for certain job situations. And, at the end of the day, we'll be proudly able to say—proudly able to say—that we have committed to providing young people in Manitoba with a quality education, certification for job training and they can go on and get a good job.

We know from employers, Mr. Speaker, that the need for skilled tradespeople is in great demand and the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology will serve in its new capacity to be able to fill that role, to be able to provide young people with an education, but more than that, with hope and opportunity and the ability to go forward and get a good job in the future, and then, of course, as we always hope, that our children stay right here in Manitoba and live happy and productive lives.

So I know that members of our caucus and Cabinet are excited about this new institution. I know that members of the educational community are very excited. I know the people at Winnipeg trades—at Winnipeg Technical College, with its new president, Mr. Holden, are incredibly excited about the opportunity that has been created among a variety of partnerships to pull this new institution together and, as I say, provide an education and hope and opportunity for our young people here in Manitoba. I know people on our side of the House are going to support this fantastic new piece of legislation, and I'm looking forward to members across the floor to support this.

So, on that very happy note, Mr. Speaker, I'll sit down and we'll keep moving the agenda forward and building a great place here in Manitoba for all Manitobans.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about this bill, which would convert the

Winnipeg Technical College to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, in 2012 spending quite a bit of time in the area of the Winnipeg Technical College and talking with people about it. I think there was a by-election on at the time in Fort Whyte and I had a number of meetings with a variety of people. It was very apparent that there needed to be a new and improved direction for the Winnipeg Technical College, and, you know, we talked about some aspects of this.

It looks like the government has used the model in Quebec of the CEGEP, which is part high school and part college, and it is a model which has worked pretty well in Quebec, and I expect and hope that it will work well for what was the Winnipeg Technical College and will become the Manitoba institute for trades and technology.

I hope that there will be an attempt to reach out to people who are, you know, struggling in the conventional learning environment of high school and to give people new types of opportunities.

I think I probably should have read the fine print in this bill after what we went through in Bill 63. But—and I'm hopeful that there's not the same sort of hue and cry about this down the road. But this so far—as I've looked at it so far, doesn't seem to have the same sorts of problems.

I wish the folks at the new Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology well as they make this conversion, and hope that it builds something that can last and serve people in Manitoba well into the future. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): We certainly, again, express concerns about the lack of consultation that there was on this bill. We've heard the concerns of the Pembina Trails School Division, Mr. Speaker, about the lack of consultation that they had about this bill, even though it directly touches them and their school division.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And we see a pattern—we see a pattern—with this Minister of Education who doesn't like to consult; doesn't like to talk to people before he brings in legislation. And it causes issues, it causes problems. He's, sort of, enjoys standing up and yelling rhetoric here in the House, and that's fine. I mean, sometimes, you know, in question period those things happen, and that's part of our democratic system, our

parliamentary system, and I accept that and I don't take offence to that. Sometimes I've been known to engage in that myself once in a while. But it is—I know that comes as a shock to members, but it is part of the democratic system that we have.

But I think that there is a responsibility that goes beyond this Legislature, particularly for those who are charged with ministries, to speak to those who are impacted about legislation that they're going to bring in. Not to surprise them and not to have them shocked about legislation that comes before the floor of the House, and then later on try to tell them that it's a good thing. If it's such a good thing, as the Minister of Education likes to say about his bills, then he would, of course, have that consultation in advance and talk to those who are impacted, like on this bill, the Pembina Trails School Division. And yet he doesn't have that consultation; he doesn't speak to them.

And now we saw what happened, of course, with Bill 63. It was referenced by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), where it became quite a public issue. And the minister was taken to task not only by our opposition critic and members of this caucus, but by the media and many of those in the education system who came to committee to express grave concern about what he had done with Bill 63. And, again, the hallmark of that is that there was no consultation, there was no discussion. It was simply this Minister of Education saying, well, I know best. I know best in terms of how something should happen. I know best in terms of how something should run. Just trust me.

And, you know, he stands in the House at different times and he says, oh, you know, everybody trusts us in Education. We're completely trusted when it comes to issues of education, and yet you open the committee doors, and you hear something completely different. They're lined up. They're lined up to say they're concerned about a bill. They register and they say, well, we don't trust him and we don't like the piece of legislation. We weren't consulted. Nobody even talked to us about it.

Now, I understand that the minister is new and maybe consultation is something that is something you only pick up as a ministerial habit after you've been summoned to the woodshed a few times on legislation, like this minister has now on previous pieces of legislation. And maybe consultation is something that he'll acquire. Maybe that's a skill that he'll acquire as he goes on in his role as minister, but

he may not. It might be something he's picked up from his colleagues, that they won't consult, that they're not interested in consulting, that you're better off to bring something forward and hope nobody notices or hope nobody raises a fuss.

But sometimes people do raise a fuss, and sometimes you end up on the front page of the Free Press like the Minister of Education did when he got taken to the woodshed on Bill 63. And sometimes you do offend people. And people are concerned, like those who aren't consulted—like those who weren't consulted on this bill who deserved to be consulted with.

* (16:30)

And often, you know—I suspect sometimes ministers don't go through the 'consultive' process because they know what the response is going to be. So, rather than reach out in advance on legislation and find out what they know is coming, that people object to the legislation, they decide, well, we'll just table the legislation, maybe nobody would notice, maybe nobody would hear about it, maybe it won't show up on the front page of the Free Press, maybe the opposition won't raise concerns about it, maybe the opposition won't do what our responsibility is. And we have a responsibility to raise concerns about legislation.

That certainly didn't happen with Bill 63. And with this bill, we raised concerns as well regarding the fact that there wasn't consultation. We raised those concerns at a committee. Our critic, I believe, brought forward amendments as well, amendments that weren't accepted by the government because they think they know best.

Now, again, the minister might, over time, learn to do things a little differently, but we've not seen that. Right now he is a minister who believes he knows best about things and he'll do as he wishes, and along the way he'll anger a lot of people within the education system.

And, you know, I suppose, as an opposition, that's perhaps not a bad—it's not a bad thing for us, I suppose, as an opposition, but it's not a good thing for the education system. We don't want people to be upset and concerned. *[interjection]*

The minister of—or the critic for Finance indicates that the minister's good at getting consensus, but it's consensus in the wrong way. The people are all upset instead of having everybody who's together. So in that way he's creating bridges,

but not the kind of bridges we'd want, the kind of bridges that get exploded when you try to cross them.

So I would encourage him to look at things differently and to try to change his approach on things. He'll have another opportunity in the fall. I know the Government House Leader (Mr. Swan) will be recalling this House in September, I suspect, and we'll have plenty of opportunity for new legislation to come forward in the House.

And the Minister of Education, if the Minister of Education is still, in fact, the Minister of Education—and I know it's a bit of a revolving door on the office of the minister of Education; you never know who may be the minister of Education the next go around.

You don't know with the NDP who's still going to be in their caucus when we come back in the fall. You know, people come, they go. They're trying to find their right balance. They're trying to put a fresh face on the government, so they kick some people out of government. They allow some people to come back in the government or into Cabinet. Some people they just kick out of their caucus altogether, and maybe they'll let those people back into their caucus, I don't know.

It's all very confusing, of course, for those who are in government. It's all very confusing for those who are trying to find office space as we search for space for independent members or people who are leaving Cabinet. And I suppose the movers and the makers of boxes, they're doing well by all this, as the Cabinet shuffles around and we're trying to figure out what the right mix is for the government.

But, ultimately, I think that the ultimate test for this minister will be to see whether or not he in fact learns his lesson and actually consults with those in the education system before he comes forward with legislation again, whether or not he actually speaks to them and—instead of ambushing them in the Legislature with legislation, that he says, well, this is what I'm planning to do, what do you think? This is what I'm looking to do, and what do you think about that?

And, you know, we heard the discussion and the question from the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) today about report cards and consultation. Consultation is important. We believe in consultation. We think that consultation is, in many ways, the hallmark of a good legislative process.

So we are disappointed that the Minister of Education is not a minister who consults, is not a minister who consulted on this bill, didn't inform the Pembina school division. And there's a growing mistrust about this minister, and it'll continue to grow until he learns to actually consult. And he might find himself in the same predicament as the many former ministers of Education on the P-NDP, might find himself in a different job or no job at all in his government if this continues.

So I offer those words of warning as friendly advice. I would—I hope the minister will consider that friendly advice from somebody who doesn't wish him any ill will. And I hope he'll take that in the spirit that it's given.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 58, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on House business, could you please call Committee of the Whole on Bill 73.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House will now resolve into the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you take the Chair?

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 73—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): The Committee of the Whole will please come to order to consider Bill 73, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014.

During the consideration of this bill, the table of contents, the enacting clause and the title will be postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement from the committee, I will call clauses in blocks that conform to the parts of the bill, with the understanding that we can pause at any point for questions. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Does the minister responsible for Bill 73 have an opening statement?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Acting Minister of Finance): This—what we're doing today is a very important step in the process of governing in Manitoba. We have put in place a budget, and now we're implementing the budget that has been voted upon in this Legislature.

Budget 2014 was a very good budget for Manitoba families. Budget 2014 made it very clear that we are investing in infrastructure in Manitoba. We've announced a five-year, 5-and-a-half-billion-dollar infrastructure investment plan. We are—we'll see investment in roads and bridges. We'll see investment in flood protection. We'll see investment in water services, clean water, safe drinking water. We'll build that infrastructure so that communities can have safe drinking water and use that to invite industry to set up shop in their communities. This is a budget through infrastructure that builds our economy and puts people to work, Mr. Chairperson.

*(16:40)

This budget also has provided funding for health care, the issue that I think matters most to Manitoba families. It looks at education and investments in our students, both at the public school level and at the post-secondary level, Mr. Chairperson. This is a budget that invests in our kids, that invests in apprenticeships, that invests in training, that invests in opportunities for young people to become educated and trained and live in our province with good jobs that pay decent salaries.

Budget 2014 does all of that. Budget 2014, as you can see in this Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, deals with a number of things, including the emissions tax on coal. We've made a commitment that this province was going to move away from burning coal. One of the real advantages that Manitoba has is our clean, green hydroelectricity. In this budget we are helping Manitobans make a conversion from dirty coal into better alternatives, and this budget helps Manitoba families and Manitoba businesses do that. And that's real progress, Mr. Chairperson.

Members opposite, I think, cling tightly to a 1950s version of progress. The 1950s have left us a long time ago, Mr. Chairperson. What we need is a modern, 21st century approach, which we see happening here, which we encourage by meeting Wisconsin decision-makers, Minnesota

decision-makers, Saskatchewan decision-makers, to talk about exporting Manitoba hydroelectricity. It works well for both us and our export partners. It works well for us because it keeps our rates the lowest on the continent, and it puts Manitobans to work. So this budget helps us in order to accomplish that.

We have changes to The Employment and Income Assistance Act, The Fuel Tax Act, The Income Tax Act, and we have a Property Tax and Insulation Assistance Act that we're making some changes to to benefit Manitoba families, and The Retail Sales Tax Act. We're making these changes in order to build a stronger economy. We're making these changes to make sure that Manitobans can be put to work. We already have one of the best—one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. We already have a number of stats that show that we're on the right track, Mr. Chairperson. What we need to do is not listen to the doom and gloom from across the way, not listen to the kind of advice that would return us to a time in this province when there was no confidence, to return us to a time when decisions were made on a very narrow focus, a very austere, narrow focus. Those kinds of decisions hurt our economy. Those kinds of decisions perpetrated by Conservative governments hurt Manitoba families.

That's not the path that we've decided to take. The path we have decided to take is one of investment in infrastructure, investment in our institutions, investment in Manitoba families and Manitoba young people.

So this Bill 73 implements what I think is a very good budget, a very progressive, forward-thinking budget, a budget that has a positive vision for Manitoba, and I would again ask members opposite to consider supporting this bill and consider dropping their doom-and-gloom ways and throw their weight behind something that is positive and forward-thinking, and that's what this bill means for Manitobans. So I commend it to the House.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister.

Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: I do, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Chair, I have had the opportunity to speak to this bill already at second reading, but here at the committee stage I will put a few comments on the record with respect to the BITSA bill, Bill 73. I think, clearly, what the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) is not indicating is that this government is one that comes saddled with a record when it comes to tax measures, when it comes to the implementation of their plan. And, of course, we understand in Manitoba that that record is one of broken promises. It's a broken promise on a—on the PST, for sure, a PST that's up 14.2 per cent. This is a government that indicated that this would be the year that they would balance the budget, that they would not run a deficit. As a matter of fact, the member for Dauphin, when he was the Minister of Finance, he said, do not underestimate our desire to balance the budget in 2014, and we didn't underestimate his desire but we did properly estimate his ability to get the job done, Mr. Chair.

Today we're not sitting in a situation where this NDP government will run a surplus. Instead, Manitobans are faced with a deficit again of almost \$400 million. So let us be clear that there is a great distance that exists between what this government professes it will do and what its record actually indicates they have accomplished.

But, Mr. Chair, there is more to discuss when it comes to Bill 73, and I've had some of—the opportunity to put some of these comments on the record already in second reading. Of course, we know that this BITSA bill then indicates things having to do with the government's infrastructure plan, and the government knows that we remain skeptical and that we will be looking for transparency when it comes to the reporting of the infrastructure projects that have been undertaken. I know that the government indicates that they will be publishing a list of all the infrastructure projects that are completed.

Of course, what we will be looking for—we will be bringing this up again in Public Accounts and again when the budget papers become available, is we will want to look very clearly at the budget papers that will indicate where any unused amounts that were allocated for infrastructure will be seen and moved forward into the next year's line items.

At the same time, when the government indicates that infrastructure projects can go towards capital projects but also for equipment, we are

looking for assurances from this government about what they mean when they say they can purchase equipment with this. Of course, we know that within departments budgets already exist to fund the purchase of capital equipment and those allocations are ongoing. Now, if this is just an issue of terminology and it's the title of a subsection, that's one thing, but we need to—of course, we understand there's an opposition.

We remain vigilant. We remain on guard in the best interests of Manitobans to make sure that this does not become some kind of fund for the government to say, well, rather than indicate that an amount that was not allocated for infrastructure will be moved forward, let's just spend that. Let's just buy new snowplows. Let's buy new highway trucks. Let's buy new maintainers and graders.

We want to make sure that there's transparency around all of those things. Why do we express this skepticism? Because this is the same government that has underspent on infrastructure by 27 per cent over only the last four budgets. We have asked repeatedly where those amounts have gone to. We've asked them to table the list. When it came to those missing amounts, the government has refused to do that.

If the government had the courage of their convictions, if they really believe that what they had accomplished with that money was 'meritous,' then they would rush to table that list. They would rush to indicate to Manitobans, because we know this is not a government that ever shies away from taking any credit they can possibly grab on to.

So, in the absence of the—of an agreement to bring a list, we remain skeptical. We understand even now that there is the large question of where that \$1.9 billion that was underspent on infrastructure the last fiscal—four fiscal years went. So we will be once again looking for greater transparency. We will be asking those questions and we will hold this government to account.

Mr. Chair, I would also add to my comments that whereas this BITSA bill sees the implementation of the—it's creating the new shelter assistance benefits replacing the rent aid benefits. Once again, I just take this opportunity to mention, again, the fact that our party was out in front on this, that in talking to stakeholders all over the province of Manitoba—*[interjection]* And I know that whenever we talk about this, those members chirp because they feel sensitive on this issue.

They—we hit a nerve whenever we talk about this, but we know the motions, the resolutions that were debated at their own convention. We know how speaker after speaker arose at their own convention and said, why aren't you doing what the opposition party is doing? We've been calling on you as a party so long to do the right thing. We know that for years and years and years those rental payments under the EIA allowances remained unchanged, and we know it is our party that called for this government to do the right thing, and we called—first in policy, we made the commitment as a party that we would do it and we would do it immediately and we would do it unequivocally.

* (16:50)

And we know that this government has said we will do it in part, we'll do it in stages, we'll do it over time, but they have said trust us. And, again, we remain skeptical, as I believe that other stakeholders remain skeptical about this. So we will continue to press them on that.

I would also say this with respect to the seniors tax rebate. Of course we all understand that, when it came to the Farmland School Tax Rebate, what the execution of the promise looked like and what the original promise looked like were two different animals. We saw a tax rebate for farmland owners whereby there was a cap of \$5,000; it made it difficult for a spouse to participate; it made it difficult for a corporate farm to participate. It—they were late with the forms, and they were early on setting a deadline after which a person would cease to be eligible to collect the benefit. And now, of course, we see the emergence of a seniors tax rebate with a hard cap, and we remain skeptical about how this will go forward.

So what we want to see is that seniors have access to the forms. We are concerned that seniors who will only receive these tax bills later in the year, if there is a rural municipality or a municipality somewhere in Manitoba that will only mail to a senior who is a homeowner their tax bill, all of a sudden we could see a situation whereby it is not a year they have to complete and mail this form in, it could be a matter of months. And that's a place where we feel we believe the government must express a flexibility; they must indicate an openness to make sure that, as this works itself out, seniors will really have access to this. It's interesting to see this again arise as a rebate rather than to see it simply emerge as a credit.

Again, the onus is on the property owner, the owner—the onus is on the senior to take measures to be able to avail themselves of the monies that this government promises are available to them. We want to see that done with efficiency; we want to see that done in a manner that benefits seniors. We're concerned about the hard cap; we're concerned about the deadline that is imposed on seniors. And that we'll continue to follow this issue as well.

And, of course, I would conclude my comments by saying with respect to this BITSA bill, of course, one of the largest areas of it is the area pertaining to the Employee Share Purchase Tax Credit. Of course, this was not an issue that was raised in the budget; it was not an issue that was raised in the Finance Minister's delivery of the budget this year. Instead, we see it now contained, it's housed in BITSA proceeding from section 11. And so I welcome the opportunity this afternoon to ask—to act—to ask the acting Minister for Finance this afternoon questions pertaining to what the ESOP will contain.

So thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to put those comments on the record this afternoon.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable member for Morden-Winkler.

Now I'll move to clause by clause.

Part 1, pages 1 and 2, shall clauses 1 through 5—pass; part 2, pages 3 to 10, clauses 6 through 28—pass; clauses 29 through 31—pass; clauses 32 through 55—pass.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Chair, you're moving just a little fast for me. I think I have some questions on that section.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, given that we've already passed these clauses, we'll need leave to revert back to the previous section.

Do we have leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, so I'll ask it again, and shall clauses 32 through 55 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no.

Mr. Friesen: I appreciate that flexibility. It is a—it's a large multi-page document, and I think this

document is 81 pages in length, so I welcome the opportunity to ask this question in this area.

I had some questions pertaining, as I said previously, to the employee share purchase tax credit, which I believe falls under this section. Is that correct? So I just wanted to ask the acting minister today, just when it comes to the employee share purchase plan, is there a provision in this part of the bill for a prospectus? Is this—is there a provision that would require groups that want to avail themselves of this new program, do they have to issue a prospectus?

Mr. Struthers: There's not a requirement in the act for a prospectus.

Mr. Friesen: So, when I look at 11.21(1), there's an (a) to (i) listing of requirements but, of course, it's not a formal prospectus, but it certainly indicates that, you know, the company has obligations. They have to include in their application any number of different things. How are those provisions, in the minister's opinion, different than the issuance of a formal prospectus?

* (17:00)

Mr. Struthers: First of all, it is quite difficult to compare what would be involved with the prospectus as opposed to what the rules are, as laid out in this act. Obviously, that I think the member knows, the prospectus would be governed by the rules of the Securities Commission.

In this case, however, I think more—probably it would be accurate to say on a more of an individual case-by-case basis there would be an analysis done. I believe people in Finance would be involved with that. There would be an analysis done on some of those requirements so that good decisions can be made, that the due diligence would be done and that that wouldn't get in the way of Manitobans taking advantage of this particular benefit.

Mr. Friesen: So I guess the next logical question then would be, by whom? So who would perform this analysis of which the minister speaks? And then in what form would that analysis take? I'll ask that question and then I'll have a follow-up to it. Thank you.

Mr. Struthers: I'd refer the member to page 48, 11.21(2). The administrator would be the one that would evaluate that. The administrator would be the minister, as appointed through order-in-council. The minister would get that advice from the department,

the analysis that would be necessary for that. But, clearly, in this act, it's the administrator who requires that additional information if there's questions that come forward. So that additional information then would be requested by the administrator and provided through the department.

Mr. Friesen: And, dealing with 11.21(2), would there be a framework established by which the minister would appoint a individual or a group to advise him on these kind of issues, on the one-off basis that he talks about, the case-by-case basis on which these decisions would be made and on which the information would be received and then adjudicated? Would there be some kind of a mechanism to appoint a group? Would the minister makes those appointments, or would it be done just in the minister's office with a executive assistant, senior assistants and members of the government?

Mr. Struthers: I don't believe that there's been decisions made yet as to exactly what that mechanism would look like, but I do want to underline that the minister would be making decisions in these cases based on information brought forward by officials in the Department of Finance. Those are the people who are most well suited to work in this area, and that would be at least part of what would inform, you know, decisions that the administrator would make.

Mr. Friesen: So I'll just inform the Minister for Municipal Government that I'll reserve the right to ask questions in the future, again, as the process unveils about what 11.21(2) will look like, and, as we get a fuller idea of the process, the actual machinery, by which these applications for ESOP will come into the minister's office and the process by which that is done.

Now, also, in that same section, but just backing up a little bit to 11.21(1), application for registration of an ESOP. So the minister understands that whenever a company of a certain size makes the decision to take that company public—and we understand, this is not the mechanism by which you take a company public—but, when you do so, you understand that you are doing so for the benefit of, you know, allowing capital to get freed up for the company in order for it to grow, to overcome some hurdles of growth, and that capitalization's going to help the company expand. And, in order to do that, of course, you weigh that against the fuller disclosure that comes through the process of taking that company public, through that full filing.

Now, when I see this list of (a) to (i), and they are the list of requirements of a corporation that wishes to issue eligible shares, and this is what they must include with their application to the administrator, I guess my question when it comes to these things, and they're including everything from, you know, the financial statements and the income tax return, the terms and conditions, a copy of the plan—includes things like audited statements and the equity capital to be raised under the plan.

Besides the minister's office, where does this information go? And does it in any way, shape or form get to be made public?

Mr. Struthers: I think, I mean, I think that is a good question, and I think it also, I think, makes good sense to understand that this is information that we need internally to make decisions. This isn't for public consumption. We know that we need certain documents, as listed under that 11.21(1); we need those documents. We need those requirements. It's not something that we go broadcast around.

We understand that, if people making decisions to go public with the corporation, to make those kind of decisions that help our economy, I—we don't want to be doing things that would send a chill to those people who would be considering doing this.

So the department is very careful about that kind of confidential information coming forward and protecting that. But, at the same time, we need to be able to have that kind of information to make good decisions and help Manitobans accomplish their goals in terms of this program.

Mr. Friesen: And the minister can understand why I then was asking for further, you know, explanation of what is meant by administrator, because, of course, then we have to ask: Who is going to be privy to the information that is shared? And in what way will that information be used? And what will be the constraints placed upon the members of whatever group or committee or organization or, you know, subset the minister organizes for that purpose, just to be able to make sure that discretion is assured to these companies and to these employees and throughout the process?

* (17:10)

I have a question pertaining to 11.21(3)(a)(i). And it just indicates there that the administrator may register an employee share ownership plan only if the plan sets out the minimum and maximum numbers of employees who will be eligible to

acquire shares or confirms that there is no such minimum or maximum number.

In what cases would the minister contemplate that it would need to set out a minimum or maximum number of employees? I don't see the merit in government having control over that issue, but perhaps the minister can just share what the thinking is with respect to that.

Mr. Struthers: Well, we know that there will be implications for the number of people who can participate with this tax credit. I don't know if the decisions have been made in terms of minimum and maximum numbers. It may depend on the individual case that comes forward. The—I—is there a concern specific about that that the member has that he could share with us? Does he have a worry about numbers, whether they be minimums or maximums?

Mr. Friesen: More like a curiosity as to—when I see the language indicated as such, that the administrator would reserve the right to set up minimums and maximums or waive a minimum or maximum number. I would just wonder—like I said before, and if the minister doesn't have a response at this time, then it's okay; we can ask at a separate time, but I would just—I'm just inquiring to know in what situations it would be necessary or advantageous, in the opinion of the administrator, to set out a minimum and maximum number of employees, if, indeed, as the minister said, that the goal of this whole program would be to allow the success of these Manitoba companies to grow and to flourish and to go to the next step but to maintain that kind of local or employee-based connection, then we would—I would suspect, want this to apply to the broadest group of applicants that it possibly could. That is why I asked the question.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, I mean, I think that's a fair question, and I think it probably—it's probably going to require a lot of thought in terms of individual, you know, case—kind of a case-by-case analysis, and I can understand that I think he shares the goal that we would have as many Manitobans benefit from this as possible, as many corporations benefit from this as possible as well.

I would suspect that it has to do with—more with a case-by-case analysis and leaving some ability for the administrator to help in a positive way to allow, as much as we can, this benefit to accrue to Manitobans. For today, I think all I can say is that it gives the administrator the ability and the flexibility to maximize this particular benefit, and I'm sure that,

as time goes on, we'll have lots of opportunities to talk about, whether they be generally or case by case, how we can improve on the delivery of this program.

Mr. Friesen: On that same subject, I'm looking at 11.19(2), the section that deals with requirements for eligible corporation, and, if you follow through to No. 4, under the definition—or the description of small business, it indicates there that the total carrying value of the assets of the corporation and its affiliates should not be more—cannot be more than \$25 million. I'm just wondering, why the limit? You know, even though \$25 million to you—and I might sound like an enormous amount of money. We understand that—look at any car franchise and, when we do a total valuation of the enterprise, so we include the buildings, we include the equipment, but then we include the inventory, and so when we—I think about some of the farm implement dealerships in the area that I represent, in the area that this member represents. Twenty-five million dollars doesn't go as far as it used to, and I say that, you know, with caution, because I understand it is still a large amount of money. Why—how did the minister arrive at the \$25-million cap?

Mr. Struthers: I think that what I should do is just commit to the member that we'd—we'll get back to him about the thinking that ran—the rationale that went in behind that—the limit on small business. I take his point that, you know, if you were to see my bank account, you'd see that \$25 million is a pretty big number, and I take his point on that. But that is different when you start to look at many of the corporations around who deal in much bigger numbers than that. But, as to the rationale as to why that particular number was chosen, I think we should probably commit to get back to the member in terms of that thinking.

Mr. Friesen: Yes, I'll be sure to continue to raise the questions pertaining to that cap, because I believe that the minister and I at least have a broad consensus around the idea that we want to include as many eligible companies as we can. And I think about some of the farm operations, and I think about some of the companies that have grown, and often these companies start from very, very small roots. Well, they all do, and then, as these companies grow and they begin to perform an assessment of the valuation of the company, they might not even have an understanding that, in market conditions, that the total value of that company is exceeding \$25 million. And it can sometimes come as a surprise to these groups exactly at the point in time that they're

thinking first about successioning, they're thinking about bringing other people into the company, employees are wanting to buy in, family members are coming inside. And so that can be a real shock.

So I would welcome the minister to examine that, to perhaps be open to adjusting that number or to write in, to the context of the bill, that that number can be adjusted up, because I think it will be necessary, if not immediately, very soon.

I just have a few more questions about the ESOP. One of them has to do with—I'm back to 11.21(3), and I've asked a question pertaining to maximum minimum, but just down the way there, under (iv), indicates—and we're still talking about the plan needing to set out—and there it says, "the proposed use of the share proceeds". What is the rationale for indicating that the—that, in this case, the company will divulge the proposed use of the share proceeds? Obviously, this would not be realized in terms of salaries or benefits; it would go back to the company. And I would imagine that what would happen is, then, in the next year's accounting, there would be a full disclosure of that under asset. It would be revenue accruing to the company, and there would be line items that would indicate where that went. But this indicates that that disclosure would be made to the administrator?—I might be right about that, if I'm not, please correct me. And then what is the rationale to include a provision that would set out a requirement for the seller to divulge the proposed use of the share proceeds?

* (17:20)

Mr. Struthers: The—as the member has pointed out in 11.21(1)(d), one of the requirements is a copy of the plan, and that's where the—they would set out what the proposed use of the share proceeds are.

I think, again, in terms of a rationale as to why that is connected to it, I think we should probably commit to a further discussion with the member on that. You know, in any of these cases, there's going to be a number of conditions, a number of regulations, rules that are put in place to make sure that things are fair, to make sure that they're—Manitobans can point to a process that is accountable and stable, so that they can make decisions on, you know, taking companies public and those sorts of decisions.

We—but, in terms of the actual specific rationale, I think, again, we can get back to the member on that, but I would encourage him to continue that kind

of a debate. If he has some advice on whether that needs to be there or not, I think we'd be interested in hearing from him on that as well.

Mr. Friesen: As the minister knows, of course, we've only been in possession of the BITSA bill for about a week's time, and so I think it is a good point of discussion. I would suggest—and I have begun to consult with stakeholder groups—I would suggest it would probably be the opinion of many groups that that particular provision overreaches, that simply there are already, in public accounting and accounting practices, there are requirements for the company to report where revenues occur, how they go back into the company; those things would all be reported. Those audits that are conducted on a company would exactly be for the reason of pointing out those forms of revenue and indicate where they're occurring and what the rationale is for them.

So I would suggest probably that it might be seen as a provision that overreaches, and anything, as the minister indicated, here we want to—of course, we want to be—we want a program like this to work. We want it, of course, to be in the best interests of Manitobans, and we want it to be fair and equitable. We also need to have a framework around it. But, at the same time, we don't want to overburden groups so that they walk away, so there's a chill on this kind of thing. I think the minister and I would probably agree what we need is more of a framework that allows businesses to succeed and grow in this way and not less.

On the same page of the bill, still page 49, still in 11.21, a question pertaining to—there's a (b)(iii) there that indicates "the administrator is satisfied that the shares to be issued under the plan do not have any rights, privileges or restrictions prohibited by the administrator or by the regulation." Could the minister indicate what kind of restrictions or a prohibition might an administrator place on such a plan?

Mr. Struthers: Thinking back to the previous question, I think that's probably a good warning on behalf of the member across the way, but it is—I think he understands it is—there is a sweet spot in between due diligence and stifling, let's say. Somewhere in there we have to have this set of rules that does encourage more benefits for Manitobans but, at the same time, we do have to—as government, we do have to be in a position to conduct our due diligence when these kind of requests come forward. That ties into, I think, his question that he just asked.

In terms of prohibitions and what the administrator might look at in terms of prohibitions, that is connected back to the purpose. The purpose is found in 11.18. There's a number of—through the clause 11.18, there's a number of clauses there that provide the kind of guidance to the administrator that that administrator would have to take under consideration when requests come forward. But, again, it needs to fit into the overall rubric of, you know, trying to find that sweet spot between doing your due diligence and not setting up an environment that is not conducive to growth in Manitoba.

So I think, if the member looks at section 11.18, kind of cross lists that with what's found under 11.21(3), I think he can see that there—those are the provisions—sorry, those are the prohibitions and the kinds of things that an administrator would take into account.

Mr. Friesen: Looking at 11.21(4) Maximum equity capital to be raised, there is an indication there that the administrator may deregister a plan under which more than \$10 million of equity capital has been raised. I'm just looking for a clarification here. Is the minister indicating that is this a provision that would be enacted exactly as a company goes through this process to sell shares to employees, or are we talking at some subsequent point down the line? I'm just wondering about if they're talking about deregistering a plan, somehow pulling the plug on the process, or are they saying that as this system would grow and employees would successfully purchase shares and all of these provisions would be put in place and the company would meet all of the requirements as set out by the administrator, the minister in this case, are they talking about subsequently pulling the plug and then what would be the result of that? What would a company then do? Maybe I'm misreading it.

* (17:30)

Mr. Struthers: Well, first of all, I think the member is correct. I mean, he's identified that the maximum shares that can be issued by a registered ESOP for tax credit purposes is \$10 million.

In an effort to find that sweet spot in implementing the clauses that are in this document, I wouldn't foresee us just to, kind of, surprising somebody and pulling the plug. There'd be a lot of discussions that would take place. If a corporation was working with our department—if the Finance Department on this, there'd be a lot of discussions

that would take place. If it was clear they were coming in—

An Honourable Member: Just tiptoe.

Mr. Struthers: Yes—if it was clear that they were coming in with something that didn't stack up against what's in the document here, then there'd be a lot of discussions take place as to alternatives.

And, you know, the Department of Finance has always wanted to be helpful for Manitoba businesses and for Manitoba individuals. We would—I would foresee us taking that kind of approach rather than simply finding a way to pull the plug on a company.

Mr. Friesen: So I thank the minister for that clarification.

It sounds like he's talking about exactly decisions that would be undertaken during the process by which a company was coming to the administrator, coming to the minister, and saying, here it all is. And I think that, you know, what we might be talking about is exactly when that initial assessment is being done. That, if they were, again, above the maximum, that they would be ineligible. We can continue to have those conversations.

I know that early on in this part of the bill, it sets out the conditions, the criteria. And I know it's a long bill, so I'm just missing the particular section where it talks about the fact that the company must reside in Manitoba, and I believe that the employees who purchase the shares must reside in Manitoba, and there's some conditions about that.

My question to the minister has to do more with the end of this part of the bill and talking about the regulations. What I'm looking for is anything, specifically, that deals with the situation of subsequent resale of employee-owned shares. So the minister spells out provisions and says, you have to reside in Manitoba—because, of course, what we want out of this is for Manitoba companies to succeed. And, you know, the minister's intent is not for a company to be get bought out and then located in North Dakota; we want to see Manitoba companies, you know, stay here and grow and employ people who work in communities and contribute and give back to our communities.

What about—are there any—are there things in here, are there dimensions here that I'm missing or I've glossed over in haste that have to do with, specifically, identifying issues to do with subsequent resale of employee-owned shares? And, while we're

at it, maybe talking about redemption of shares. We're talking about people who might cease to satisfy the criteria that they initially satisfied. Maybe they move out of province. Maybe they retire and they're no longer with the company.

Is the minister concerned about what happens after this sale is adjudicated, and are there specific parts of this bill that address exactly that?

Mr. Struthers: I would refer the member to page 51, 11.21(7), it—section (d). In section (d), that does give the administrator the ability to bring forward rules governing the resale.

I understand what the member's asking about the sale of shares, and I think that's pretty clear here. His question is about the resale of those shares again. I agree. We want to have Manitoba companies do well in this. We want to have, as much as we can, you know, Manitobans and employees doing well with these kind of transactions.

What we would have in that section, 11.21(7), is the ability to make rules governing that resale for the purpose of the subsection (3). *[interjection]* That's the one, yes.

Mr. Chairperson: No further questions? Let's move on.

Clauses 32 through 55—pass; clause 56—pass; clauses 57 through 62—pass; clauses 63 through 68—pass; clauses 69 through 72—pass; clauses 73 through 75—pass; clause 76—pass; clauses 1 through 22 of the schedule—pass; schedule's table of contents—pass; bill's table of contents—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass.

Shall the bill be reported?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of reporting the bill, signify so by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed to the reporting of the bill, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On division, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Bill shall be reported on division.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: That concludes the business of the committee.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered the following bill: Bill 73, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014, and reports the same without amendment, on division.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

* (17:40)

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of receiving the report, please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to receiving the report, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On division. The report will be received upon division.

* * *

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we move to a third reading of Bill 73.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 73—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014

Mr. Speaker: We'll now, under concurrence in third readings, call Bill 73, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 73, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2014 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate?

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): And just it's my pleasure to just be able to stand and just to make a few brief comments on the bill, and what I would say is this, you know, while I thank the minister this afternoon for providing some answers, it was obvious that there were some answers that he could not provide at this point in time. And I'm struck by the fact that we have received the BITSA bill less than a week ago and—or about a week ago—and we have endeavoured to study these very significant aspects of this bill.

I'm left with this opinion that conditions like this ESOP do not belong in the context of the BITSA bill; this was not something that was addressed in the budget. The budget is the opportunity this government has, the budget is the opportunity the Finance Minister has to be able to bring those things to the attention of Manitobans, to the attention of the parties in this House that they intend to implement in that spring session. And so the whole employee share tax credit was not mentioned in the process of the—in the context of the budget; instead, it arrives in the context of BITSA.

Now this afternoon we took some time and there was a conjecture. There was some discussion about what industry experts may say, what business owners may say about this bill, what the implications of it might be. I would express to this government that we have—that they have not availed themselves of the opinions that are out there in our communities that will be affected by a bill like this, because we have

not provided the framework for them to be able to come to a full committee stage where they could apply to come and have their opinions heard.

So there were points this afternoon where we talked about whether a \$25-million cap was actually—a good place to stop. We talked about what the discretionary power of the administrator—of course, that's the minister—should be. We talked about the fact there—that there would be other parts of this bill that could present questions. And the minister acknowledged in his remarks that yes, there needs to be that sweet spot, there needs to be, of course, a framework, but there needs to be flexibility.

We want—we want—Manitoba businesses to succeed. We want Manitoba enterprise to succeed. So where there are those businesses in our communities, in our cities, in our towns, in our rural municipalities who are growing—and we're getting to that place where they're looking at succession, where this kind of employee share purchase plan could inject new monies into the company, could help them capitalize to be able to go forward. Those are things we must see succeed. They are things that are good for business.

I would suggest to this minister that we don't get there when they take this full-speed-ahead approach that sticks this bill inside BITSA and says, quick, let's pass this so the money can keep flowing. If BITSA is supposed to be about the machinery by which this government will implement things like its infrastructure plan and things like its EIA reforms and things like its rebate for seniors, then those are the things we expect to see in the BITSA bill. But, when we open up The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act and see something completely different, and go back and look and see, yes, there was something like this in 2011, but it was not ever practised. Whether the regulations were written and not used, we don't know, but then all of sudden we see this bill back for a second try in this context.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've said it before, but I will say it again: We know there is precedent here, and this is the same manner in which the government brought wholesale changes to how they would fund, or rather not fund, the horse race industry in Manitoba. We know that was done in the context of BITSA, and we know there is other precedent. We know that the NDP tried in the past to create and hide, at the last minute, a first-in-Canada tax on accident and disability insurance, and the only reason

they removed the provision from the legislation is because they got caught doing it.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know and we know, on this side of the House, we will continue to remain vigilant. I would suggest to the members of that government that the place for a feature as significant as an employee share purchase plan would have been as an independent bill that would have been cited by that minister in the budget speech, that would have been tabled in this House, that would have received first and second reading, and would have gone to a full committee of this House where members of all parties would have been present where we could have heard industry experts, where we would have had the time to contact these stakeholder groups.

Instead, what we are left with is this minister's comments that say we'll get back to you on that. We will advise you at a later time. You raise a great question; we just don't have the answer at this time.

And, Mr. Speaker, that should not be the standard to which this government is held. We will hold them to a higher standard than this.

So I thank the minister for the comments he did provide. We will indicate to the government that we will remain vigilant to seek out those answers that were not provided in the context of debate this afternoon, and we continue to have concerns, of course, about the overall context of BITSA, which I have had opportunity at second reading to talk about and in my opening remarks at committee stage, precisely that what we understand BITSA to really do is to take an illegal and immoral PST hike and seek to push it forward. The bill's in place; the PST is being collected. But what this does is it galvanizes it. What it does is it demonstrates that the government is not willing to do the right thing and repeal that PST increase that makes it so difficult for Manitobans, businesses, families, wage earners, seniors, students to do better here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, as I've talked about earlier today, I'm opposed to the general budgetary policies of this government, which have left Manitoba lagging behind Saskatchewan now in manufacturing. This is not acceptable. For eight months in a row we've had fewer people employed in Manitoba than we had the month—the same month a year earlier. You know, this is just not a good government and it's not a good situation and

it's not good fiscal policy, economic policy, or job policy.

So those are my comments, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 73?

Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 73, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014.

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 by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

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

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

Order, please.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 73, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2014.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Rowat, Schuler, Wishart.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 28, Nays 15.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

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