

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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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	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon.	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Greg, Hon.	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	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	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	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Thomas, Hon.	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa	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, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 28, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no bills, we'll move on to petitions.

Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Every day, hundreds of Manitoba children walk to school in Oakbank and must cross PTH 206 at the intersection with Cedar Avenue.

(2) There have been many dangerous incidents where drivers use the right shoulder to pass vehicles that have stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left at this intersection.

(3) Law enforcement officials have identified this intersection as a hot spot of concern for the safety of schoolchildren, drivers and emergency responders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government improve the safety at the pedestrian corridor at the intersection of PTH 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank by considering such steps as highlighting pavement markings to better indicate the location of the shoulders and crosswalk, as well as installing a lighted crosswalk structure.

This is signed by J. Warbeck, J. Warbeck, R. Forbes and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

**Province-Wide Long-Term Care—
Review Need and Increase Spaces**

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

And this is the background to this petition:

(1) There are currently 125 licensed personal-care homes, PCHs, across Manitoba, consisting of less than 10,000 beds.

(2) All trends point to an increasingly aging population who will require additional personal-care-home facilities.

(3) By some estimates, Manitoba will require an increase of more than 5,100 personal-care-home beds by 2036.

(4) The number of Manitobans with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness who will require personal-care-home services are steadily increasing and are threatening to double within the current generation.

(5) The last personal-care-home review in many years, including the Swan River Valley area currently under administration of Prairie Mountain regional health authority, was conducted in 2008.

(6) Average occupancy rates for personal-care homes across the province are exceeding 97 per cent, with some regions, such as Swan River Valley, witnessing 100 per cent 'occupancy' rates.

(7) These high occupancy rates are creating the conditions where many individuals requiring long-term care are being displaced far away from their families and their communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to consider immediately enacting a province-wide review of the long-term-care needs of residents of Manitoba.

And (2) to urge the provincial government to recognize the stresses placed upon the health-care system by the current and continuous aging population and consider increasing the availability of

long-term-care spaces, PCH beds, in the communities across the province.

And this petition is signed by A. Nahnybida and C. Svojanovski and C. Forbes and many, many more fine Manitobans.

**Minnesota-Manitoba Transmission
Line Route-Information Request**

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line is a 500-kilovolt alternating-current transmission line set to be located in southeastern Manitoba that will cross into the US border south of Piney, Manitoba.

(2) The line has an in-service date of 2020 and will run approximately 150 kilometres with tower heights expected to reach between 40 to 60 metres and be located every four to five hundred metres.

(3) The preferred route designated for the line will see hydro towers come in close proximity to the community of La Broquerie and many other communities in Manitoba's southeast rather than an alternate route that was also considered.

(4) The alternate route would have seen the line run further east, avoid densely populated areas and eventually terminate at the same spot at the US border.

(5) The Progressive Conservative caucus has repeatedly asked for information about the routing of the line and its proximity to densely populated areas and has yet to receive any response.

(6) Landowners all across Manitoba are concerned about the impact hydro line routing could have on land values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro to immediately provide a written explanation to all members of the Legislative Assembly regarding what criteria were used and the reasons for selecting the preferred routing for the Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line, including whether or not this routing represented the least intrusive option to residents of Taché, Springfield, Ste. Anne, Stuartburn, Piney and La Broquerie.

This petition is signed by R. Ricard, D. Goertzen, N. Goertzen and many more fine Manitobans.

**Province-Wide Long-Term Care-
Review Need and Increase Spaces**

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

There are currently 125 licensed personal-care homes, PCHs, across Manitoba, consisting of less than 10,000 beds.

Mr. Speaker, all trends point to an increasingly aging population who will require additional personal-care-home facilities.

By some estimates, Manitoba will require an increase of more than 5,100 personal-care-home beds by 2036.

The number of Manitobans with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness who will require personal-care-home services are steadily increasing and are threatening to double within the current generation.

The last personal-care-home review in many areas, including the Swan River Valley area currently under administration of Prairie Mountain regional health authority, was conducted in 2008.

Average occupancy rates for personal-care homes across the province are exceeding 97 per cent, with some regions, such as Swan River Valley, witnessing 100 per cent occupancy rates.

These high occupancy rates are creating the conditions where many individuals requiring long-term care are being displaced far away from their families and home community.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider immediately enacting a province-wide review of the long-term-care needs of residents of Manitoba.

To urge the provincial government to recognize the stresses placed upon the health-care system by the current and continuous aging population and consider increasing the availability of long-term-care spaces, PCH beds, in communities across the province.

And this is signed by T. Gatien, L. Barker, Z. Atkinson and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Bipole III Land Expropriation— Collective Bargaining Request

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

On November 19th, 2014, the Premier authorized an order-in-council enabling Manitoba Hydro to take valuable and productive farmland for its controversial Bipole III transmission line project without due process of law.

On November 24th, 2014, the minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act signed a confirming order for the province of Manitoba declaring that no notice to landowners is required for the seizure of property.

This waiver of notice represents an attack on rural families and their property rights in a modern democratic society. There was not even an opportunity provided for debate in the Manitoba Legislature. In many cases, the private property seized has been part of a family farm for generations.

Manitoba Hydro has claimed that it has only ever expropriated one landowner in its entire history of operation. The provincial government has now gone ahead and instituted expropriation procedures against more than 200 landowners impacted by Bipole III.

Since November 2013, the Manitoba Bipole III Landowner Committee, MBLC, in association with the Canadian Association of Energy and Pipeline Landowner Associations, CAEPLA, have been trying to engage Manitoba Hydro to negotiate a fair business agreement.

* (13:40)

For over 14 months, the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro have acted in bad faith in their dealings with Manitoba landowners or their duly authorized agents. Those actions have denied farmers the right—their right to bargain collectively to protect their property and their businesses from Bipole III.

MBLC, CAEPLA has not formed an association to stop the Bipole III project and they are not antidevelopment. MBLC, CAEPLA has simply come together, as a group of people, as Manitobans, to stand up for property rights and the right to

collectively bargain for a fair business agreement that protects the future well-being of their businesses.

MBLC, CAEPLA are duly authorized agents for Manitoba landowners who wish to exercise their freedom to associate and negotiate in good faith.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government immediately direct Manitoba Hydro to engage with MBLC, CAEPLA in order to negotiate a fair business agreement that addresses the many legitimate concerns of farm families affected by the Bipole III transmission line.

And this petition is signed by D. Kunka, H. Kunka and L. Kunka and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): Yes, I'd like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Department of Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Don Scott, the former member for Inkster.

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

And also, seated in the public gallery we have with us this afternoon from Woodlawn School 100 grade 4 students under the direction of Lisa Martens, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us from Pacific Junction School, we have 25 grade 4 students under the direction of Ms. Pat Shearer, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

NDP Leadership Campaign Number of Union Delegates

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Congratulations to all the U of M grads this week.

When former Premier Gary Doer won his leadership contest, there was screams of joy elicited from some on the stage who jumped up and down and yelled, the machine works, the machine works. And what they were referring to was the power of union bosses to control the outcome of a leadership race.

Now, that same machine was put to work for the candidate from St. Boniface in the last leadership race. And this union-boss power resulted in a rather narrow, razor-thin victory for him.

So my question for the Premier (Mr. Selinger) today is: What percentage of the delegates are allocated to union bosses in NDP leadership races?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased the member got up today and asked a question about the political issues that he's been raising now for the past few weeks about severance.

And I'd like the member to try to explain why, in today's Winnipeg Free Press, his party says that it's okay to pay severance and to not say anything about it because those are the rules, yet every day in this House, that member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister) has stood up and condemned the rules and said, you can't give severance, you didn't follow the rules.

And there's a rule for the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, and a different rule for everyone else. Can he explain that, please?

Mr. Pallister: And the kids in the gallery will notice that I asked a perfectly fine, legitimate question of the Premier, who didn't answer it, and then I was attacked by the member from Kildonan. It's such a shame.

And frankly, we know, Mr. Speaker, and I said before the NDP leadership race, that 99 per cent of Manitobans would have no say whatsoever in the outcome. What we didn't anticipate is that 99 per cent of the NDP delegates would have no say either.

Now, the Premier brought in new staff from Unifor to his office and new staff from the United

Food and Commercial Workers so that they could help him network to get delegate support for the leadership race, using the Premier's office. This co-ordination with union bosses was very effective for him but, unfortunately, disrespected the members of his own party and deprived them of a fair contest.

So I'd like to ask the question again: What percentage of the delegates for the NDP leadership contest were preassigned to a handful of union bosses?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite surprised that the Leader of the Opposition seems to be totally preoccupied with the inner functionings of the NDP. And I can understand that, because when he ran for leadership, there was no one who ran against him. It was the puff of smoke like the Vatican that came out of the chimney and said the member who had been an MLA and then became an MP and then ran for leadership of the Reform Party, then ran for the Tories, then told the Prime Minister he didn't want to be in Cabinet and then came back and wanted to run for the Tory party became leader of the Tory party.

He doesn't understand the inner workings of democracy.

Mr. Pallister: Well, Mr. Speaker, and the kids should notice this as well, when they don't have answers over there, they just talk louder. That's how it works.

Now, you know, it isn't just me that's concerned about this, 25 to 30 per cent of the delegates being handed to a small handful of powerful people. It's NDP members opposite. It's people like Michael Balagou who are expressing concerns about this.

It's people like the MLA for Thompson, who didn't get to hire, using public money, assistants to help him run his campaign, or the MLA for Seine River, who was also deprived of an opportunity for a level playing field and a fair contest. These members didn't get the chance to actually compete in a fair and level way. They didn't get the chance to use taxpayers' money to pay for their campaign or to help strategize their campaign or to lever union-boss support.

Now, I'd like the Premier to admit today that this is more evidence that he is not at all focused on what matters most to Manitoba families but rather focused solely on what matters to keeping him leader.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this is the classic example of the double standard held by the Leader of the Opposition.

You know, first of all, he said to the media, oh, I don't want to talk about individuals. But he stands up today and he attacks individuals. Then he says, well, you shouldn't give out severance or you should give it publicly, and he attacks the Premier (Mr. Selinger), when in today's paper it's indicated that three members of his party staff who quit got severance, and they said, oh, it's normal to get severance, it's okay to get severance.

You know, Mr. Speaker, double standard for the Leader of the Opposition. He says one thing, he does another thing. He ought to get the wooden buffalo award for this week.

Paramedic Self-Regulation Firefighters Union

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): During the NDP leadership convention, allegations were made that a deal had been cut between the president of the firefighters union and the NDP that would kill or stall the paramedic application for self-regulation in exchange for votes for the Premier.

Those allegations were made after this Minister of Health personally escorted the firefighters union to the Premier's side of the room after having a conversation with them. The president of the firefighters union refused to divulge what he called, and I quote, internal discussions.

So can the Minister of Health tell us: Who in the NDP have had internal discussions with the firefighters? Was it her, Heather Grant-Jury or some other political staffer?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): I can assure members opposite that we have the utmost respect for all first responders in this side of the Chamber.

And, in fact, I can say that one of the things that I had the pleasure of doing today was actually attending the Celebration of Life Awards where we recognized the Winnipeg EMS paramedics and the fine work that they do. And we recognized, in three particular cases, the wonderful folks that save lives and the partnerships that they have with, in our unique system in Winnipeg, with firefighter paramedics. And it was a wonderful indication of the collaboration that exists between first responders.

And we respect what they do on the front lines far too much for political interference.

* (13:50)

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, Heather Grant-Jury was seconded to work for this Premier during the NDP family feud. Her one purpose was to help this Premier hold on to his job. So to see her and the Minister of Health escort the firefighters to the Premier's camp raised a lot of eyebrows.

Questions asked this week showed there is still cause for concern. This Minister of Health sat on the advisory council report for three months. She continues to stall moving the bill—the application for paramedic self-regulation forward, and she has corrupted the process.

Can the Minister of Health tell us: What carrot was offered by someone in the NDP to get the firefighters to change their vote?

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question, and again I would like to take this opportunity to recognize, as it is Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week, the fine work that our first responders do. We have amazing people in this province that do fine work, and allegations of the kind made by members opposite really does nothing to recognize the fine work that those folks do. It's really an insult to the fine work that they do and I, again, respect them far too much. I appreciate what they do far too much to even dignify such allegations with a response.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, a local editorial slammed this Minister of Health for her political interference in this issue. It said, and I quote: Politics, horse trading and treachery have no place in the regulation and oversight of medical practitioners. This Health Minister sullied the move to improve paramedical regulation by her actions, even as she was sitting on a report from an advisory council on the paramedics' application. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health owes the firefighters a lot. They helped get her elected in that last election.

So I would like to ask this Minister of Health to tell us: Did she or any NDP political staffer offer anything to the firefighters so that she could ensure their support in her next election?

Ms. Blady: I'd like to thank the member for the question and again take the opportunity to reiterate

that on this side of the Chamber we work with all first responders.

Last week I had the privilege of meeting with the Paramedic Association of Manitoba when they did their Paramedics on Broadway, also had the opportunity with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) for presenting a private member's statement as well as a copy of the proclamation, and then that very evening, with UFFW, meeting with them as well because they were doing fundraising for Cvet's Pets and PTSD dogs, because we know how important PTSD and the role of service animals is in the recovery of EMS and firefighters, all first responders. What happens to them, service animals play a vital role.

So I work with all first responders.

Prairie Mountain Health Authority Doctor Recruitment and Retention

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, I'm sure it's just a matter of time 'til the minister gets some advice from the firefighters union.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize there are at least 40 doctor vacancies in the Prairie Mountain regional health authority. We say at least 40 because the government reports the vacancies in Brandon as several, so we're really not sure how many vacancies there are in the region.

This government has a poor record of attracting and maintaining doctors in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: Are these vacancies this government's attempt to balance the books at the RHAs?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): I'd like to thank the member for the question.

Rural doctors are a vital part of health care, as are all doctors in Manitoba, and that's why we've invested more than members opposite ever could have imagined investing in training doctors. They cut seats; we increased seats. We've increased funding to help doctors go to rural areas, whether it's seats to have them do their residency or whether it's to bring internationally trained doctors there.

We work with all doctors, with all health-care professionals to ensure that all Manitobans get the kind of health care they want and need.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear the NDP are inept at hiring and retaining doctors in Manitoba. Because of this, front-line services are at risk. We

have at least 23 emergency rooms closed, many more rotate on-call.

Communities are becoming very, very frustrated with this crisis in health care. In fact, the municipality of Killarney-Turtle Mountain have taken it upon themselves to hire a headhunter to find doctors in their community.

Is this the new reality for doctor recruitment in Manitoba?

Ms. Blady: I'd like to thank the member for the question. And, yes, I'm familiar with what is going on in the Killarney area because communities do work with their RHAs to attract and retain doctors. RHAs are the ones that hire doctors, and they partner with their communities.

And I understand the member's lack of familiarity with the health-care hiring practices. But I invite him to my office, that if he would like to have a briefing on how hiring, training and retention works, I will gladly offer he or any of the members opposite a full briefing with my staff so that they can better understand what we do to bring doctors to rural Manitoba.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, we clearly recognize the crisis in health care, and clearly this government has dropped the ball.

The local government of Killarney-Turtle Mountain have allocated \$300,000 of local taxpayers' money in an attempt to find doctors for that community. This should clearly be the role of the provincial government, not local taxpayers.

Why has the NDP allowed the situation to get so bad that local taxpayers are on the hook to find doctors for their communities?

Ms. Blady: Again, thank the member for the question and, again, invite him to my office for a briefing, he or any of his colleagues at any time to, again, inform them more about the process.

But we are increasing physician training. We've added 22 more medical residencies, including new family residencies in Brandon, Steinbach, Morden-Winkler, and doubling the number of nurse practitioners we train in Manitoba from nine to 18. We're investing.

When members opposite were in charge of health care, we had doctor strikes, we had doctors fleeing the province, and we had 1,000 nurses handed a pink slip.

**Child and Family Services
Case Concern (de Antonio Family)**

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I must bring to this House distressing news. Those in the Chamber will remember the tragic death of baby Matias de Antonio while in the care of CFS.

Last December, I informed this House that the mother, Maria de Antonio, was expecting again and asked the minister for advice on whether Maria was safe to have her baby here in Manitoba. On Monday, Maria gave birth to a baby boy, Samuel de Antonio. On Wednesday, CFS officials moved again to seize the baby.

Can the minister offer any explanation to the family or to Manitobans as to why her department would take such action?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): As the member opposite knows, that I am not able to speak about the specifics about a case. That is not what this Chamber's about. We need to protect the confidentiality of the families and the privacy of the child.

The legislation in Manitoba, The Child and Family Services Act, it states that the safety of children is our paramount concern. We will continue to work with the families that have—issues have been identified. Our goal is to provide them with the supports they need so children could be reunified. But the important thing is the safety of the child.

We will continue to work with all families across Manitoba to provide them with the necessary supports they need to nurture and support their children.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, this family is owed an explanation for the life of the child this government has taken from them; none has been provided. Now a second action to take baby Samuel. We understand the need for confidentiality, but the family of the child should not be kept in the dark.

Mr. Speaker, CFS is here to protect the children, but who will protect the family and the children from CFS?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I've spoken before with the member opposite, we're unable to discuss the specifics of cases in this Chamber or even outside the Chamber. That is not our responsibility.

What we want to do is ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. That's what we need to focus on.

Today we made an announcement around more Families First workers supporting families. That's a way to prevent children from coming into care. We will continue to work with families to provide them with the necessary supports.

I will not second-guess the professionals that are working hard in the front lines to protect Manitoba children.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, no explanation was offered for the seizure of Matias, no explanation around the death of Matias, no inquest into the death, an autopsy report that left more questions than answers, and no change in the transfer protocols that led to Matias's death, and now this action with baby Samuel.

* (14:00)

With the family—with the baby's family in the gallery today, will this minister commit to the only compassionate course of action to—and do whatever is necessary to reunite this young mother and baby?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, there is no greater tragedy than the loss of a child, and I have met with the family previously and we have spoken about their experience.

What we've been able to do is we have investigated with the CME. We also have the Children's Advocate that will be writing—or reviewing the case and providing us with advice about how we move forward.

I encourage the families, all families that are involved with Child and Family Services, to work with them to identify what the supports are that they need so their children can go home and we can be confident that their children will be safe.

The safety of Manitoba children is paramount. We need to support the front-line workers, but we also—we do not need to judge the decisions they make. We need to support the families, to work with the families and ensure that when it is possible that families—

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

Education System Test Score Results

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government, student literacy, science and math scores have declined from 2003 to 2012.

The MLA for St. Vital said in 2011, and I quote: This is unacceptable. I'm very concerned about this.

Mr. Speaker, the current Minister of Education, the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview, stated on December 5th, 2013, in the House that, I quote, "we do find the results unacceptable." End quote.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are disappointed with the scores and even the NDP Education ministers are disappointed with the scores.

Will this minister admit that his NDP government's waste and mismanagement is harming our students?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Mr. Speaker, of course, it's very important that we have a quality education system for our young students, and we are concerned and we spend every day working in this House and with our partners across the educational system to improve the quality of education for our students.

For example, Mr. Speaker, we have reduced class sizes from kindergarten to grade 3 so students get that essential one-on-one time with their student. The result of that initiative is that we've also hired 300 more teachers, and as a result of that we've had to invest in schools in order to ensure we have the classroom space so that we can do smaller class sizes.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're concerned with education quality every single day.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, I think this minister's been far too busy with the NDP family feud over the last few months.

Our scores have dropped dramatically when it comes to math. We went from being a leader in Canada to near the bottom and are getting worse.

Experts backed with statistics, such as PISA, PCAP, the C.D. Howe Institute, OECD and Manitoba post-secondary math professors, are telling this government how to improve, but is this government listening? No, they're not. There are experts willing to help.

Will the minister admit today that the scores in math in Manitoba have declined sharply under his NDP government and that he refuses to listen to the experts?

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member will remember that when the scores came out last year we stood shoulder to shoulder with members from the Manitoba School Boards Association, with parents, with members from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, with all of our partners in the education system to announce a five-point plan to address quality needs in our system. One of those things was to strengthen teacher training. We—ongoing work to revise the curriculum. We're giving new supports to parents, new supports to teachers, and we're ensuring greater accountability in the system.

As I said in my last question, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're concerned with the educational quality in Manitoba every single day.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Speaker, 16 years and it continues to get worse.

Mr. Speaker, there is documentation from the minister's own department that's telling him that kids are struggling when it comes to math. He is not listening to national and international experts, he is not listening to math experts in Manitoba, and he is not even listening to the experts within his own department.

If the minister's not listening to any of these people, who is he listening to?

Mr. Allum: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member's question is kind of disingenuous, you know, because when they were in power and when the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the Cabinet, they cut Education five consecutive years. The result of that is that they laid off 700 teachers. Classrooms became larger, there was overcrowding, and our classrooms were in disrepair.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest threat to the quality of education in this province is the leader of an opposition and the Education critic and the 'tole' Tory caucus who don't believe in investing in our education system.

All Nations Coordinated Response Program Emergency Call Service—Staffing Levels

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, All Nations Coordinated Response, or ANCR, is the agency mandated by this Province to provide emergency placements for youth at risk.

Earlier this week, information was presented that showed a 700 per cent increase over four years in the use of after-hours emergency call service used by ANCR. The minister has tried to characterize this as a normal fluctuation in usage and that there is nothing out of the ordinary here.

Why, then, was it suddenly necessary to hire three staff to fill the vacancies for those that are responsible for these emergency placements?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): For the House's information, I'd like to talk about the great work that ANCR does after hours.

Families are operating 24-7. ANCR provides that support to families, to foster parents, to agencies around the clock. They have a number of staff that work in the front lines, that go into homes and provide support. That's where they need to be. When they're not available to answer the phone, we have an answering service, and I think that that's important that we have someone answering the phone.

What the member hasn't told you is he's cherry-picked the numbers. In 2008-2009, 95 minutes a day was used with the answering service. This month, it's been 11 minutes a day. We have been able to reduce it. We are going to continue to reduce it.

And I will never apologize for providing—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable minister's time has expired for this question.

Mr. Wishart: Minister had followed up on her numbers, she'd also find that there was a big staff vacancy back when the usage was high back then. Data clearly shows that when staffing is allowed to slide in the after-hours program of ANCR that the use of emergency answering service climbs. The minister has had to act to replace three staff in this critical role.

Why is it that only after the public questioning that this minister acts when there's an obvious problem?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: This government has shown their commitment to the child-welfare system since 1999. We have tripled the funding. Guess what they did? Reduced it by 4.5 per cent. Today, we announced more support for foster parents. What did they do? They reduced and slashed the rates to foster parents.

We provide support to families. We provide support to the authorities and agencies. We're going to continue to do that. And I will never apologize for those investments.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Speaker, this government now has the highest percentage of child-children in care of any province in Canada.

We have 'repeatedly' seen this minister take action only when she is publicly forced to do so. Only after repeated questioning by opposition and media do we see any action, first on children in care of CFS in hotels and now on staff in critical areas.

When will this minister learn? When will she see a problem before it costs a child in care its future?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I will take this answer to explain what happened today.

Today, we were able to talk about our June 1st commitment of no hotel use in Winnipeg. We are making progress. We have 90 more beds available, 80 more staff. At that announcement we were surrounded by 200 people. We had elders, parents, children, community-based organizations coming together and supporting an initiative that's going to not only support families, provide prevention with the Families First program, provide mediation services, but also will provide the specialized treatment beds we need for our complex children.

We're going to continue to make those investments. As I said before, I would much rather see triple the funding than a reduction of \$4.5 million.

Emergency Child-Care Services Rural Hotel Accommodations

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, there can be no greater consideration that we have here today than the health and well-being of our children.

*(14:10)

I note that earlier on, the Minister of Family Services has announced that she will continue to allow children in rural Manitoba to be in hotels up until December 1st of this year.

I ask the Minister of Family Services: Why has she broken her promise to have no children in hotels in Manitoba after June the 1st of this year?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): The authorities, the agencies, we came

together with the department. We've developed a strategy to reduce the hotel usage and to eliminate it by June 1st in Winnipeg, and how did we do that?

We have a hotel-reduction team that's working every day to support this initiative. We've hired more staff, 80 more permanent staff. We've developed 90 more beds in less than a year. We're going to continue to add to those resources. We're going to improve emergency beds, specialized treatment beds, as well as recruit more foster parents.

But we're not stopping there. We're going to invest in prevention services so children can be at home with their families.

Mr. Gerrard: I have here a quote from the video of the presentation that the minister gave on April the 1st. It says, as of June 1st we will no longer use hotels.

Is the minister now saying that people in Manitoba, children in Manitoba are second-class citizens? Why is the minister saying today that she will break her promise and will allow children in rural Manitoba who are in CFS care to continue to be in hotels past June the 1st all the way to December the 1st?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As we started on this journey of reducing hotel usage and eliminating it by June 1st, what became apparent—[*interjection*] If they'd like to listen to the answer, I'd be more than willing to share it.

What we identified as we were working with our hotel-reduction team and what we heard from agencies and authorities is that there are not the same resources in the rural and the North as there is in Winnipeg. What they identified to us is sometimes, even though hotels are a last resort in the rural and the North, sometimes that's their only option. So what they asked us to do was extend the deadline in rural and North. We've agreed to do that.

But what we're doing is we're expanding the hotel-reduction team to work in the rural and North to address the issue, to build more resources, more beds, more child-care workers. We're going to continue to do that.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services can twist and turn all she wants, but it's quite clear that she's breaking her solemn promise, made on April of the 1st of this year, that all children in CFS care would no longer be in hotels.

I ask the minister: Was her April the 1st promise some sort of misguided April Fool's joke on rural children in this province?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The commitment that we made on April 1st, it remains. We want no children in hotels as of June 1st.

Authorities and agencies and the department have worked day and night to address this issue and we have seen marked improvement. There are no—have been no children in hotels since May 11th here in Winnipeg.

The agencies and the authorities have spoken to us loudly that they have concerns around a June 1st deadline in rural and North. They've asked that we extend it; we've agreed to that. But as we're moving forward, I've also heard from those authorities, the CEOs from those authorities, that they have no children in hotels.

We need to continue to work to build more resources so we can ensure that they—that families in the rural and the North have the services that they need, that the authorities can access them.

Conference Board Report Manitoba's Economy

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): We know there will be a lot of—we have a lot of challenges ahead, but to manage a government, one of the most important things—most important thing is also to see how is our economy doing and how we are creating jobs.

So I would say that I have some good news. I understand some of my friends from out of town, of Ontario and British Columbia, have been calling and congratulating us for doing a good job in the economy and creating more jobs.

Particularly, the new Minister of Finance is doing a good job, as I understand, that I would like to ask him to give the information to the House about the hard-working businesses and hard-working people of Manitoba that are contributing into our economy and creating—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Radisson's time on this question has elapsed.

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I want to thank the member for the question. I was looking forward to a Finance question today. We didn't get one from the members opposite, but that's fine.

I just wanted to remind the House and refer the House to the Conference Board of Canada's report that came out today, and they talk about Manitoba and the headline is: Bright days ahead for Manitoba's economy.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is expected to make solid gains this year and next, with the gains coming in all sectors. Real GDP growth is expected to be 2.8 per cent this year, again in 2016, where it will lead all provinces. I'll remind members retail sales are up in the province, which is an indicator that Manitobans have confidence in their lives. Last month was the highest percentage increase in the country.

I remind the members opposite that performance rankings, Manitoba's No. 1—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance's time on this question has elapsed.

Provincial Deficit Balanced Budget

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to oblige the Minister of Finance with a credit—with a question, and once again it's facts behind forecasts over there.

Mr. Speaker, this week Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries has been rolling out a new media campaign, and the centrepiece of this campaign is an advertisement in print media featuring a photo of a nice-looking young person and a straightforward message that reads, it's important to stick to a budget, and I table the information in the House now.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP deficit is \$422 million, up 20 per cent from last year.

My question for the Minister of Finance: Does he believe that the message of this new ad campaign doesn't apply to him and that it's not important to stick to a budget?

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a chance to continue on with my comments. I didn't have a chance to finish my comments on the member for Radisson (Mr. Jha).

As I said, the—we're going to lead the nation, either—both in 2015, 2016. As well, we'll be one of the strongest performances well into 2017.

I'll remind the member opposite, when he reads the—if he was to, you know, take the time and read the Conference Board report, he would see that

was some major gains are expected in all sectors of the economy. We're No. 1 in full-time employment; we're No. 1 in total employment; we're No. 1 when—in private employment.

The only ones who aren't happy that we're No. 1 are the members opposite.

Mr. Friesen: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's forecasts over facts over there.

But I would go on and tell the minister that the Liquor & Lotteries website has a new section entitled Playing Responsibly, and it says if you're concerned about someone's gambling, look for the following signs.

So does the NDP have the signs? Acting defensively when asked about gambling, check; hiding—hiding—the extent of the gambling activity, check; arguing increasingly about money, check; gambling with money meant for essentials, check; borrowing money to cover gambling losses and debts increasing due to gambling.

Will the Finance Minister admit that they are gambling and Manitobans are losing as a result?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister responsible for Liquor and Gaming Control): Mr. Speaker, as is very common with the opposition, they've missed the forest for the trees. This is an ad about gambling. This is an ad to deal with Manitobans who have there's maybe a serious gambling addiction. It's a very serious issue. It's an attempt to educate the public about gambling and the serious ramifications.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, the biggest gamble Manitobans could take, the biggest risk Manitobans could take, would be to go with the members opposite or to vote with the members opposite who have nothing but to lay off doctors, to lay off nurses and today to attack firefighters.

* (14:20)

Mr. Friesen: Well, Mr. Speaker, the website contains a section entitled Tips to Keep it a Game, and I hope the Finance Minister will give careful consideration. It says before you start playing, set a limit on how much you want to spend. It says keep track of your spending over time and it says stop when you run out of money.

Mr. Speaker, we pay \$850 million each year to service this ballooning debt. It's sucking money from front-line services.

Mr. Speaker, will the Finance Minister admit that his high-spend, high-tax, high-debt policies are risky and, worse, that as a result, hard-working Manitobans pay more and get less?

Mr. Chomiak: I have a friend who lost the house, the family house, because of a gambling addiction. He's living with his mother.

One of the reasons that 2 per cent of revenues from liquor and gaming, now under our government—and the members opposite voted against—2 per cent—gaming revenues go to addictions and those issues, Mr. Speaker, it's to recognize a very serious issue. Gambling addiction is serious, as serious as alcohol addiction and other forms of addiction.

This ad and this whole policy is aimed at helping people, Mr. Speaker, not making fun of people, not making a game of people. We're dealing with a very serious issue that costs people's lives.

You know, the members opposite use bad judgment every day—

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

Hydro Rate Increases Impact on Manitobans

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, 60,000 Manitobans use the food bank each and every day. We certainly see what this Manitoba government has done is 'foced'—forced another increase through Manitoba Hydro on the backs of those 60,000 people.

How's this government expect those people to pay the higher rate by—placed on this government?

Hon. James Allum (Acting Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Of course, what the member fails to state is that Manitobans pay among the lowest hydro rates in Canada and that, in addition to that, when you add hydro rates to car insurance rates and home heating, they have the lowest bundle of rates in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, our investments of hydro will continue to help to grow our economy. The members opposite want to turn the lights off on Manitobans. They want to pull the plug on Manitobans. They want to keep Manitobans in the dark. We're never going to let that happen.

We'll continue to invest in Manitoba, continue to create jobs, continue to work with First Nations—

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

Mr. Eichler: Every member on that side of the House went door to door and said it would not cost Manitobans 1 cent. What did they do? They reneged on that promise, went back, had the CEO of Manitoba Hydro come out and say all Manitobans will pay for that risk. And instead, this government reneged on that promise once again. They can't be trusted.

I ask the minister again: What is he going to say to those 60,000 people can barely make ends meet? What are they going to say to those people that can't pay the extra hydro rate?

They could've used the \$670,000 in bonuses paid out to cover off some of those costs.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Speaker, what we'll say is you're paying among the lowest hydro rates in Canada. It's that simple.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we invest in hydro, we ensure reliable, clean energy for Manitobans for generations to come. As I said earlier, the members opposite want to pull the plug on Manitoba Hydro, they want to keep Manitobans in the dark, and they want to leave all of Manitobans in the cold. We're not going to let that happen.

We're going to continue to invest in Manitoba Hydro, we're going to continue to employ First Nations folks, we're going to continue to enjoy that Manitobans have clean, reliable source of energy, and we're going to keep growing this economy for the benefit of all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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

Mary Melnychuk

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Environmental degradation is a serious risk to our planet and to humankind. Our day-to-day actions, when tallied together, have a tremendous impact on the health of our water, air and land. For those of us who are concerned with this reality, it may seem like a daunting task to make change on such a pressing issue.

However, there is one individual in Winnipeg who stands out as a shining example of how to be a

mentor and a model and advocate for a more sustainable way of living. Mary Melnychuk has been involved with the Green Action Centre and Environmental Speakers Bureau for the past 15 years and has been engaging with environmental issues her entire life.

Her work with the Green Action Centre has let Mary speak to over 100,000 students while visiting almost every school in Winnipeg. During those visits, she teaches students about recycling, water usage, litterless lunches and so many more important ways to help the environment in our everyday lives. Her work focuses on giving information to people that can lead directly to action. She provides simple, inexpensive and effective ways for all of us to live harmoniously with our environment.

Mr. Speaker, we are joined today by Ms. Janice Moore's class of grade 5 and 6 students from the St. George School. Ms. Melnychuk has been visiting Ms. Moore's classes for the past four years. I'm sure these students can attest to how much Ms. Melnychuk has shaped the way they see the world.

Mary's story is proof that each of us is capable of effecting great change if we dedicate ourselves to the task. As Mary likes to say, when everybody does something, everything gets better.

I'm sure all members will join me in commending Ms. Mary Melnychuk for her tremendous life's work.

Thank you.

Paul Labelle

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, there are many Manitobans who go above and beyond to help their fellow citizens. Today I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mr. Paul Labelle of Brandon, Manitoba, with his quick thinking and actions that have saved the life of Norma Simpson, a constituent of mine.

On the 28th of October 2013, Norma Simpson's vehicle came in contact with another on Highway 1. As a result, flipped onto its shoulder of the highway, landing on its roof. Ms. Simpson left—was left suspended from her seatbelt. Mr. Labelle came across the scene and stopped to assist Ms. Simpson who was being choked by the seatbelt across her neck. Seeing that—her suspended in the seatbelt, Mr. Labelle quickly ran to the truck to get his tools to help her out of the vehicle.

Mr. Labelle broke the rear passenger-side window to gain access to the vehicle, allowing him to cut her seatbelt and released her from the vehicle. While waiting for the ambulance to arrive, Mr. Labelle remained on the scene with Ms. Simpson, only leaving once she—she was safely inside the ambulance.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Mr. Labelle whose concern, compassion and quick thinking saved the life of Ms. Simpson. We are here—we're so proud to have Mr. Labelle here today as a true Manitoba hero, and Ms. Simpson here today too.

Manitoba Chinese Tribune Family Centre

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): I am very pleased to welcome members of the Chinese community who are joining us in the gallery today. I would like to congratulate them on opening the Manitoba Chinese Tribune family centre at Epiphany Lutheran Church in January of this year.

The family centre was established as a response to the strong desire of many local residents to have a gathering place for members of the Chinese community. As Fort Richmond has one of the fastest growing Chinese populations in our province, situating the family centre here is proving to be ideal.

On a recent visit to the family centre, I was very impressed to see the variety of opportunities that are available for residents who attend. Activities include free workshops in everything from finance to culture, adult fitness dance classes, children's education classes and English conversational classes. The centre also offers social supports and encouragement to assist the Chinese community to integrate and participate in the broader community while celebrating their own rich contributions to our province.

During my visit to the family centre, I was honoured to be invited to participate in the adult dance class. There is a well-known Chinese saying that one minute on the stage takes 10 years of practice. I quickly learned how true that was.

Hong, the adult and fitness dance instructor, says the Manitoba Chinese Tribune family centre is like a family to us; even though we are far away from our home country, we dance the same dance.

I'd like to thank the many volunteers who have been involved in making the Manitoba Chinese Tribune centre a reality. They should be commended for their commitment and dedication, and I look

forward to watching as this initiative continues to grow.

Xie xie [thank you].

* (14:30)

Pembina Trails Human Rights Project

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pembina Trails School Division on an amazing human rights project that they have undertaken. An entire school division took over Investors Group Field for two days in May. Students attending Pembina Trail School Division turned a football field into a massive mosaic highlighting human rights.

Each of the 13,000 students created a panel depicting what human rights means to them, then one by one all 33 Pembina Trails schools gathered on the green turf and placed their art side by side in the shape of the international logo for human rights. Thousands of individual panels created a giant art installation unlike anything you have ever seen. Although every tile was unique, the cause was all the same.

Each day their educators worked towards creating a true sense of community and belonging in their schools. They understand that they must extend these lessons beyond the classroom. The mission of the Pembina Trails human rights project was to create a catalyst for change. Simply put, they aim to support a generation of students who are already thinking about social justice, human rights and social action.

Every child in Canada and around the world has rights. UNICEF Canada's rights respecting schools used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to make sure everyone feels included and respected. All rights are interconnected and cannot be taken away from the child. This convention is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. This innovative two-day art installation born from this convention was an amazing and powerful moment, not to mention a first for any school division in Canada.

Pembina Trails School Division is always at the forefront when it comes to innovation. I congratulate them for their vision as well as their efforts to create a generation of socially conscious youth.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Portage-Assiniboia, pardon me.

Hedges Hawkes—Junior Provincial Champions

Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There's some amazing young athletes in my constituency this year who were the team to beat.

Hedges Middle School's Junior Varsity Hawks dominated the courts in both volleyball and basketball winning their tier 1 provincial champions. This is the first time the Hawks have won the boys' category in either sport for over 15 years.

From the start of the season every one of these boys worked hard to come together as a team, showing that they could compete on any court. But there were three boys in particular that were a huge part of the team success: Colby, Dillon and Theo spent all their time building their volleyball and basketball skills with their teammates.

I want to give special congratulations to these three athletes. Colby's won the leagues' MVP, receiving the Neil Krebs Award in volleyball.

Dillon demonstrated his sportsmanship and his commitment to the team when he was aggressively knocked down by an opposing player. This determined young man, even with a swollen knee, insisted that he finish the game and managed to get a steal followed by two rebounds at a pivotal point in the game.

Theo, a grade 8 basketball star, showcased his skills by scoring 38 out of the Hawks' 51 points in the championship game against George Waters Middle School.

All of these three amazing athletes are looking forward to keeping their building—and building their skills in high school sports next year.

Behind any great team is the hard work and commitment of their coaches. To Grant Betz, the coach of the volleyball team, and Darcey McCallum, the coach of the basketball team, this is your victory, thank you for your time and dedication.

Congratulations to the Hedges Hawks, their coaches for building an incredible reputation and building for the future.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes members' statements. Now, time for grievances. Are there any grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY*(Continued)***GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to call the following bill for third reading, Bill 69. Following that, we would like to call the following bills for debate at second reading and second reading: debate at second reading Bill 9; second reading, Bill 16 followed by debate at second reading of Bill 6, Bill 2, Bill 5 and Bill 7; followed by second reading of Bill 12 and Bill 14; and finally, if there's still time, we'd like to call for report stage and third reading of Bill 70.

Mr. Speaker: We're going to be calling bills in the following order for information of members of the House: starting first with concurrence and third readings, we'll be calling Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act; and then that will be followed by debate on second readings of Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act; followed by second readings of Bill 16, The Terry Fox Legacy Act; and that'll be following—following that will be the debate on second readings of Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act; Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3); Bill 5, The Police Services Amendment Act (First Nation Safety Officers); Bill 7, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Protecting Child Care Space in Schools).

And then following that we'll be dealing with second readings of Bill 12, The Water Protection Amendment Act (Aquatic Invasive Species); followed by Bill 14, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Home Improvement Contracts); followed by Bill 70, in report stage amendments, The Real Estate Services Act.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS**Bill 69—The Technical Safety Act**

Mr. Speaker: So we'll be calling Bill 69 now, under concurrence and third readings, The Technical Safety Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour, that Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act;

Loi sur la sécurité technique, 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. Erna Braun (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm pleased to rise for third reading of Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act.

By consolidating a number of existing statutes, this legislation will improve consistency in the way several types of equipment such as boilers, gas equipment and elevators are overseen for public safety. We believe that this legislation will be a benefit to both industry and the public by making legislation easier to understand, more accountable and more flexible, and by providing strengthened enforcement provisions.

I would like to thank all of our stakeholders who participated in the consultations on this bill including a special thanks to those who served on the technical safety legislation review committee and those who came out to committee to speak in favour of the legislation. There is considerable work to be done in developing new regulations under this legislation and we very much look forward to continuing to work with industry as the development of these regulations moves ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I'm pleased to be here today to put some words on the record in regards to Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act.

Manitobans have the right to feel safe in their workplace or wherever they may be, in an elevator, in an apartment block, shopping in their favourite mall, knowing that there are safety codes that regulate the construction, the maintenance and just everyday condition of these areas. That is important to everyone.

Safety in the workplace is extremely important not only because it protects employees, it also benefits employers. When workers feel safe and secure in their workplace, productivity usually increases. A focus on safety and security in the workplace also promotes healthy and responsible behaviour, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries.

Bill 69 consolidates Manitoba's current technical safety laws into one act. This bill modernizes how equipment such as elevators, boilers, refrigeration

systems, amusement rides, fuel systems and electrical devices, and work performed on that equipment, is regulated. At present, there are six equipment-specific statutes. This bill replaces them with one umbrella act, Mr. Speaker. Each equipment-specific statute will be repealed and that type of equipment will be regulated under this act in an equipment-specific regulation. This act imposes requirements on owners, operators, manufacturers, vendors, designers, for the technical safety of equipment and work performed on it.

All of the acts and regulations related to the technical safety are administered and enforced by the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Having all the acts combined into one should make it easier for the Office of the Fire Commissioner's staff to inspect and approve permits. The inspectors will be working with the same definitions, as it is now one act. Under the old acts, there were examples of the same item having different definitions.

* (14:40)

Mr. Speaker, this act, like all other acts that have been upgraded now has an administrative penalty. This will make all the six separate acts consistent when it comes to penalties for offences.

This NDP government has done well when it comes to raising fines. The intent of raising fines is to make a safer workplace. We wait to see how—what the results are for this because it's not necessarily that fines always make the difference in a workplace.

During my bill briefing it was noted that with the combining of these acts one of the goals was to reduce red tape. Mr. Speaker, this is something that on this side of the House we welcome. We have brought private members' bills to reduce red tape, but, unfortunately, we received no support from this NDP government; I hope that this legislation will be successful in reducing red tape because this NDP government does not have a very good track record when it comes to reducing red tape.

We cannot be complacent when it comes to safety, fairness and protection in the workplace. Unfortunately, it is all Manitobans who have had to pay the price. In 2012, 10 workers died under the—died—to workplace injuries and another 29 deaths were attributed to workplace-related illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months, I have met with several organizations and individuals in regards to this bill. Everyone agreed that consolidating Manitoba's current technical safety

laws into one coherent act was necessary. There was concern about it. As we know, the regulations still need to be written, and, like everything else, the devil is always in the details. We don't know what will be written for regulations. Will this NDP government solicit the experts from these organizations to help write these regulations, or not? This NDP government does not have a good track record for consulting experts. This is the concern of the—a lot of the people I talked to: they said how can we be supportive of a bill when we don't know what the final product will look like.

Mr. Speaker, we all know what this NDP government is like when it comes to keeping their word. After the election—or during the election of 2011 they all went door to door and promised no tax increases. Shortly thereafter they came up with some of the highest tax increases Manitoba has seen in decades, which was not very forthcoming to Manitobans. No, Manitobans did not care for this at all.

Mr. Speaker, during the next budget, they went and they raised the provincial tax from 7 per cent to 8 per cent, again, breaking their word. What kind of government would do this two budgets in a row, and not keep their word? I mean, they all went, including the Premier (Mr. Selinger), during the election of 2011 they went and they said no tax increases, door to door, read my lips, no tax increases. That is just not very good. I can see why people cannot trust this government.

Then, to add things to it, they took away the right to vote on important tax increases like the PST; a referendum should have been used to do that. So why would people trust this NDP government?

Another one, hydro. During the election of 2011 the Premier said Bipole III will not cost Manitobans one red cent, and then shortly, not that long ago, the CEO of Hydro said no, Manitobans are going to pay the whole shot for Bipole III. Again, how can this government be trusted? Their word does not mean anything; the hydro, the taxes, why do Manitobans trust them? Like, you can see why, and I don't why the NDP still consider that Manitobans should trust them.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe the changes to The Technical Safety Act are necessary. I just hope that the regulations that are written for this act are going to be in the spirit of the bill and actually take into consideration everybody, not just one side. We've seen too many laws and bills and regulations written

that are all one-sided. This cannot continue. This government needs to look at all people in Manitoba when they are writing legislation.

This bill is necessary for this province; yes, I agree. But I just hope that they do a good job of writing the regulations. Otherwise, there will be a lot more unhappy Manitobans.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly on Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act.

This is an act which brings together six statutes to replace them with an umbrella act which deals with elevators, electrical equipment, boilers, pressure vessels, gas equipment and amusement rides all at the same time.

The goal of this bill is a reasonable one, bringing together a number of services under one bill. And it is supported, I note, at committee stage by the Mechanical Contractors Association of Manitoba. The support provided by the Canadian Propane Association at committee was tentative, and Mr. Scott McFadyen, their representative, said that he was asking for a level playing field with respect to natural gas utilities compared to Manitoba Hydro.

The current bill clearly doesn't provide that level field, as sections 4(2) and 4(3) provide an exemption for Manitoba Hydro under this act. And, while the government may have good reasons for exempting Manitoba Hydro, the government has not presented these reasons for not providing a level playing field and, clearly, this—the government should have done if they were on the ball. Sadly, they aren't.

I want it to be noted that I am in support of Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act. At the same time, I note that the bill has taken a rather long and tortuous time to get to third reading. It was introduced by the government at first reading on May the 12th of last year. It completed second reading on June the 9th of last year. It went to committee on November 21st, and it is now May the 28th, more than a year after it was first introduced before this Assembly for third reading today. Clearly, the bill has never been a priority bill for the NDP; otherwise, they would have managed the legislative process much more efficiently and effectively than they have done. They could have, for example, recalled the Legislature under our rules in September of 2014, in October of 2014, or even in

early November of last year in order to have time for debate and to have the bill passed last year.

However, that was not what the NDP chose to do. They chose to call the Legislature on November 20th last year, a date which was so late that there was only time for the Throne Speech and the Throne Speech debate, and there wasn't time to deal with and to have a third reading on Bill 69. This alone shows how incompetent the NDP are in properly managing the legislative process in order to get bills passed in a reasonable length of time. The 'registrature', of course, could have been called in January or February or in early March to allow the bill to come forward more quickly. But the NDP chose to delay the start of the legislative session until late April, again, showing a poor ability to manage the time of legislators and to get bills passed within a reasonable period of time.

Mr. Speaker, it is characteristic of today's NDP that they are very poor managers, whether of time in the Legislature or the budget or the affairs of the province. In recent days, indeed, I have spoken about poor management in child and family services, poor management from an economic perspective, poor management from a health-care perspective and poor management in the environmental review or lack of it through the Clean Environment Commission of the Energy East Pipeline. When a government doesn't manage environmental reviews well, this puts us all at risk, and that includes putting the economy at risk as well as people at risk. That is what today's NDP are doing to Manitobans: putting people at risk.

* (14:50)

Now, with the current bill, there are still a number of questions for which we should have had answers. Presumably, the bill was provided an organization which would bring together these six different major functions and that, presumably, one might expect that there would be some savings in costs or bureaucracy and perhaps some improvements in safety. But we have no indication of whether the costs will actually be lower or higher or the same. We just don't know from the information that the NDP have provided. And there are concerns that in bringing the activities together like this that the NDP will, in fact, be creating more bureaucracy and more costs. This is a real concern. It will create a new position, new director, I believe, an advisory council and various other things. And these all may be well needed, but the fact of the matter is that how will the numbers compare to before, to

after? How will the costs compare before and after and, you know, people who are involved in inspecting boilers, will they now be asked to inspect amusement rides? And what is going to happen? Are people going to be cross-trained? Are you going to have people who are a speciality in understanding boilers continue to inspect boilers while people who specialize in understanding amusement rides are the ones who are going to inspect those. It may be that what we will do is bring together six groups which had functioned pretty well independently, and now they will just be one larger group with all the individuals within the groups still doing their same function.

So it would've been helpful if the NDP had at least provided us a cost-benefit analysis, an analysis of whether there would be more or fewer people employed and analysis of the safety situation because, clearly, we're going to have concerns about people who've been used to inspecting roller coasters starting to inspect boilers of which they may not have experience or be trained on. And, hopefully, that's not going to be the case, or if it is the case, there's going to be very thorough and proper training. And, certainly, what is paramount here is that we have a safe society, a safe system and that—whether we're dealing with elevators or roller coaster rides or boilers—that the inspection be done in a very careful manner and that the safety of all Manitobans, in particular, the safety of our children who will be riding on roller coasters in particular and—is going to be met.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are my few comments on this bill. I think it is a important message to the NDP as we bring this forward to third reading that they need to get their act together and start managing things better, because we shouldn't be having delays like this in legislation which was presented more than a year ago now just coming to third reading today.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to say a few words on this bill.

I thank my friend from River Heights for his comments. I find myself in agreement with many of his comments regarding how this bill has proceeded through the Legislature.

Our critic, our very capable critic from La Verendrye, has put the comments on the record regarding the technical nature of this bill, and I thank him for both his diligence on the research on it, on a difficult bill, on a thick bill. I think if you look at this

legislation, it probably has more heft in terms of volume than all the legislation this government has introduced in this particular session.

But I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I have some concerns about how this bill has proceeded through the Legislature. It was introduced now, I think, more than a year ago. I last spoke to this bill on June 9th of last year, so we're almost at the anniversary of the time when I last had the opportunity to speak on this bill, and I would never have imagined on June 9th of last year that it would be another year until this government would get around to calling the bill. Of course, many Manitobans wouldn't have foreseen the political disaster that befell the NDP over the intervening months, but still one would be very concerned that this bill was such a small priority, such a lack of a priority for the government that it would take a year for them to call it again.

And let's remember now that this is really in the purview of the government. The government has the decision-making power in terms of when the Legislature sits. So, when it begins sitting again, the government has the purview to determine when bills are called for debate. And so, ultimately, this is a government who, on their own, decided to not recall the Legislature from the time this bill was introduced last year until November for two weeks just in time—just enough time for a Throne Speech but not to have bill debate. In fact, if I did the calculations, my guess is that there were probably nine months in between when this bill was last debated and now—maybe 10 months that went by without this government giving this bill the opportunity to see the light of day.

Now, this isn't an opposition bill. This isn't a private member's bill. This is a bill that is sponsored by the government. This is a bill that presumably the government supports. We certainly know, in talking to those in industry, they have some concerns but they also have some support for the bill, and to have held this bill up for 10 months, I think, is not only remarkable in a legislative way, but also very concerning from the interests of Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

And, as has already been noted by others—*[interjection]*—and I hear my colleague mentioning it again, this is a government that was doing other things and not to the service of Manitobans. They were busy fighting amongst themselves. They were busy trying to determine who was going to be the king of the castle. They spent months deciding who

was going to have the—be the winner of the family feud, and, of course, they were distracted during that entire time. They weren't doing what Manitobans elected them to do, regardless of whether I agree with their agenda and whether I agree with the fact, you know, that they are currently the government, that is what they were elected to do, just like we were elected to do a job in opposition.

And I was disappointed as month after month went by and I looked for the House to be recalled, and it wasn't recalled.

And I know there were calls by our leader, there were calls by members of our caucus to recall the Legislature in January, in February, in March and finally we heard, then, the last day of April the Legislature was going to be recalled. I think it's the latest recall of the Legislature for the spring session that I can recall, maybe one of the latest in Manitoba history, Mr. Speaker.

And so now we're in this position where bills have been delayed for so long and, of course, again, I said this in the morning and I don't like to make predictions because I'm not in the prediction business, but I do know that—or I do suspect that over the next three or four months we're going to hear members of the government saying, well, you know, why doesn't this bill get passed. Why doesn't this bill get passed? Why don't you quickly rush this bill through? And I've always said, and I continue to say, and I'll continue to say during my time here, Mr. Speaker, that bills need to be debated and bill—bills need to be considered.

So this particular bill has fallen victim of the NDP infighting and so it's been hung up for a year, and finally it's going to pass today. And I'm glad to say that it's going to pass today.

But we know that there are other bills that were introduced in November and December which have yet to be debated, which, for the first time today are being called. And even if Manitobans, you know, would legitimately expect us to spend, you know, a couple of days on each bill to be debated, with 35 bills, that's, you know, it's—that's 70 legislative days. And let's not forget that bills are here for eternity. They will outlast probably everybody in this House, and I don't think it's unreasonable to spend a couple of days to debate a piece of legislation that is going to outlive each one of us in the Legislature and to ensure that people have an opportunity to hear about the bills and have—make presentations. And even if one spent a couple of days on each bill, you

know, we're talking about September until we just get through the Legislative agenda.

Now, that doesn't mean there's not other things. There's Opposition Day motions, and I'm glad to see there's one on the Order Paper and there'll be more yet coming on the Order Paper. And there's other things that happen in the context of this Legislature, Mr. Speaker, so, you know, I have concerns. I have concerns about how this government has operated.

* (15:00)

And I know, in the days ahead, the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) will be going out there and saying, oh, rush everything through—just close your eyes and rush everything through. I wonder where that was a few months ago when people were asking for this Legislature to sit again so that this debate and discussion could happen. We know where the NDP were; we know that they were off fighting amongst themselves. But that's not our fault and that's not our responsibility. Our responsibility is to make sure that legislation gets considered, and it gets considered well and it gets considered respectfully. And we will fulfill our responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

With those words, our party is willing to see this bill passed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on this bill? House is ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 69, The Technical Safety Act.

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 9—The Chartered Professional Accountants Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

The honourable member—any further debate?

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): It's my pleasure to rise in the House today and to put some comments on the record with respect to Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation for the province of Manitoba, as I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar) and I both agree.

We know that in the province of Manitoba right now there are 3,000 chartered accountants, there are 2,300 certified general accountants and there are 1,700 certified management accountants practising. And I say that, but we understand that the movement within the industry across Canada and, indeed, the intent here in the province of Manitoba is to take these designations and then come together.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, what's clear is that, of course, a lot of this work has been accomplished, a lot of this work is under way and what is needed to make this happen officially in the province of Manitoba is for this—for a bill to come forward; a bill that has been brought by this government; a bill that was brought in the fall session of the Legislature, an abbreviated session that was in late November. And if memory serves, I believe that the Minister of Finance brought this bill about halfway through the fall session.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we have spoken to people within the industry, people at CPA Manitoba, bookkeepers, other stakeholders, those providing, you know, all kinds of public accounting services and all kinds of other accounting services, we have gotten a chance to hear clearly from the industry, to hear clearly from the business community and all kinds of groups with respect to this bill, the need for this bill.

But, I would like to preface my remarks by saying that in—like in so many other categories, Manitoba is not exactly leading the charge when it comes to getting through the Legislature legislation that would enable the merger of the organizations of CMA, CA and CGA. As a matter of fact, the province is trailing; that in other provinces, there's a lot going on.

Let me just remark that in BC, the CPA legislation received royal assent on March 25th, so just in March of this year, with a coming-into-force date yet to be set by proclamation.

In Alberta—this is interesting, because the CPA legislation in Alberta received royal assent in

December 14th, with a coming-into-force date yet to be set by proclamation, but I would remind the House that the government of Alberta introduced the CPA legislation on November the 25th, 2014. They introduced in that province the same legislation five days before the government of Manitoba introduced this legislation, and yet in Alberta right now this legislation has received royal assent and it is coming into force. They're—they've done the work, they've done the committee, they've had a debate in the Legislature. They've made it happen.

In Saskatchewan—Saskatchewan passed the necessary CPA legislation on May the 14th of last year with a coming-into-force date yet to be set by proclamation.

In Quebec, CPA legislation received royal assent in 2012 and came into force on that day.

In New Brunswick, CPA law received royal assent on May the 21st, 2014, and came into force on September the 1st of that year.

In Nova Scotia the CPA legislation received royal assent on May the 11th of this year, which is just a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, with a coming-into-force date yet to be set.

In PEI the CPA law received royal assent in November of last year, 2014, and came into force just now in April of 2015, and in Newfoundland and Labrador the CPA law received royal assent in December of last year and came into force on January the 9th.

As I mentioned, even if you compare Manitoba's situation to Alberta, Alberta introduced their legislation at a later date, and yet their legislation has already proceeded to the point where it's receiving royal assent.

Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba under this Finance Minister the legislation was introduced on December the 1st, and it like so many other important pieces of government business, was delayed.

Why was this bill delayed? Why was the bill delayed? The bill was delayed because this government had every opportunity to make a priority of this bill, and they did not. I can recall in 2014 hearing from CPA Manitoba, hearing from the industry, hearing from professionals the whole time, and what they were saying a year ago is they said we are concerned that we are falling behind other provinces when it comes to the focus being put on this important piece of legislation.

And I will never forget, Mr. Speaker, it was exactly this—late this last fall, on one particular day of note in this Legislature—and, you know, every day's important in this Legislature—but I had a meeting lined up, myself and a few colleagues, with some important stakeholders with an immediate interest in Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act. Well, it just so happened that that was the same day that the media had taken to camp outside of the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) office, because that was the day after some senior ministers in the Premier's Cabinet had a press conference and announced that they were no longer supporting the Premier, that the Premier had to go, that they were taking this action that they would no longer, you know, take it lying down and that they were going to stand up and be counted and they were going to make it very clear to all Manitobans that the Premier did not have their support anymore.

Mr. Speaker, this was the context in which I met with major stakeholders on the CPA bill on that, I believe, must have been November day of 2014. And I took time to explain, as that group came in to my office and we met and we discussed the importance of the bill, we took that bill and went through the clauses. And I heard their concerns and I relayed to them the concerns expressed by other stakeholders. But I made the point of indicating to this group: this is the context. They were intent on—in a positive way—advocating with this Finance Minister to make a priority of their bill. And instead of doing that at the very time—that was the context. They walked down that hall, past the main stair, and there on the second floor were camped out multiple members of this media in Manitoba waiting for the Premier to emerge and face his detractors and face his accusers.

That was the context and, Mr. Speaker, that juxtaposition is certainly not lost on me, that at the very same time the industry was calling on this minister to focus, to double down, to pull up his socks and to get that bill made a priority at the same time this government was fraying at the edges. That discipline was coming apart, Cabinet solidarity was falling apart, and, indeed, as my colleague, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), has described just earlier in debate with respect to another bill, we know what the months ensuing contained. They contained a focus of this government. A focus on what matters most to Manitobans, I think not. It was a focus on what mattered most to the Premier of this province, to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), to the member for Seine River

(Ms. Oswald) and, indeed, what we saw were those colleagues surrounding various challengers. We saw a breakdown of discipline. We saw staffers leaving the enterprise. We saw new staffers coming on, ones seconded from other areas who's time served in the Legislature suspiciously coincided exactly with the dates of a NDP leadership campaign.

* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker, we called for this House to be in session in January, and the House did not resume sitting. We called for this—to go back into session in February. The House did not resume session. In March, the House did not resume session. And in April, on the last day, this government finally came back into session, perhaps the latest recall date in the history of the Manitoba Legislature.

And, while I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, as an opposition MLA, it is business every day over here, and I know it is for my colleagues as well. We know what was not being done in the meantime. The work that should have been done in preparation on this bill was not being done. The work that was going into—the work that should have been performed on other bills brought before the Legislature was not being performed, and this is the context now in which we find ourselves, where we are trailing, not leading.

So, with respect to this bill, let me continue to say, when it comes to the content of this bill, we know where the industry stands.

I know that the CEO for chartered accountants of Manitoba had said that with respect to this bill, it would be a historic day for the accounting profession in Manitoba. I know that chartered accountants of Manitoba expressed excitement for the next chapter. They said they would continue to work together to build the CPA designation in the province. I know that Grant Christensen, the CEO for the CGA association of Manitoba, had said that they look forward to working together as one with the new partners to create a truly exceptional organization, and I know that Ron Stoesz, the CEO for CMA Manitoba, had said that he was delighted and they were delighted as an organization with the development, with the introduction of the bill. He said they have a lot of work to do, but they had a meeting, and they were optimistic that the legislation would be passed in 2014. Well, I think that the CEO of CMA Manitoba has since, of course, had to adjust his thinking on the timeline with respect to this bill,

but, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that we know where the industry stands, and they have done their work.

Let me actually include in my remarks today the fact that we know that a lot of ancillary work, a lot of additional work has had to be done in order to bring coherence to various aspects of each of those associations' articles. And so, that work in their backyard has been performed. At this point in time, I believe that work is basically ready to proceed and has been for some time. Of course, we know where the obstacle lies, and it lies with this government and a failure to recall this House in such a time where this bill could have been given consideration much, much sooner. And, indeed, this is a point I have made with the industry and with others who have contacted me with respect to this. They would contact me and ask me in my role as Finance critic what they could do. And, really, I was clear with them each time: right now, their call, their communication, their correspondence was best directed to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar). And I said, very clearly, what they should do is be asking the Minister of Finance where is this thing at.

And so, Mr. Speaker, so, it's indeed our pleasure today to have the opportunity to put some comments on the record. I would add, as a matter of fact, that even in 2014, in April, the government was already communicating at that point in time with industry people and with stakeholders that the bill might be deferred to fall session due to time restraints. And that was in 2014, April. So in no way can this minister say that his focus has been on bringing forward the legislation that would enable this new designation.

I would add that there have been other obstacles along the way. Now, I know that at one point in time government was kind of arguing out of both sides of their mouths and saying, yes, yes, proceeding with haste is the most important thing, and then they kind of put the brakes on and went into a comprehensive public consultation. Now don't get me wrong; public consultation is very important, and it was—and the public consultation part is one that the government would do well to observe in other situations. But at the same time let me be clear. When the public consultation initiative ended, then, at that point in time, the process still could not proceed because the Finance Minister and his department indicated that the consultation process was not sufficient, it was not enough. And they wanted to invite additional submissions from third parties and private citizens.

And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that part confused me; that part was interesting to me because I would have thought that a comprehensive consultative process would have already drawn in representations from all those third parties and private citizens.

So I don't know if the problem was the mechanism with which they solicited for input or if the problem was that the minister didn't get the opinion that he wanted expressed. I don't know where all those pieces in the puzzle fit in. What I do know, that something that was supposed to be expedited became protracted, and so—much like my comments this afternoon in some respects.

But let me say this as I close, that—just so much important stuff that I need to put on the record with respect to this bill. So I will continue to strive towards brevity and I will not make the minister wait much longer for the conclusion of my remarks.

But I want to say this, that with respect to the bill we know that I cannot put on the record that we think that all groups have unanimity with the idea of the articles of the legislation. We know that there has been a difference of opinion on various parts of this legislation. We know, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, that there are sections of this bill pertaining to, you know, some of the technical things in public accounting that take place. And we know that the government has proposed legislation that would permit compilations to be done by various individuals, not just with the CPA designation. So we know that there are concerns being expressed. We know the opinion of CPA on those matters and we know the opinions of bookkeepers and others who provide those services, and it's important, as it is with any piece of legislation that comes forward, that all parties are heard and that all positions are considered.

So I think that what I could say is after a careful reading of the bill and after careful consultation with individuals and groups, we look forward to the committee hearings that will ensue because we want to know what others are saying about these various levels of audits under public accounting. We want to know what groups believe. We want to know the reasons more fully that CPA is saying those services should be restricted. And we also understand that there are many even at this time who provide services under compilation who would be affected by change.

So, as an opposition party, I know that we are looking forward to committee and, of course, it's up

to this minister and the House leader and the NDP party to agree on when committee could take place. So, once again, even as—up to this point, the ball truly has been in the minister's court. Now, again, after today the ball will be in the minister's court.

And so we welcome the committee's hearings at an early opportunity so that Manitobans, professional groups, stakeholder groups will be able to have a say on this bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, thank you for my opportunity this afternoon to put these comments on the record.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just few brief words on this bill.

I salute the members of the certified public accountants association of Manitoba, the certified general accountants of Manitoba, the Society of Management Accountants of Manitoba and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba for coming together and deciding to work as a single body, which will carry the chartered professional's accountant designation. I'm looking forward to hearing from the presenters that come when we get to committee meeting, and I think this is a significant and important step forward.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 9?

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is second reading of Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act.

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill 16—The Terry Fox Legacy Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 16, The Terry Fox Legacy Act.

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Health): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar), that Bill 16, The Terry Fox Legacy Act; Loi commémorative de Terry Fox, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

* (15:20)

Ms. Blady: It is definitely an honour and a privilege to bring this piece of legislation into the House and to put a few words on the record today.

Not a day goes by in my life where I do not think about the legacy of Terry Fox and how Terry Fox touched my life, the legacy that he left when I found out I had a cancer diagnosis. But Terry, like so many others, touched my life at an early age when I learned about him because Terry is one of Manitoba's finest sons. I stand before you as a cancer survivor. As many know in this Chamber, I have pink in my hair in memory of a special woman, Danette, who lost her battle with cancer and left behind two beautiful young daughters that I have the honour and privilege of having as part of my life. And for those of us that have faced a cancer diagnosis, we know that it's not an individual that gets the diagnosis, it's a family. So, when we think of a young gentleman named Terrance Stanley Fox, who was born on July 28th of 1958, I don't think anyone in that family knew what legacy lay before them.

At 18 years old, Terry discovered that he had a malignant tumour on his right leg. It was osteogenic sarcoma, which is a form of bone cancer, and he had his right leg amputated six inches above the knee in 1977. As a young man, he went through something that I—again, it's his teenage years; he's supposed to be out having fun. Terry was a young, wonderful and active young man, and what's so interesting is not only did he face this challenge, but he faced it with an optimism and a tenacity that had marked his entire short life.

Family tell stories of his upbringing, and I've had the pleasure in recent past to come to know some of the members of his family. I have his wonderful Uncle William who lives in my neighbourhood. I also go into my constituency office every day and I'm able to see a portrait of Terry painted by neighbourhood artist and friend, Charlie Johnston, and it's a picture of Terry running in his Marathon of Hope.

What Terry gave to Canadians was his tenacity, his determination and his hope. He was a young man that, despite the fact we know of him running a marathon, actually really wasn't all that interested in running. His early passion, strangely enough, was basketball, and it was he and his friend Doug that were crazy for basketball in grade 8 and wanted to try out for the team. And the funny part is both of them were only around five feet tall; they were not,

you know, as tall as the regular guys out there. But he was out there every day. He got up early. He actually defied his mother's orders to—so he could run to school and practise before school. And what was interesting was by grade 9 he actually made the top 12 and made it to the team. His coach and his family all noted that it was his tenacity. And what was interesting was that his friend Doug actually, you know, said to him, why don't you go for long-distance running? He had really no interest in running, but he stuck it out with basketball. And he and his Doug—friend Doug got through so much together, but it was always Terry's tenacity that Doug admired. It was—the family admired his tenacity.

So, when he faced a cancer diagnosis, interestingly enough, it was while he was in hospital that he was so overcome by the suffering of other cancer patients, many of them even younger than him, that he actually decided to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. And he wrote the Canadian Cancer Society back in October of '79, and I'd like to put the quote that he made in one of the lines from the letter. He says: I'm not a dreamer, and I'm not saying this will initiate any kind of definitive answer or cure to cancer, but I believe in miracles. I have to.

No truer words have ever been spoken by any of us facing a cancer diagnosis. Sometimes the only thing that gets you through any given day, any given moment, is hope. So one of the most important things that Terry left for us was a legacy of hope. And it is with this piece of legislation that I hope that we can continue as Manitobans to honour Terry Fox because of what he gave. His run, which was stopped short by the progress of his cancer, is something; it's a legacy we must continue to fulfill. The Terry Fox Foundation, the Terry Fox institute do so much, and those are family-based organizations. His brother, Darrell, his parents are so much involved with this. And to do something on the 35th anniversary of Terry's Marathon of Hope, the weekend that falls right after his birthday, a young man who died one month before his 23rd birthday, the opportunity to memorialize him, to honour his legacy so that every year we remember the journey of a tenacious, fighting young man who, in his own quest for hope and survival, left us all with a legacy to maintain. And, again, as a cancer patient and survivor, I want to do anything and everything that I can to honour his memory, and I want to let him know that people haven't given up the fight against cancer.

And that is why I am so proud of projects that we have: our In Sixty Cancer Patient Journey—sorry I'm a little verklempt here. Again, it aims to move patients from suspicion of cancer to treatment in 60 days or less, because every day matters. Not just in terms of the progress of the cancer, but what it means psychologically to patients. And I know that so much of what he did to get the conversation started about the importance of research, the importance of diagnosis, again, that's part of the legacy that we have built from, whether it's In Sixty, whether it's offering 100 per cent of costs for cancer treatment and support drugs with no deductibles for patients at home and hospital, these are things that we are doing here in Manitoba to keep honouring his legacy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the unanimous passage of this bill, and I really do hope that others that choose to speak to this, recognize it's not only Terry's legacy, but, again, in hopes that we can pass it before his birthday in July.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It's always a pleasure to get up and speak to legislation in front of the Manitoba Legislature, and this bill is a very important bill, recognizes a young individual who took a lot upon himself to raise awareness and to raise funds for a very serious illness that affects everyone. The thing with cancer is cancer knows no gender, knows no socio-economic status, knows no ethnicity; it knows nothing. Cancer is actually a very blind disease in effect, because it does impact everyone.

And we have seen a lot of cases where we've had a lot of success with cancer in various forms. The survival rates for a lot of cancers has improved, and it is through the unbelievable work and dedication of those individuals who put their heart and souls into raising awareness of the various cancers and for raising money, and Terry Fox was certainly one of those.

I remember the Terry Fox Run. I was a young individual, much younger than I am today. And I remember following his run across the country and what he was trying to achieve and—just unbelievable courage. And for a generation of us who followed it, he certainly inspired us that, you know, you can take something, you can take an idea and you can follow through with it and you can make a big difference.

A lot of individuals are confused often in what it means to raise money, and they think that it's a lot of individuals in white smocks looking at different slides and trying to figure out how you're going to solve this cancer. And often a lot of this money is used in a different form, and I had this explained to me that there was a friend of ours, a close friend who was suffering and needed to have a bone-marrow transplant and they couldn't find a proper fit for him. But they did find a proper fit very close in another country. It was a European country and the individual was prepared to give a donation. And what they wanted to do was see—is how close they could come to having a fit when it didn't quite fit, and the person wouldn't reject the bone marrow. So they withdrew the bone marrow in Europe. Had the individual here in Winnipeg prepped, ready to receive it, and they hired a private jet to fly to Winnipeg so they could do a test on it. And the individual agreed because they could not find a perfect match, so what they had to do was get as close as they could.

*(15:30)

Needless to say, they withdrew the bone marrow in Europe, flew it to Winnipeg and inserted it in the individual here, and what a unbelievable success story. That individual took the bone marrow and today is in remission.

And that's what a lot of the research, a lot of the money that's raised is used for, because now we have moved the bar so much further ahead that it doesn't have to be a perfect match, and the question, then, is how close of a match does it have to be for the other individual to actually receive that bone marrow. And how exciting this individual is still productive and is still amongst us and is in remission.

And so it is individuals like Terry Fox—and not just Terry Fox anymore, it's also the different individuals, the organizations that have sprung up, and there's that great Terry Fox Run that a lot of our schools participate in. I know my children did, and my kids would come to me and they'd say, you know, Dad, I know if you—I don't know if you ever heard about Terry Fox, and, you know, he's this guy—now he's made them explain to me what Terry Fox was about, because I knew there—at the end of it would be, you know, would I give a donation, and my kids would do the sales pitch on me and then I'd say, absolutely, I'd be more than willing to donate.

But they got a lot of younger, new generation, and every year we've got new kids getting involved

in the Terry Fox Run. And not just that it's about raising the money, but it's also raising the profile of what the impacts of cancer are and hard—how hard it is on families and how hard it is on communities when we lose a loved one and how difficult the struggle is.

So Terry Fox's legacy is far more than that run that he tried to take across the country. It's far more than the money that he raised. It's the legacy that he left behind, and this bill is another one of those steps. It's a small step but it's also a very important step that we recognize what Terry Fox stood for, what he attempted to achieve. And what the end result is is that a lot of individuals now when they are faced with that doctor's appointment and they're told, listen, you know, your—we're going to have to do something a little bit more aggressive because you have cancer, it doesn't have the same negative connotation that it might've had 20, 30 or 40 or 50 years ago.

And I know from personal experience, you know, women who today are facing breast cancer, it's—the survival rate and what can be done and the severity of the treatment is far less than what women used to face even 50 and 60 years ago when it was far more grim and a far more serious operation. And that's way—why I have—one of my neighbours comes by, and she's just a delightful person, and raises money for cancer research, and we always have this discussion about, you know, family members who've not made it and family members who have survived cancer, and I always gladly write a cheque for cancer because I know that it's so important that we continue to look for solutions and continue to look for better ways for treating cancer, and whether it's breast cancer, prostate cancer, leukemia, and the lists go on and on.

And, in fact, I had a nephew who years and years ago had leukemia, and Ryan Lutzer is his name. He unfortunately did not survive, but the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) at that time was one of his consulting doctors, and I don't know if the honourable member for River Heights remembers my nephew, but I do remember his name being spoken about. And the member for River Heights was very instrumental at that time in pediatric oncology, and I believe he was one of the consulting doctors for my nephew.

And, you know, today Ryan would've had a much better chance of survival because of the kinds of things that Terry Fox and others have done to

raise money and raise a profile and do more research. So we are always thankful when we approach individuals in the medical community, like the honourable member for River Heights and the kind of work he did, and certainly appreciate the research that's done. But to do that research and to further what can be done and to make the treatment more humane, to make all that more humane.

In fact, when you go into a lot of the cancer wards or where they give chemo treatment now, it is far more civilized. They've tried to make it—you know, you can't make it a happy place, but you can make it a lot more comfortable. And, with the children, they do all kinds of things. They have individuals that will knit little finger puppets, and every time you go in for a finger poke, they need to take some blood, they give them a little knitted finger puppet that they can put on their finger, and they try to make it a, you know, not a positive experience; make it a little less negative. And that's why I think it's very important for this Chamber to recognize Terry Fox and everything that he stands for and everything that that name stands for and everything that the organization around that stands for because there isn't a family, there isn't a person in society that doesn't know someone and that doesn't have a friend or a neighbour or relative that hasn't at least faced the prospect of having cancer treatment and, sadly, in many cases, succumbed to cancer.

So, certainly, this is an important resolution, a very important bill, and I know that we will be supporting it on this side, and it's one of those things that we want to see continue. We want to encourage those individuals who go out and raise money and raise the profile and try to make life better for individuals who are faced with this. And, Mr. Speaker, God forbid, someday it might be one of us, and at least we'll know when we walk into there that, you know, the kinds of things that are provided, you know, we certainly stood in support of when we had the opportunity to in this Chamber.

So, with those few comments, certainly, I will be supporting this bill. I know my caucus will. And I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to join others in this Chamber in supporting this bill. Terry Fox—incredible person, and what he achieved was really extraordinary in the face of tremendous odds.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, I was a physician working through the 1980s at the Children's Hospital

in Winnipeg and looking after many children with cancer, including a number who had osteosarcoma. And it was the story of the day at that time that osteosarcoma could be cured, and that cure rate was increasing, but for most it meant amputation and a difficult journey with chemotherapy, and the success rate, which in the mid-'70s was probably about 15 per cent, had gone up by the time that Terry Fox was diagnosed to about 50 per cent and has improved since then.

So, I—I'm—feel honoured to be here today to be able to speak to honouring Terry Fox's legacy, to making sure that what he was able to accomplish lives on. I appreciated the visibility that Terry Fox gave to cancer, not only the visibility but the demonstration that somebody with an osteosarcoma who had lost a leg could run a marathon, could run across Canada. And even though he himself didn't make it all the way, he showed, by his efforts that—what was possible. And his commitment to cancer research has made a huge difference.

* (15:40)

I think that he was alerted or learned of the fact or became understanding of the fact that research was starting to make a very significant difference in quite a number of cancers and that the treatment, the cure rates, were going up. And this was one of the reasons that he felt that it was very important to increase the amount of funding for cancer research.

And, in the final analysis, from all the money that has been raised through the efforts in Terry Fox's names over the years, that the amount has made a big difference in Canada to the extent to which cancer research has been possible and to the extent to which advances have been possible in the treatment of cancer. And some of that research takes many years to make a difference, and so the impact is not just in the last several decades since Terry Fox was running, but it is—continues and will get greater as time passes.

I was very involved in research, some of which was directly related to cancer in the 1970s and '80s and early '90s, and I can tell you first-hand what a difference it made to people in the research community in Canada who appreciated the attention that was being given and the funding that was resulting from the efforts of Terry Fox. It's really certainly without precedent in Canadian history that one individual has made this much difference to not really one disease but many diseases which we collectively call cancer because of the way that the

cells grow out of control. And it is a reflection on the importance of his contributions.

I think it's also important to note that his effort and his decision to try to run across Canada to raise money for cancer and cancer research—it was not an easy decision. It was one which took a lot of vision and one which there were a lot of obstacles to achieve. His mother even, to start with, was not on board and tried to discourage him and, you know, I think that's understandable. If you had a son who was—had lost a leg and he came to you and said I want to run across Canada, I think if you were a parent you would've probably tried to discourage him too.

But he overcame that discouragement. He persisted and he achieved something very extraordinary. And that's why I'm glad to be here today saying a few words to salute Terry Fox and to join in supporting this bill to add to his legacy. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I thank all the members who've spoken in the House, on the government side, on the—on our side and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), for their comments. I think that they're all very fitting and a tribute to somebody who's received many tributes, but I don't think there can be enough tributes for someone like Terry Fox.

I was 11 years old, I think, when the Marathon of Hope began, and I remember it a little bit—hard to sort of—at that age, just sort of take it all in and understand sort of the magnitude of what it is and what it became, obviously, Mr. Speaker. But I do remember it somewhat and watching some of the television reports of it.

The Marathon of Hope, I understand, went on for about 143 days and for over 5,000 kilometres. And when it began—and I remember seeing a documentary on it not too long ago—and when the Marathon of Hope began in St. John's, it sort of began with little fanfare. And that's hard to imagine today because it's become such a strong part of the national identity of Canada in many ways that one would assume, looking back, that it was—started off very grandiose but, of course, it didn't. It started off in a very humble way and in a very almost anonymous way with Terry Fox deciding to take on this enormous challenge to try to bring light to not only his own situation but to give hope to many others who were dealing with cancer. And it really, I understand, only when he went into Ontario did it

truly start to get the kind of attention that we sort of recognize today with people sort of lining the streets and the highways and cheering him on.

And so when you look back it's—now, of course, as young students learn about Terry Fox they learn about this enormous legacy. But it started in a very sort of small and humble way which I think is reflective and symbolic of the individual, the man himself. And when we talk about legacy, sometimes that word is one of those words that gets thrown around a little too loosely and thrown around without much thought sometimes. But I'm glad that the minister and the government have seen fit to put the word legacy into this bill because I think it bears repeating that what Terry Fox left truly is a legacy. And not just a legacy for Canada, though he certainly did.

Canada is often one of those nations where we have a hard time defining ourselves, and it's been said that we have a hard time speaking about ourselves, that we're a humble people, and I think that that's true. But we often don't have much nationalism to sort of move around. Now maybe that's changed a lot—a little bit in the last number of years, but, certainly, when we think about the things that we have to be proud of as a country and the things that are defining us internationally, one of those is Terry Fox, and he has resonance not just in the country of Canada, of course, but around the world. And that is a remarkable thing. It's not something that many Canadians have achieved for the relatively short time that Terry Fox was with us here on this earth.

His Marathon of Hope, as I mentioned, has sort of gained steam in terms of the public recognition in Ontario, but my understanding and doing a little bit of research on him is that he was running almost a marathon a day, and that's, you know, an amazing feat for anyone, let alone somebody who is doing it with an artificial leg.

I think it's fitting that this bill is here in Manitoba, with Mr. Fox having been born here and having the legacy of his family here. And there are many people in Canada, many provinces who would like to claim a little bit of Terry Fox as their own, and that's a good thing; it's good that the various provinces in some ways find their own connections to Terry Fox. I think that that's something that is important and it speaks very well of his legacy.

Canadians have voted Mr. Fox at different times as either one of the great heroes of Canadian history

or one of the great Canadians. And so many years after the Marathon of Hope the fact people who were not alive and that would now count for many, many Canadians, or people who actually weren't even in the country if they've immigrated as new Canadians to our country, still regard him in that way speaks volumes.

Often our heroes in society generally, but, you know, Canada's no exception to that, are sports heroes and for a country like Canada that's often hockey heroes. And so we build statues to Wayne Gretzky outside of the coliseum in Edmonton, and hockey heroes become sort of mystical figures within Canadian society, but Terry Fox has taken on that status.

And I know there are a number of statues, actually, of Mr. Fox around Canada, and the one that I have yet to see, but I really want to and it's on my list of things to see, is the one just outside of Thunder Bay where he ended the Marathon of Hope. And it should one of the many places that Canadians could go to to connect with the amazing thing that he did, but also to connect a little bit about what it's like to be a Canadian.

And he embodied many of those things although maybe not always purposely. And I don't know, you know, I suspect that if he was watching here today and all the things that have happened since his passing, he would be astounded and no doubt very humble about the many things that happened since his passing.

But I think that what he did with the Marathon of Hope was a—very Canadian in many ways; it symbolized endurance, and it symbolized a desire and a willingness to help others beyond just helping yourself. And we know that in Manitoba, of course, its being a very generous province and a province that gives financially and many other ways, and so it's, I think, a fitting tribute that it happens here in Manitoba with having a day named in honour.

*(15:50)

And I hope that, you know, when people look at the Terry Fox Day—now, I recognize that when you name a holiday after somebody, often, you know, people think of the holiday before they think of individual who it's named after. I suspect this will be a little bit different, and I do think that Manitobans will take great pride in the fact that a day is being named after Terry Fox and that he will be prominent

in their thoughts when that day occurs. And I think that that is something that is very important.

There's many different ways that Terry Fox has been recognized across the country. I understand he has 32 streets and roads that are named after him, and there's, of course, the famous one by Thunder Bay near the statue that memorializes the Marathon of Hope. There are 14 schools that have been named after Terry Fox. The mint, a number of years ago, commissioned a coin in honour of him, and the list goes on and on. I know he's been inducted in many of the different honours that we have in Canada, and I think that that's appropriate, and so this is one, but it's one that I think is significant and it will be significant to Manitoba.

The Terry Fox Run, from my research, is now the largest single-day way that donations are made to cancer care, and I understand that it's been more than \$600 million which has been raised in that single day, raises more on any day that's dedicated to donating to cancer. So that is obviously something that I don't think that Terry Fox could have possibly imagined.

One of the things in sort of researching his background, he said at the time of his marathon when people were asking him why he was participating and trying to run across Canada, he said that I believe in miracles; I have to. And now I know at the time what he was speaking about is very much his own personal health condition and what he was dealing with cancer, but I think, you know, the miracle that he may have been talking about didn't happen, but I do think it's a miracle what he's achieved after that, Mr. Speaker. And nobody, I don't think, at that time, could have possibly imagined the legacy that Terry Fox would have left for millions of people that he would never have met or never have known about because of his legacy of raising money through the things that have happened since his passing.

So I think in many ways when he said that he believes in miracles; he has to, that was fulfilled, and that miracle was achieved because it truly is miraculous what has happened since then and all the different things that have come to honour Terry Fox, all the different fundraisers that have happened and the benefits that have happened because of those fundraisers.

So, I mean, there aren't many things in this Legislature that we always agree on so unanimously and so clearly, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think that

you'll find one more than this. Terry Fox is a hero for Canadians. I think he will always be a hero for Canadians. He truly did leave a legacy for all Canadians to remember, and I think in many ways he helped define us as a nation. And those are things that, in my mind, are truly miraculous, and we need to thank Terry Fox for the amazing things that he has accomplished that he never could have imagined himself, I suppose.

So, with that, I'm very happy to see this bill go to committee. I'll be happy to see it return to the House and to pass third reading, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 16? House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 16, The Terry Fox Legacy Act.

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): I wonder if it might be noted that the House has accepted this bill with—unanimously.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement of the House to let the record reflect that this bill has passed unanimously? *[Agreed]*

We'll let the record reflect that.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 6—The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act

Mr. Speaker: Now proceed to call debate on second readings of Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act, under debates on second readings.

The honourable member for River Heights—pardon me, just give me one moment—standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights, who has 16 minutes.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I have already put some words on the record on this matter. But I wanted to say just a few more words, and those words reflect, in essence, a tribute to the people who have worked as part of the Indian residential schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission because what has been done through the commission is listening to and recording the stories from many, many people

who had experiences in or with residential schools. And it is particular those who were in residential schools who experienced very traumatic and tragic events that people who came to listen and to record what they had heard from the residential schools survivors is that this was not easy work, listening to the tragic events, often difficult-to-describe events, of the past of many years ago, often has not been easy for those who are involved with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

And I think it's fitting that we acknowledge for those who spent hours listening to or recording what was said that this, indeed, was very tough work, not easy to do, psychologically difficult when you're looking and listening to experiences which were very traumatic experiences and difficult to understand. And it's important that in this place where there will be the records from the Indian residential schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that there also be some reference to those who were involved and the tough work that they did and a recognition of how important it was because I believe that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in listening to these stories, in sharing information about these stories, often sometimes in bringing to light the individual stories themselves, has played a tremendous service in helping Canadians from coast to coast understand better what happened during the Indian residential schools experience, why this was as traumatic as it was for so many and the impact that it's had, not just on those who are in the residential schools but on their families and on their children.

I listened the other day at the Westland Foundation breakfast to a presentation by Susan Swan who was—whose mother was in residential schools. And Susan had—was taken away when she was very young from her mother and she was told as she was growing up in a foster home that her mother had given him up—her up because she didn't love her. And it was only many years later that she came to realize that, No. 1, her mother had been through the traumatic experience in residential schools; No. 2, that her mother did love her and had written this down in letters, which she received many years after they were written. And her mother, in part, I suspect, because of what happened in the residential schools and perhaps in part because of the fact that her baby had been taken away, committed suicide.

* (16:00)

But I think it is a testament to Susan's life that she grew up and became a police officer and has a

daughter who is doing very well. And, although her own life was pretty traumatic early on, that she has broken the cycle.

And one of the things that we need to do is to 'dedicar' ourselves to breaking the cycle that has all too often 'engumfed' family after family, and improving conditions for those who are now alive and those generations and children and adults yet to come. And I think that's what this housing of the Indian residential schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission documents is really about, is paving the way for a better understanding and for a better future.

Thank you.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I just want to put a few words for the—on the record for the Bill 6, national research centre of truth and reconciliation.

And the—some of the words I have to say is that I can't imagine, you know, being taken away from your home, your heritage, your culture and put into a situation where you're in a foster home or a school, residential school.

I remember being growing up on a farm and, you know, we had a—we had routine. And I remember going to stay with some relatives as a holiday and being—after a couple days being very, very homesick. And I can't imagine these—some of these young people from the reserve who actually had to be taken off from their parents and family and taken to residential schools and try to change their culture and their identity. It must have been so traumatic for a lot of those individuals, and I can't imagine what they went through. And, you know, in some cases, they might have had some benefits of education, but at the same time they lost their identity and they lost their belonging, their self-worth and their identity.

And I can't—you know, one thing—this past week, I had the opportunity to be invited to the Russell—in Russell for the blanket ceremony. And what was the blanket ceremony was basically putting a whole bunch of blankets on the arena floor and having a group of high school students and individuals from Waywayseecappo to the Russell Major Pratt School, and there were grade 12s and, I guess, the—grade 11s and grade 12s. They were—all said to go onto these blankets.

And there was so much room for them to walk around these blankets. And soon as they actually—

over time, blankets were taken away based on information that was—you know, when land was taken away from their First Nations people. It gives an idea to the people there, to educate our youth here, our high school students and everybody, to see how it was like to actually lose more and more space and more and more land that you actually had. And as the blankets were taken away, there was so many people put on such a small area, which represented the land.

And—but we also talked about the residential schools and how some of the—they showed, like, people having dolls and babies being ripped away from them to take—be taken to—away from the parents to be put into these schools and foster homes. And it was really heartbreaking to see all that and to hear all that. It was a very good educational process for everyone to understand.

And to have a library at the University of Manitoba, actually, the only one in Canada, to be here in the province of Manitoba, I think, is very important. We're the centre, we are the meeting place, the Red River, the Assiniboine. It's appropriate to have it here.

And the one thing I learned also was mentioned at this blanket ceremony was they were told that the Prime Minister Stephen Harper actually has—had apology, was the first Prime Minister to apology—apologize for the residential schools and how people were treated.

And, again, this is the start of reconciliation in—and actually having the federal government to come here to bring this to our province is very important.

And, again, this is good for to—for the healing process. But when it comes to reconciliation, we're learning about the past. But what we need—also need to focus on is how we're going to go into the future. You know, is this reconciliation library going to be able to go beyond just learning what happened in the past, but also learning where we can go in the future for our youth, our different diversity of population that's coming from different parts of the world coming into our—the multicultural area of our province.

And we—what we need to do is educate and—especially newcomers coming into Canada, how important it is to have this harmony with our—with everybody, with all of the people of the province of Manitoba. And this is—can be the—a great learning experience for everyone.

And, again, growing up in Roblin, Manitoba, I went to school with a number of First Nation individuals from river-like, east river reserve, just east of Roblin, and we had a high population of the Metis population in the Boggy Creek-San Clara area. And to my—actually, many of them actually married into our family, and I have—a number of—my sister-in-law is Metis. Her last name was Belle [*phonetic*], and she—her family came from the San Clara area and it's great to have, even in our own family, the diversity of the population to understand the First Nations and the Metis and the Inuit that we have in our country here.

My—also, my cousin married into the Bouvier [*phonetic*] family, which is a Metis family. And one of the—mother of my cousin's wife sells moccasins all over the world, and she's well known and, again, we've learned a lot from the members in our own family how the history and the reconciliation. And it's already happening in the Roblin area, and I'm so proud to be from that region and to have that harmony that we work together with our Metis and our First Nation people.

The other day else, a few months ago, actually, I went to the Winnipeg Art Gallery, and they had a program about the North, and we had a number of speakers, and some of them were well-spoken Inuit women who actually were taken away from their homes in places in the far north and came to residential schools. And it was very interesting to listen to their story. It's so important to understand, you know, where they came from and to hope for this sense of belonging. And it was really emotional to hear their story. And, Mr. Speaker, it's—you know what, to have the—this library and the research that people can go to to get the understanding, but also, at the same time, we also have to have the respect for privacy, too, depending on what situations and what individuals want to keep their stories private as possible.

And I was just—it was great to actually be briefed on this bill a few days of—last week and to understand where this—how important coming together with both levels of government to come to with this library and to have this information available for anybody who's doing some research or people who are wanting to know—get to know more about their past and understanding from the—generation from generation. And it's going to be a great learning experience in how we go forward, and I would like to put these few words on the record

here, and I—we feel in our side of the House that we want to support this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure today to stand up and put a few words on the record for Bill 6, the—brought forward by the member from Dawson Trail, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act, which, in fact, is going to create the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, which has been established by the University of Manitoba to receive, hold and archive the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's records. I know that this bill is very important in the fact that it's going to be able to put down the groundwork so that the transfer of all those very important documents are going to be taken to the University of Manitoba.

* (16:10)

And the thing is, Mr. Speaker, this bill was first brought forward to the House December 4th of—this past December, December 4th, 2014, and it's sort of interesting—I mean, it's nice to see that this bill finally came so that we can move this forward onto committee because I do feel it's very important to make sure that the—as I said before, that the groundwork is set. All of the rules and regulations around all those documents are going to be put into legislation because I do believe that as the provincial body, being held at the University of Manitoba with these documents, I believe to transfer all that information from the federal achieves, it does have to—everybody has to make sure that those documents are going to be safe when they're being transferred, but also make sure that once they do get here, there are the various regulations put forward properly so that all of the information can be stored properly.

So for that, I do—on this side of the House, we do see the importance of this bill. We are going to see this move forward to committee, but, at the same time, I don't see any reason why within the first week or so of session being called back after April 30th, why this bill couldn't have come a little sooner. I know that there has been pressure from stakeholders to move this bill forward, so it's nice to see that the NDP government finally called the bill. We've been waiting for this bill to be called and, on this side of the House, we're happy to see this bill move forward to committee so that we can get the process moving, Mr. Speaker.

So thank you for the few words—or for the time to put a few words on the record.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to contribute to support The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act.

I want to share an inside point of view of working directly with residential school survivors. I had the opportunity as a band councillor for OCN and for Swampy Cree Tribal Council to work directly with our school—residential school survivors from our First Nations with SCTC, Swampy Cree Tribal Council. My role was to work with the residential school survivors, connect them with our people who are recording their stories—these stories that are going to be housed in Winnipeg here.

And I just wanted to share with you the sensitivity that was involved working directly with our survivors. And when we would talk about their stories, you can see their gestures, their body language. They would always be looking back—looking back—almost afraid to be sharing their story, Mr. Speaker. And with that, we treated our environment with great respect, we—whether it was burning sweetgrass, saying the Lord's Prayer, you know, we provided a comfortable environment for our survivors to share their story.

And coming from three generations of residential school survivors, I can tell you that I am the fourth generation and I can still tell you that I'm still living with those intergenerational effects, and it's my hope and dream that my daughter, those effects, that cycle, will be broken, fifth generation.

Also, too, I had the opportunity to—again, I'm going to share my story. I approached our MP for Churchill, Niki Ashton, to help me lobby the government to extend the funding for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation which provided therapy services for residential school survivors as they share their stories, and the second level of being compensated. There was a common-experience level of being compensated, then there was another level when you talked about the real severe, severe abuses that weren't shared before.

And from there, when we went to Ottawa, we created a national petition from west coast to east coast. And even in Nunavut, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation staff formed a human chain around their centre in support that we wanted our funding to stay. To me, the government cutting off that funding was

like a deadline for us to heal. That's how I seen that deadline. That's it; that's your time to heal, you're cut off. And with that, even though they didn't extend the funding, we sure made noise, we sure educated a lot of people. It was an honour to see our MPs support our initiative by having an emergency debate.

And so with that I moved on to apply for monies for the Indian residential school secretariat department, which was another way of providing healing services to our residential schools. So I worked hard for a year and a half on this proposal and was able to provide healing services in the community. Rather than sending our survivors from their communities to Winnipeg, we provided the services in the community for Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Mosakahiken, that is Moose Lake, and Mathias Colomb, and again it was an honour to work with our residential school survivors once again, again providing them a safe environment with a therapist to share their stories and receive healing after going through their adjudication process, sharing their horrific stories. So, after that process was done, we provided therapy within their communities.

So, again, I was—it was an honour to be a part of that process, especially having my great-grandmother, my grandmother and my mother in my mind while I'm in the room here with her schoolmates, if you will.

And I also want to acknowledge the residential school gathering that happens at Opaskwayak Cree Nation at the Guy Hill Residential School site every year. August long weekend, former residential school survivors gather. Now that our survivors are slowly passing on, it's amazing how their next generation are completing that journey and making it to that trip—that campsite to share their stories of their mom, dad or grandparents.

And I've had the opportunity of listening to Justice Murray Sinclair twice, and when he speaks about this TRC, not one person moves in the room; it's just quiet. His words are so powerful and emotional you don't even want to miss one second of what he says. But one thing that really did stick with me, and I share with people all the time, is that he said residential schools is not an Aboriginal problem, it's a Canadian problem.

So, with that, I just want to say that I'm honoured to be standing here today to share my insight of the process of how we ended up with our TRC here today. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to thank the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) for putting her words on the record and her own personal experiences, and thank other members who've spoken about the bill this afternoon as well, Mr. Speaker.

I do think this is an important bill for the province and for those who have been impacted by residential schools and really Canadians generally, and so we're pleased that the bill is—has been called for debate. I know we've been in the Chamber for three or four weeks; time goes quickly sometimes here, Mr. Speaker. And it's taken three or four weeks to have the bill called, but I'm glad it's called today and we want to ensure that it moves to committee on the first day that it's called.

And I think that the committee hearings themselves will be helpful and instructive, and certainly those who have insight, as the member for The Pas brought her insight to the Chamber, could also be encouraged to bring their insight to committee.

The committee process in Manitoba is relatively unique across Manitoba. I think there are some that are similar, although not exactly the same as we have in this province, but it is an opportunity for Manitobans to come forward as private citizens and bring forward their views on legislation and how they feel that it impacts them or how they've been impacted by the general nature of the issue that the legislation is intended to discuss.

So I think it could be a very helpful committee, and I've often said that committees at their best in Manitoba are that. And they offer an opportunity not just for amendments—but they do that as well, of course— but an opportunity for people to speak about things that they might not always be able to speak about or haven't always been able to speak about or things that are close to their heart and things that are meaningful to them and their families. And so the committee that this will go to, I think, before the end of today will be something that is significant, Mr. Speaker.

*(16:20)

The fact that the University of Manitoba has been chosen as the national research centre and to house the archives in one format or the other from the Truth and Reconciliation process, I think is important. I think it speaks well of the university.

An alumni of the University of Manitoba, having graduated there three times, actually, Mr. Speaker—but you stop counting after a couple, I think—it speaks well to the university and I think it's an appropriate place for it, not just obviously because of the unfortunate history—the sad history of residential schools in Manitoba, but we are the centre of Canada and I think it's a good place to have these documents archived and to have individuals who want to research in the years ahead to be able to do that.

And, of course, I mean, there'll be those who will research the archives because they are interested in the topic on a more academic level or on a more historical level, but, of course, there'll be many who will do so as families who were impacted. And the member for The Pas spoke about her own family impact. But there'll be an ability to research family history and then those records as well.

And they might not always be—well, they're not a happy history, Mr. Speaker, but you learn from the past and you learn from mistakes of the past, not by forgetting it or not by not acknowledging the past, but by being upfront and recognizing that there has been a mistake.

And I—it was mentioned, I think, by one of the speakers previously, that the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, issued an apology in the House of Commons, and I just was looking up the text of that apology. I believe it happened in 2008. I just want to read a little bit of that into the record, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's certainly important to this particular topic.

This is Mr.—Prime Minister Harper speaking in the House of Commons in 2008. I think it was June of 2008: "It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors" that "have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures.

"Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

"The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to aboriginal peoples for

Canada's role in the Indian residential schools system."

And I think it's important to have that on the record in the context of this debate, Mr. Speaker. It was something that, I think, was important for Canada, important for those who generationally suffered under the residential schools.

I don't pretend to have a clear understanding of how heart-wrenching it must be to have a child taken from your home and moved to another place to be assimilated into a majority culture, Mr. Speaker. I have no understanding of that, and I don't pretend to have that, but the absence of understanding doesn't mean the absence of compassion, and the absence of understanding doesn't mean the absence of regret. And now being the father of a young son who's growing up fairly quickly, you know, I can think about how difficult it would be for any family to have that happen to them. And, while I hope to never understand the pain and the generational pain that that brings—and it is generational; I don't think anybody can deny that—I do think it's important that we continue to recognize the mistakes that were made and to not forget that, but to also look for reconciliation and that was part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I want to just read the mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I downloaded it a little bit earlier from the Internet. It reads that—this is the mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in a mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation."

And there's a few key words, I think, Mr. Speaker, within the mandate of the commission that are worth highlighting, and, of course, there are many, but there are a few. Injustices and harms experienced by the Aboriginal people, those who were subjected to the residential school experience: And I think we can't underestimate the harms that

happened and the fact that it was an injustice. And we should never lose sight of the fact that those type of experiences don't die with those who experienced with them, and that was alluded to by the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin). I think she said that she was fourth generation, and she—and I listened as she talked about the hope that her daughter would not suffer the generational into the fifth generation. And I respect that, and I appreciate the fact that she brought that forward because it is something that we need to remember that it isn't something, the experience, that ends with the individual who experienced with it, that it really is something that can be generational. And I think that the fact that we're going to have the records accessible and housed in different fashions in the University of Manitoba, you know, be an opportunity for those who come and do research and come and look into it to remember that. And it'll be there for generations, and it'll be there for future generations of legislators, and it'll be there for future generations of Manitobans, and, of course, it'll be there for those of Aboriginal descent to be able to research it as well.

So I understand there's some timeliness to this bill, Mr. Speaker. I've seen correspondence from the president of the University of Manitoba, and our critic for Education, I think, has had discussions with the president of the University of Manitoba or at least representatives of the University of Manitoba. And I think we have a commitment to try and to ensure that this legislation is brought into force on the time frame that it needs to be. We—it's always difficult when you're—don't have a lot of time in terms of legislation, and we, as I mentioned, haven't sat a great deal in the last several months, but we wanted to ensure that the first time this bill got called, it could go to committee and hear the different presentations at committee and then come back to the House for third reading so that there would be still an appropriate time to have the debate but also an appropriate time for committee. So we don't feel that—we don't want to be rushing any bills in the Legislature. I put that on the record in a discussion previously.

But I do think that this is a respectful amount of time to assure we have the debate this afternoon; we'll have a committee hearing and then third reading debate and, hopefully, this bill—I understand the time frame was the end of June, the last day of this month, and I think that that should be able to be accommodated, Mr. Speaker, or at least that's our expectation. We don't entirely control the agenda. In

fact, we don't control the government agenda at all; they determine which bills to call. But, having been called for the first time, we're looking forward to seeing it moved forward to committee, and we will look to do our part in terms of the time frame that this particular bill is under.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:30)

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, on June 11th, 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada got up, and amongst other things that he said, I'd like to quote him from his statement, and it says the following: "The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly. . . . We are sorry." Unquote.

Mr. Speaker, if you read the Prime Minister's speech given that day in the House of Commons, unprecedented in the history of our nation, where the First Nations people were invited into the Chamber, they were greeted into the Chamber and this apology was made. If you actually read the entirety of the apology, it does not attempt to whitewash, nor does it attempt to put a good face on things. In fact, it is very graphic; it lays out exactly where the failings were and it makes it very clear that there was egregious—egregious—things done to our First Nations, to our Aboriginal peoples.

And it's only through that apology that we as a country, then, can start facing what happened. It was wrong what was done; the suffering that came out of it was unfortunate. And I was raised that an apology, when you actually said sorry to somebody, it was actually less about the other individual and it was way more about yourself because the other individual certainly will have to deal with what was said or done to them, but it actually is something that will eat away at you, that will fester within you and it's only by apologizing that you get to move forward.

And I know that the Prime Minister, as many Prime Ministers before him, had had this placed in front of him, and why this apology didn't come earlier we don't know and it's not part of this debate today. But I do know is that the current Prime Minister, when faced with this issue, when it was laid in front of him, was very troubled and was very moved by it. And he felt that to move forward as a nation we had to deal with a real sore spot, with an ugly stain on our past. And the only way that we

could move forward as a nation, the only way we could effectively deal with this issue was to start with an apology.

And I was a legislator at that time here in this Chamber and watched very closely what was taking place in Ottawa in the House of Commons. It was appropriately done; I believe it was respectfully done, did not attempt to whitewash anything that was done. It laid bare what actually took place, took responsibility for what happened, and the Prime Minister of this country on behalf of all Canadians stated: We are sorry.

Does that undo what took place over all those years, in fact something that started in the 1870s? Does it undo all the hardship and the hurt and everything that happened to those individuals? No, Mr. Speaker, because, by and large, most of the individuals that were impacted aren't even alive. They would never know that the House of Commons, that the Prime Minister apologized on behalf of all Canadians and behalf of our country.

But, to those that were impacted, it wasn't just the individuals themselves; it was the next generation and the next generation and the next generation. In fact, when you listen to a lot of the family members talk about their upbringing, they didn't understand why things happened in their family, they didn't understand why there were issues and problems in their family. It was only until this started to come out, until the apology that people would go home and they would ask their parents or their grandparents, and that's when they would find out that individuals who they have known their whole life and had never told them that they were survivors of the residential schools, would then tell them of some of the things that happened. And then only could the catharsis, could then the healing process start.

And the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up. It's an important step; it's an important healing process for us as a nation to face what happened in our past. It was a very important step and a very important healing process and an opportunity for our Aboriginal, for our First Nations people to also repair and try to move forward.

And for those who were here at that time, we had—I believe it was within the following week or two weeks after the apology that took place in the House of Commons—we had a similar ceremony here in this Chamber. And I know, Mr. Speaker, you were part of that, and here, too, we invited our Aboriginal, our First Nations community to come into the

Chamber, and an apology was made here as well. And it was a very moving and it was a very beautiful time in this Chamber.

After the official ceremony took place, we all walked out of the centre doors and along the staircase, leading down the staircase, our First Nations, our Aboriginal community lined up and many of them, survivors of the residential schools, and we walked by as elected officials and apologized. And it's not that I personally had anything to do with it, but I apologized as representing my office, as a member of this Legislative Chamber of what we represent, saying to those who were so poorly treated, were so terribly mistreated, saying to them, I'm sorry on behalf of what we represent here at the elected body.

Out of all of that, out of all of the apologies, out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, came a body of documents, came a lot of information, and that's what this bill actually deals with. It's then—what happens to all that data? How do we deal with all of that respectfully? How do we deal with it in such a manner that it then be able to be used? There's going to be a lot of research. We are in the beginning of the process. There is going to be a lot that's going to be written, a lot that's going to be studied. Academics are going to deal with this issue, and it's important that academics then start looking at this data and look at everything that happened, and it's important to have all that data in one place so that individuals can go somewhere and they can start doing academic studies, and that's what we're going to start getting, you know, the entire issue dealt with in history books and in school texts and in books that are going to be written.

This bill prepares for how that will be dealt with in a very respectful manner, how it should be protected, how it—who should access it, how it should be accessed. And we are pleased that the government has called this bill. It's important that this bill now move forward so that that transfer of the data can take place, and, as one individual who was here during that whole process, and I feel very strongly that it was an important thing for our nation to do. It's very important for our province to do, and I think it's only fitting that an electronic record of what took place be here at the University of Manitoba. In fact, I know Dr. Barnard from the University of Manitoba has dealt with a lot of these issues. He's done a lot of open houses and round tables and discussion groups on this, and, Mr. Speaker, what

has happened since 2008 and just before that and moving forward is just the beginning.

This is only the start of the process, that the healing process has to continue, and it's got to be very much an academic discussion. There's got to be the proper looking at it all, and I can't think of a better place to house that than at the University of Manitoba. I think that's a good place to have it. I think it's important that it be accessible to academics and to those who want to look at it. It's going to be important for generations of Aboriginal and First Nations communities to know that they can go there and perhaps they want to read for themselves what a family member said or what was said by community members.

I think the University of Manitoba is the right place to house this, and, certainly, I know that this is one of those bills that's going to go forward. As the apology was unanimous in the House of Commons, as the apology that took place in this Legislative Chamber was unanimous, so, too, I know will this bill move forward and it, too, will be unanimous because it's important that we, as a nation, look back at what we did wrong so that we can move forward in the way we treat individuals and the way we treat issues, and I am a proud member of this Chamber to be supporting this piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:40)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker. I'm seeking unanimous consent of the House to not see the clock until all members of the Chamber who wish to speak on the second reading of this bill have an opportunity to speak and until I have an opportunity to call the Standing Committee of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock until all members of the Assembly wishing to speak to this matter have had the opportunity and the honourable Government House Leader has had a chance to refer matters to Standing Committee?

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I might go a little further and ask that there be leave to not see the clock until second reading on this bill is resolved and until the Government House Leader has an opportunity to call committee.

Mr. Speaker: So is there agreement of the House, then, to not see the clock until this matter has been resolved and the House leader has had an opportunity to call the Standing Committee?
[Agreed]

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I just want to make a few brief comments in regard to Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation, and I think we're going to get support from all sides of the House on this particular legislation moving forward so we can actually move it into committee and hear what the public has to say as well in this regard.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, I will say that, you know, we as governments don't always do what is right. But it is important that we as government and we as legislators learn from our mistakes. And, clearly, we look back in history, and this is undoubtedly one of the bigger mistakes that a government can make. And, obviously, it's been a painful reminder of mistakes of the past, but we're trying to come to reality with the mistakes that were made. Clearly, the federal government has made an apology and moving forward with that, and, clearly, we had the same type of a process here in Manitoba not too long ago, and it's a very significant piece of rebuilding, I think, and moving forward on this.

In terms of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it was formed by the Canadian government back a number of years ago as part of the court-approved residential schools settlement agreement that was negotiated between legal counsel for former students, legal counsel for the churches, the Government of Canada and the—some of the First Nations and other Aboriginal organizations. This commission is an official independent body that provides the former students and, in fact, anyone who has been affected by residential school legacy with an opportunity to share their individual experiences in a safe and culturally appropriate manner. And it is an opportunity for people to tell their stories about a significant part of Canadian history that is still unknown to many Canadians. So, clearly, the purpose of the commission was not to

determine guilt or innocence but to create a historical account of the residential schools to help people heal, to encourage reconciliation between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, we know the commission did host and has hosted a lot of events across the country to raise awareness about the residential school system and, certainly, the impact that it had to literally thousands of Canadians. So part of that particular legislation there that was established by the provinces is what we're seeing here in legislation today, and I hope the members will take a look at the material that's actually supplied in the legislation itself in terms of the explanatory note. And I think it reflects, certainly, the history of what we're talking about today and some of the issues that really come to the forefront that, quite frankly, we are still dealing with today in terms of some of the mistakes that we made in the past.

And, clearly, the whole idea of assimilation is wrong and did cause great harm is borne out in this particular message, and it talks about the commission and the goals of the commission in going forward, and in terms of actually putting the documents together and the transcripts of recordings, of statements received from people that were involved in this process, Mr. Speaker, over many years, of course. And it has had a real impact on people and continues, as I said, to have an impact on many people.

And the concept of establishing a centre here at the University of Manitoba, I think, is very important. Clearly, we have a lot of respect for our secondary educations here in Manitoba, and certainly the University of Manitoba is a fine facility, a fine organization. And I think it does make a lot of sense to have these records available at the University of Manitoba to Manitobans so that we can share the story with Manitobans.

And Mr. Speaker, we recognize in Manitoba we certainly have a very large Aboriginal and Metis population here in Manitoba. I think it makes sense to have this particular information and this centre here actually centred at the University of Manitoba here in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I was actually out at the University of Manitoba this morning. It was, of course, convocation graduation exercises there. And today, I guess, our middle son graduated today, so—*[interjection]* Thanks—thank you, I thank my colleagues for that—yes, it was a really good day. I

know the Minister of Education was out there today—thank you.

So anyway, my son, he did graduate from agriculture and he's taken agribusiness, and we'll see what happens down the road. I know he does have a job here in Winnipeg and he's quite happy with that. But I think he's one of those younger fellows that would like to spend a little bit of time to travel and maybe experience the world. So I think that's on his mind for some time this winter, and I certainly don't blame him at this point in time, where he doesn't have too many ties, so he can take some time to do that. But I think he's also looking at coming back and continuing his education, and that too is important. Certainly, he enjoys his education and he enjoys the people and had some really good experiences at school. So I think that's something that we can look forward too as well down the road.

And, you know, when I look at this legislation, this, too, is really about education. And it is about making people aware of what has happened in our history and what—some of the things that we have done wrong as a society and a government, and, hopefully, the Manitobans and the Canadians will take the time to visit this centre and to look at the information. We'll learn from that, and we will learn for the future of our province, and, in fact, how we deal with people and how we deal with different elements of our society. So I think it's a very important piece of legislation.

We certainly on this side are excited with the idea of having this centre here in Winnipeg and having it available to those that have been impacted by this particular situation over the years. And I think it will bode very well for the University of Manitoba. Certainly, it even—this morning, in the ceremony this morning, there was recognition early in the ceremony about the—being, this being ancestral land for Aboriginal and First Nations community. There certainly was a recognition of that. We also had a Aboriginal member come in and give a prayer at the beginning of the ceremony.

So, clearly, the university itself is going out of their way to making sure that the important aspect and the history of Manitoba and Winnipeg and the relationship to the First Nations community are made available and made present. So I really tip my hat to the people at the university there, the management of the university that are bringing that to the forefront.

So, in saying that, I think it's a natural fit that this particular centre be set up and established at the

University of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. It certainly is a worthwhile organization, a worthwhile event. And I see here, this particular legislation does not come into effect immediately. It will come into effect as a day fixed by proclamation. So, clearly, there will be some work to do, even once this legislation is passed, but we're hopeful that that work can be done in a fairly expeditious manner and we can get this centre established as quickly as possible.

* (16:50)

I'm sure the commission has collected a lot of very valuable information. And part of the learning process for all of us, and part of the healing process for all of us, will be to have that information available to Canadians, Mr. Speaker.

So we certainly look forward to having this particular legislation passed and we look forward to this centre being established, and to having this information made available to Canadians all across our great country.

With that, I thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

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

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act.

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

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might canvass the House to see if there's unanimous agreement to the passage of this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement of the House to let the record reflect that the bill has passed second reading unanimously? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, June 3rd, at 6 p.m., to consider Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act; Bill 9, The

Chartered Professional Accountants Act; Bill 16, The Terry Fox Legacy Act; Bill 201, The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act; and Bill 203, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety at New Schools).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, June the 3rd, 2015, at 6 p.m., to consider the following: Bill 6, The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act; Bill 9, The Chartered Professional Accountants Act; Bill 16, The Terry Fox Legacy Act; Bill 201, The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act; and Bill 203, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Pedestrian Safety at New Schools).

Just information for the House.

Bill 2—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3)

Mr. Speaker: I will now proceed to call Bill 2, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3), standing in the name of the honourable member for Steinbach.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's again a pleasure to speak this afternoon on legislation before the House, and this is one, of course, that is near and dear to my heart having a son in grade 3, Mr. Speaker. And I often think about, you know, the quality of education he's getting.

And I want to say that, you know, the teachers that we've had the opportunity to interact with in the school that he goes to in Steinbach have been excellent and we've had nothing but good experiences with the teachers. Where there have been challenges that sometimes happen in a classroom environment or in a learning environment, we've been able to meet with the teachers and to talk about how things could proceed from there and how things could be improved. And I really want to thank the teachers at his school that we've had the opportunity—my wife and I—my wife, Kim, and I, to meet with and we feel—always feel—that he's getting very good instruction from those professionals and always feel that he's in a caring and a learning environment. And so we're very thankful for that, Mr. Speaker.

On the broader strokes, I do have concerns, though, and I think it was expressed as recently as this question period by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), our Education critic, about the

quality of education that our young people are getting, not as a result of the professionals who are in the schools, as I mentioned but as a result of those things that they are having to teach within the school system. And we've seen the result of that.

We've seen report after report whether it's 'psac'—or PCAP and PISA and various other acronyms, Mr. Speaker, the different reports where we've seen that Manitoba has been on a steady decline when it comes to performance in math skills, science and in reading and literacy. And, when you look at that decline, you can see that it's happened under this NDP government.

Earlier in question period, I think one of—the minister was saying, well, let's talk about what happened when you were in government. Well, when we were in government, the scores were a lot better than they are now, and it's—and I think he should reflect on that. I know that the minister, like all the ministers there, are given talking points and they rarely research or think beyond the talking points, Mr. Speaker. But, if they did a little bit of research, they would see that there's been a decline under this government, a decline to the point where we've gotten to last—last—in the country when it comes to those three core and critical areas of learning.

And that doesn't mean—and I want, you know, the record to be clear that, I think, that our students in our schools and our teachers in our schools can compete with any teaching professionals and with any students in terms of their abilities. It's not an issue of ability. It's not an issue of professionalism. It is an issue of how this government has set up the education system.

And we heard, as recently as yesterday, a math expert. I was watching one of the local news broadcasts, and there was an expert in Manitoba on math curriculum and simply saying that, while the government has done some tinkering on that particular part of the curriculum in the last couple of years, that it didn't go far enough and that we would continue to see a decline and we'll continue to see results that everyone considers unacceptable, including, apparently, the current Minister of Education, the former minister of Education, and the former former minister of Education. But saying that it's unacceptable isn't enough. It's not enough just to simply say, well, we don't like the fact that our students are being ranked last in the country in math and the other two core areas of literacy and science, Mr. Speaker. It's not

enough; you have to take action. And the Minister of Education is empowered with that action.

Now we can have a discussion about the different ways that that can be done. The expert yesterday, on the news broadcast, was talking about the need to revamp the curriculum and to ensure that more core and basic areas of math are being taught at an earlier stage, and to ensure that there was more attention paid to the fundamentals so that children at a young age are able to ensure that they get the kind of grounding in a core—or in a core subject like math that they need.

Now I understand, of course, that class size is always one component that's talked about. Class composition would be another component. And, when I talk to teachers, I often hear about the issue of class composition, how a class is made up not simply the size of that class, Mr. Speaker. But you can't have the discussion, whether it's a class size or class composition, without talking about curriculum. We have to talk about curriculum. We have to talk about class size. We have to talk about composition of those classes.

But this is a government that doesn't want to talk about those things. They simply don't want to talk about the outcomes. They don't want to talk about the results. And, if you don't want to talk about the results, then, obviously, you don't want to talk about the curriculum. And so, as a parent, I mean, as much as a legislator, I would say as a parent, those things concern me.

And I do have the opportunity in talking to teachers, whether they're, you know, the ones who have interacted with my own son or they're just teachers in different schools or in different grades, Mr. Speaker, I hear the concerns. I hear the concerns about how report cards are done. I hear the concerns

about how teachers feel that they have lost a lot of their professional independence. We often hear about the no-fail policy and the fact that teachers are restricted in terms of being able to ensure that assignments that are late, that there can be some sort of reflection on that. And teachers are continuing to say to me that they are under those restrictions, and they feel that it impacts their professionalism. And I agree with them. I agree with them, Mr. Speaker, that they aren't always being treated in the professional manner that they should be. And, when I talk to the professional teachers, I know that I have great confidence in them. But we have to give them the tools; it's not enough to just simply say that we have a particular concern. If we don't give the tools to our professional teachers, it's very, very difficult for them to fulfill their own mandate.

And I want to tell you that teachers care greatly about the students that they are entrusted with. I see that all the time. When I'm talking to teachers within the schools, within the Hanover School Division, there's a great deal of concern for the well-being and the future success of students within the division and within their classrooms. And so we know it's not an issue of passion. We know that it's not an issue of confidence. But it is an issue about how this government has set up education in the province of Manitoba. And that decline has happened under them, Mr. Speaker. It's happened under their watch, and they have to take responsibility for the fact that students are doing worse today—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) will have 22 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 28, 2015

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Petitions		All Nations Coordinated Response Program	
		Wishart; Irvin-Ross	1274
		Emergency Child-Care Services	
		Gerrard; Irvin-Ross	1275
Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety		Conference Board Report	
Schuler	1267	Jha; Dewar	1276
Province-Wide Long-Term Care—Review Need and Increase Spaces		Provincial Deficit	
Graydon	1267	Friesen; Dewar	1277
Driedger	1268	Friesen; Chomiak	1277
Minnesota-Manitoba Transmission Line Route—Information Request		Hydro Rate Increases	
Smook	1268	Eichler; Allum	1278
Bipole III Land Expropriation—Collective Bargaining Request		Members' Statements	
Pedersen	1269	Mary Melnychuk	
		Allan	1278
Tabling of Reports		Paul Labelle	
		Piwniuk	1279
Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2015-2016, Departmental Expenditure Estimates		Manitoba Chinese Tribune Family Centre	
Blady	1269	Irvin-Ross	1279
		Pembina Trails Human Rights Project	
		Driedger	1280
		Hedges Hawkes—Junior Provincial Champions	
		Rondeau	1280
Oral Questions			
NDP Leadership Campaign		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
Pallister; Chomiak	1270	<i>(Continued)</i>	
Paramedic Self-Regulation		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
Driedger; Blady	1271	Concurrence and Third Readings	
Prairie Mountain Health Authority		Bill 69—The Technical Safety Act	
Cullen; Blady	1272	Braun	1281
Child and Family Services		Smook	1281
Wishart; Irvin-Ross	1273	Gerrard	1283
Education System		Goertzen	1284
Ewasko; Allum	1274		

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 9—The Chartered Professional Accountants Act

Friesen 1286
Gerrard 1289

Bill 6—The National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Act

Gerrard 1295
Piwniuk 1296
Ewasko 1297
Lathlin 1298
Goertzen 1299

Schuler 1301

Cullen 1303

Bill 2—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Small Classes for K to 3)

Goertzen 1305

Second Readings

Bill 16—The Terry Fox Legacy Act

Blady 1289

Schuler 1290

Gerrard 1292

Goertzen 1293

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

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