

Third Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Ind.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Madam Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker.

We'd like to call Bill 200 for second reading. *[interjection]*

Is it the will of the House to proceed to Bill 200 for second reading?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave this morning to proceed with Bill 200? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Planning Amendment Act

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Dawson Trail, that Bill 200, The Planning Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martin: Good morning, Madam Speaker.

It's my pleasure to rise this morning and make a few brief comments on Bill 200, The Planning Amendment Act. This is my second effort to bring this bill forward to the Legislature for consideration. I won't be spending a great deal of time providing any kind of background on the bill as, as I indicated, this is its second time.

Now the planning amendment act requires that a landowner or developer obtain a development permit from the local municipality or planning district

before any development can occur on the property. Development, Madam Speaker, is very broadly defined. It can be anything from movement of soil or vegetation excavation or, obviously, change in the intensity of the building on the land.

This amendment in Bill 200 is of—it's a minor amendment, Madam Speaker, as development permits are generally acquired after any other necessary local approvals are obtained.

Subsection 148(1) of the act states that a development permit may be issued if the planning district or municipality is satisfied with the proposed development conforms with local planning requirements.

This section 2 of subsection 148(2) of the act provides the planning district or municipality with a 60-day period to review the application and determine if it conforms to local planning requirements. This proposed bill, the planning amendment act, will change subsection 148(3) to reduce the number of days a planning district board of municipal council may withhold a development permit after the initial 60-day period has expired from 125 days to 90 days. This amendment will bring The Planning Act in line with subsection 246(2) of The City of Winnipeg Charter.

In a nutshell, Madam Speaker, that is really the crux of this minor amendment to the planning amendment act. We have 137 municipalities here in the province of Manitoba. One municipality, the City of Winnipeg, is treated in one way in terms of a—90 days for an appeal process, while the other 136 municipalities, those existing outside the Perimeter, are treated a different way under the act. In the interests of fairness and equity in how we treat all Manitobans, where they live within or with outside the Perimeter, I believe that this amendment is something that all members of the House can support.

I know members opposite have on occasion when they were government brought forward similar bills in terms of achieving that sort of—that equity that may have been lacking in terms of whether it was regional or otherwise. For example, I can remember early on, a bill that actually equalized hydro rates because there was a differential of hydro

rates between, again, the city of Winnipeg and rural Manitoba, and legislation was brought forward under members opposite, began to equalize those rates because there did note that discrepancy. I actually recall the member from Minto bringing forward a private member's bill to make a small amendment to the gift—or the gift card legislation that ended the expiry of gift cards.

Through oversight or what else, the government of the day had forgotten or had missed shopping malls from the original expiry, so gift cards that belonged to shopping malls could, indeed, expire or lose their value over time, and the member of Minto brought forward an amendment to ensure again that equity, that so whether a Manitoban bought it at a shopping mall or bought it at a, you know, stand-alone outfit, again, they were treated the same.

That is why this amendment and—will ensure that everyone is assessed equally across Manitoba, whether you're in Winnipeg, Beausejour, The Pas, Flin Flon or Niverville, changing the time frame from 125 days to withhold a development permit to 90 days standardized is The Planning Act with The City of Winnipeg Charter.

I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that if the 90-day time frame, which has been in existence here for the City of Winnipeg and the majority of the population of Manitoba, three quarters, two thirds, three quarters, depending on how you look at your numbers, and is working well, that there would be no reason to deny passage of this bill and, again, ensure that those residents living outside of the city of Winnipeg are treated in the same manner.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Wondering if the member could inform us what the position of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities is on this proposal.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): I want to thank my colleague across the way for that question.

While I was the co-chair of the red tape review, we did engage with a number of municipalities, including the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Manitoba Home Builders', the chambers here in the province of Manitoba, as well as a number of developers, the Urban Development Institute and as well as the Department of Municipal Relations. Those entities are supportive, again, of the equalization of treatment of individuals, whether they are within the city of Winnipeg or outside of the city of Winnipeg when it comes to the planning amendment.

Mr. Altemeyer: I appreciate that answer.

Why is it that this proposal to change The Planning Act was not included in the government's own bill to amend The Planning Act?

*(10:10)

Mr. Martin: Again, I thank the member for that question.

Again, this is a minor amendment, Madam Speaker. This is something that I was—highlighted to me during my review of red tape.

I know members opposite have expressed concern over omnibus bills despite their use of them in government. I thought, in the interest of seeing this pass in a timely manner, presenting it as a stand-alone legislation to highlight the fact that it is, indeed, a minor piece, a minor amendment, but, again, that seeks to equalize the treatment of individuals within the city of Winnipeg with those outside Winnipeg would be the best course of action.

Mr. Altemeyer: Would the honourable member kindly share with the House his definition of what an omnibus bill is?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I've no doubt the member opposite, having been a government member, I think, since 2003 or 2007, is well aware of that definition.

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes, it's still Wolseley—still a little confused on this one, Madam Speaker. An omnibus bill is a piece of legislation which amends multiple pieces of existing legislation.

The member is correct; we quite rightly objected to previous omnibus bills from his government, such as Bill 24, which amended a very large number of pieces of existing legislation, a tactic used by his

government, used by the Harper government, to stifle debate and the time allowed, so this is only amending one piece of legislation.

Does he still maintain he's trying to avoid omnibus situations?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's sharing the information. He failed to also note the omnibus bills were also used by the Doer government and the Selinger government on average about five omnibus a year during their 17 years.

Again, this legislation is to highlight the fact that this is a similar—this is a simple amendment to a piece of legislation that will treat individuals in Manitoba, whether they live inside the city of Winnipeg perimeter or outside the city of Winnipeg, equally under The Planning Act so that it's standardized with The City of Winnipeg Charter. I think if this legislation, if the current effort in terms of how it proposes or how it treats the city of Winnipeg is good enough for them, I would suggest that it's good enough for the people I represent.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, in bringing this forward, I'm presuming that the member has had done some analysis of the existing pattern, and I would wonder what proportion of measures now are dealt within 90 days and what proportion are actually delayed the full 125 days that is allowed currently.

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague across the way for the question. Madam Speaker, the member for River Heights is correct. The majority of them are dealt with, within the time frame. However, there are those that exist outside the time frame, but really, we have to stick to the crux of the issue, is that what we're seeking to do is to treat individuals, developers, land developers, businesses and individuals that live outside the perimeter of the city of—outside the perimeter of Winnipeg the same as we treat those within the perimeter of Winnipeg.

Mr. Altemeyer: What did the honourable member's colleague, the MLA for Gimli and the minister for municipal affairs, who, I believe, is the government's author of the government's amendment of Bill 19, what did that minister tell the MLA for Morris in response to the idea of incorporating this private member's bill which was already introduced last session into the government's own legislation? Did the member have that conversation with his colleague?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, again I appreciate the question. Again, the issue here is we wanted to highlight the fact that the best course of action, I felt, was, from my perspective, in terms of what I heard from individuals during the multi-month review of red tape, was to extract this, to bring it forward, to highlight the fact that it is a minor amendment. This does equalize the treatment of individuals within the city of Winnipeg the same—to bring them on the same playing ground as those outside the city of Winnipeg. Again, I don't really see the potential kerfuffle that members opposite may have with the legislation.

Mr. Altemeyer: It is just confusing that the member, who has been in the Chamber for a number of years and served his constituents, would not be fully aware that bringing forward an idea which he believes in under a private member's bill is in no way going to guarantee that it passes.

Would he not agree it would have made far more sense for him to have his own government minister and colleague incorporate—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —his idea into The Planning Act amendments which this government will ram through later on this summer?

Mr. Martin: Again, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's history lesson. If that was the attitude of all members of the House, then there would be no point to bring any private member bills or resolutions forward.

Again, this bill, what this bill seeks to do is to standardize The Planning Act with The City of Winnipeg Charter.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, as much as I do enjoy Tuesday and Thursday mornings and the debate, I also believe that as MLAs it's our job to get things done for our constituents, and quite often what happens with this government is ideas that are not quite ready for prime time, for whatever reason, are relegated to a private member's proposal rather than being incorporated into government legislation.

It is beyond strange that this member was either unable to convince his own colleague to include his idea in the government's own legislative proposal for this session or there is something within this act that he's not telling us about. I would ask him: Which one is it?

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, again, I appreciate the question.

Based on the member opposite's logic when they were in their 17 years of office, on Tuesdays and Thursdays they brought forward a number of private members' bills and resolutions. Is he—the suggestion the member is saying is none of those bills or resolutions that their government brought forward during those 17 years were ready for prime time.

Mr. Altemeyer: That logic, such as it is, Madam Speaker, only holds in a situation where you're bringing in an amendment to a legislation that your government's already amending. That, I would say, is the exceptional circumstance that we're dealing with this morning.

Members do a very good job, all of us, on all sides of the House, bringing forward resolutions and private members' bills which lie outside of what the agenda has been set, and that's a positive contribution to the debate here. The idea that the member would be amending a piece of legislation his government is already amending sets off some alarm bells for us wondering what's really going over there.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Martin: Madam Speaker, I will take the high road and I won't get into talking about other issues and that. I will simply say that this is a minor amendment to the act. The goal here is to standardize The Planning Act with The City of Winnipeg Charter. If the member opposite or if members opposite believe that individuals that live in the 136 municipalities outside the city of Winnipeg should be treated differently, then I would ask him to stand up and articulate why that exists.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Well, Madam Speaker, and this is an interesting situation. I'm not sure how many times in my years here at the Chamber I have seen this particular situation where a government is amending an existing piece of legislation, and one of the government's own members is, at the same time, bringing forward his own amendment to that legislation. It is additionally bemusing that everyone on the government side should have been aware of this proposal already

because, as he mentioned, he already introduced it in the last session.

* (10:20)

So trying to get some clarification from the member on how we have ended up at this point. *[interjection]* All good? Okay, all right—is, you know, and I get it that the member is not all that forthcoming with whatever private conversations he may have had with his colleague, the MLA for Gimli, who currently serves as the Minister for Municipal Relations. Maybe those conversations didn't take place at all. Or maybe there is, in fact, something about this legislation that he's bringing forward, for a second time, that the government has some concerns about, and they deliberately left this idea out of their legislative proposal, as a result.

I tried to find out where the truth lies on that front just now with our question back-and-forth, and I certainly appreciate the tone of the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) and the responses he gave, but there certainly weren't any answers or any clarifications that were provided. If, indeed—you know, it becomes even more confusing based on his own comments—if, indeed, he has had those discussions with a number of stakeholders who would be impacted by this change and they're all in favour of it, if, indeed, as he proposes, this is just a minor amendment, a minor change to existing legislation, well, why on earth wouldn't his own government have taken the step to include his idea in their legislative proposal under Bill 19?

Now, Bill 19 is already pretty controversial, Madam Speaker. I'm not sure if it has the single largest number of presenters lined up to speak at committee, but it's pretty close. I'm informed by my always-knowledgeable caucus whip and colleague from Minto that it is indeed the one that this session has the most number of concerned Manitobans coming down.

Some of them might be coming here to speak in favour of it, that's certainly true. Usually, people at committee are coming down to oppose a piece of legislation, and we'll have to wait until committee starts later this week to find out what's happening there.

But clearly, Madam Speaker, there's another story, there's another element to this legislative proposal which the member and the government are not sharing with us publicly. And, you know, that's their choice. But it quite simply makes no sense for a

private member's bill to come forward amending the same legislation that the government is amending, when the government should've known full well, all on its own, that this idea existed, that one of their own members was supporting it.

And we can look at the question that my colleague from River Heights asked. Maybe that's part of the truth of what's going here, that, in fact, this isn't nearly as big an obstacle or an issue as the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) is presenting it as, because, as the member from Morris acknowledged in his answer to the question from the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), most of these issues, I believe the quote was, the majority of them are dealt with within the timeline involved, and that actually legally shrinking the number of days is not necessary because the vast majority of the development proposals are being dealt with in the time allowed.

Our caucus has been very concerned and very consistent in its, you know, opposition to this move and, most fundamentally, we believe that it is becoming more and more important, Madam Speaker, for local opportunities, for democratic participation, to occur. And, when the number of days for a council and its citizenry to receive a change to the existing plans, when the timeline to consider those changes, those development proposals is shrunk, then, of course, you reduce the opportunities for local councils, no matter where they are in the 137 municipalities, as the member's mentioned, no matter which one it is. They just have less time to absorb that information, to review any of the technical aspects of it, to try and provide that information to their citizens and receive feedback and make an informed decision that will properly take into account a wide variety of factors.

Certainly, new economic activity and, potentially, new job creation can be beneficial. There will also be potential questions of, you know, other potential impacts on a local municipality, which not everyone might realize initially and which may have positive or negative impacts. When a new activity takes place, it is going to be there for a long time and the difference of 35 days between, you know, the existing system and what the member proposes, in the long run, could well be time very well spent. And I certainly know I have always appreciated the opportunity to come forward with my views, even as a private citizen, before becoming elected myself, and an opportunity to review and digest and consider something that is being proposed and try and offer, you know, my 2 cents of what I think the best path

forward for my community would be. And I think those can actually be very empowering opportunities.

There is just such a gap between citizens in their day-to-day lives and buildings like our own here at the Legislature, an enormous information and engagement gap between the governed and the governing, that I firmly believe that opportunities like this, particularly at the local level, where the decisions can be very direct, are important. And I look to our own experience in government for some really positive examples of that.

For instance, the Building Communities Initiative was a partnership, and, perhaps, Madam Speaker, your own constituency may have benefited from this program when it existed. It is a partnership in funding between municipalities and the Province. It provided a pot of money from both levels for targeted neighbourhoods, and then it was local people in the neighbourhoods who would sit down and decide what their core needs were. They would listen to each other's points of views and then some assessment of the assets in the neighbourhood and assessment of the opportunities would take place, and then specific ideas were pitched as possible solutions and ways to enhance our neighbourhood for the betterment of everyone would come forward. People would then have a chance to vote on which one of those projects they most wanted to proceed with. You would rank them and implement as many of them as you could before the money was spent. It's really pretty straightforward and yet so incredibly unique.

And none of that is possible if you're shrinking opportunities for citizen engagement. None of that is possible if you are shrinking the number of days for the public to become informed, to become engaged and to have a chance to offer their points of view.

And, you know, the public, same as us, just because we come forward with our views or ideas doesn't mean they're going to get implemented. Democracy doesn't mean that you get your way just because you show up. It means you get to show up and offer your point of view in a safe forum where your point of view will be listened to and respected and a decision will be made and you'll have a chance to have input into that.

So I thank the member for bringing this idea forward. I remain very confused as to why he and his colleagues have chosen to do it in this manner, and I look forward to hearing comments from his colleagues. Perhaps we'll get some clarification from

them as to why this idea wasn't good enough to be included in their actual bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Morning, Madam Speaker. I would like to start by thanking the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) for all the hard work he has done on the red tape review he has undertaken, which, I'm certain, at times, he must've felt like he was mounting an impossible mission, considering how much there was in place.

As we've heard from the member for Morris, under subsection 148(3) of the planning amendment act, if changes to a development plan, bylaw, zoning bylaw or secondary plan have been initiated, an application for development permit may be held up for up to 125 days if the proposed development plan does not conform with depending changes. This amendment shortens that time from 125 days to 90 days. That changes the timeline withholding the development permit in line with the city of Winnipeg—with The City of Winnipeg Charter, sorry.

* (10:30)

This amendment has received positive reviews and support from the local development community. This is because it would reduce the potentially 'lengthly' wait times to receive approval on changing a plan and allow for construction and improvement to happen sooner. This amendment will help reduce red tape and allow for more construction through the short construction season. Trimming 35 days off The Planning Act would help business, municipalities, local governments and non-profit organizations realize their construction goals sooner.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans will no longer have to wait a potential of four months for their construction permits to be changed. Instead of their permits waiting on government tables, workers can be out building Manitoba better communities, upgrading their areas and boosting our economy. Construction has a short enough season here in Manitoba. With such long and cold winters and slow snow melts in the spring, as well as flooding and the potential for abnormal weather, Manitobans only have a few short months to have their construction projects completed before the cold hits again.

This reduction in red tape gives a better use of the dollars put towards improving and development. Many effective-affected stakeholders are in support

of this bill because it reduces red tape and unnecessary costs to Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I rise just as perplexed as my friend from Wolseley was as to what exactly we're doing here this morning.

This bill that we have before the Legislature this morning seems very similar, or it captures a lot of the same items that are captured in Bill 19. And it's my understanding, in fact, that Bill 19 is a bill that's before this Legislature and, in fact, is coming to committee this week. This week this bill is coming to committee for—to hear from the public and for discussion by members of this House, and during this process, during the committee stage of a bill is an opportunity to bring amendments.

Now, this member for Morris has called this a minor amendment. He's called this a very small piece, a very small amendment. And so I'm quite open if this is something that he would like to bring to committee and have the opportunity at committee—I'll be happy to hear his explanation at committee. He can stand up and put on the record exactly why he thinks this is important, and he can spend some time talking about the work that he did with the committee to develop this and he can bring this amendment forward and he can make this an issue that we consider at committee.

But he hasn't done that, Madam Speaker. Instead, he's brought it here to the Chamber to discuss on a morning when, as he points out, is our opportunity as backbench MLAs or independent MLAs or opposition MLAs to bring forward important legislation that otherwise can't be discussed. So I'm trying to figure this out. I'm trying to get to the bottom of this. I'm trying to understand what's going on.

Now, I had said, you know, off the record, Madam Speaker, I shouted out maybe in the House here earlier, I apologize for that. I'm admitting a bit of heckling. But I said maybe there's a rift. Maybe there's some factions that are developing that we're seeing come to the forefront here in the House because we have the member who apparently can't go to his own minister and say, look, I've got this very small amendment. I've done this work, I've talked to constituents. I've talked to people. This is an important thing. We have a broad consensus of support for this. Can you implement this?

Did he do that? Maybe the minister said no. Maybe the minister said this isn't what we want to do. We don't support Bill 200. Maybe the minister said that. He said, actually, I don't support Bill 200, and if the minister said that, I'd ask him to put on the record that he didn't support Bill 200. He will not vote in favour of Bill 200. Maybe that's what's going on. Maybe he didn't listen. Maybe the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) can't even get a meeting with his own minister. Maybe that's what's going on. Again, maybe there's a faction going on in the governing caucus.

You know, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) likes to stand up and he often says we are the—as he glares over his shoulder and watches every single one of his MLAs—says we are the best team in history. And he looks and he makes sure everybody applauds, that's right, and he says, you'd better applaud, because we are the best team, when I tell you what to do.

That's what the Premier says. So, maybe that's what's going on. Maybe it's—there's a rift that we're now seeing come to the forefront publicly here, before the House. But I have another theory, Madam Speaker, and I could be wrong, I'm just—this is me just trying to figure out what—why we're spending our time, when we have so many important—I mean, I could ask every single one of the opposition MLAs right now to bring forward a bill right now that matters to Manitobans and they would happily bring you one, or two, or three or a half dozen great bills that we could be spending our time talking about.

No, we're talking about a minor amendment that, for some reason, this member can't get his minister to support. So, I thought, maybe there is another reason. And I'm—maybe I've figured it out, Madam Speaker, maybe this is what it is. We could bring it to committee tomorrow. We could talk about this as part of the discussion of Bill 19. But maybe this member is concerned that Bill 19 won't, in fact, pass. Maybe he's concerned that when Bill 19 hearings begin and presenter after presenter, after presenter, after presenter come and start picking apart this government's Bill 19—and I'm not saying that they would've specifically talked about this amendment—but they would—there is certainly a lot of presenters that are ready to come to this Legislature and start talking about Bill 19. Maybe these members opposite, maybe they'd actually start listening for a change. Maybe they'd actually listen to the public. Maybe they'd actually pay attention to what their own constituents are saying. Not supporters of the NDP. Hey, there's a lot of those out there, Madam

Speaker, and they certainly have a lot of criticism for this government.

But maybe it's when their own supporters and their own constituents start coming to Bill 19 hearings, maybe that's when they'll start listening, and maybe they'll make a decision to either pull Bill 19, hold it off, send it to the dustbin of history, or maybe—maybe—we'll actually get some of these members opposite to stand up to this Premier and stand up to this government and actually vote against Bill 19. Maybe that's something that they're willing to do.

Now, again, I'm just—I'm trying to figure out why we're spending our time here this morning, why we're wasting our valuable time talking about something that the mini—the member could very easily either have talked to the minister ahead of time about, or could bring as an amendment. Both of those options are very viable and they don't spend the time of this House making—giving us an opportunity to speak about this.

Now, the other issue that, of course, is forefront on members opposite's minds—I know, because they're starting to get a little squirmy in their seats over there—two years in and oh, there's been a lot of bad news, been a lot of lack of transparency, been a lot of hiding and shuffling and trying to figure out how we can 'obsfucate'—did I say that word correctly? Hansard will clean that up for me, hopefully—obsf—obsf—okay, I'm not even going to try. 'Obsfucate'. I think I said it right. And I'm the education critic, as pointed out. Absolutely, it's an—always a learning experience and I appreciate the very kind assistance of our clerks, helping me out. They certainly know how to say these words.

But this is what they've been doing. They've now spent two years and we actually have a bill before this House, as well, that removes transparency, that takes transparency away from the very process that we're talking about in Bill 200. And that is, with regards to notices in local newspapers.

And so these mini—these members stand up and they say, no, you know what? You don't need to know this information. Just kind of hide it as best they can. Move through the process without the proper public notices. You know, this isn't a big issue; don't worry about that. And then at the same time, say, oh, guess what? We're going to shorten the period that municipalities need to let their citizens know about this information. And those two points, Madam Speaker, just, I think paint the absolute,

perfect picture of where this government is at. A government that came in—well, promising a lot of things, promising you know, to protect front-line services. Well, we know that we're—you know, that they backed down on that promise. They say, we're going to protect those front-line workers that everybody respects and cares about. Of course, they've totally backtracked on that, on that idea.

*(10:40)

But then the other thing they said—and, again, I always like to point out there was very few things that were actually said in the last election by this government when they were trying to convince Manitobans that they would keep things running as the NDP had in the past. They said, you know what, transparency. Transparency is something that we care about.

And yet, what do we get? We get, time after time, example after example of this government failing to be transparent, failing to communicate properly with Manitobans. You know, this member talks about a committee that he was on to—or maybe he chaired? Is that right? Maybe he chaired? He chaired a committee looking at red tape. I haven't seen that report. I'd love to maybe ask the member. He could table that report before the House, love to see that report. I'd love to see all those Manitobans he talked to, not just a cherry-picked few. I want to see everybody that they talked to, all the responses that they got.

Hey, there's always good ways that we can make things more efficient or eliminate red tape. I think there's always been a culture of that in Manitoba of improving that. But this minister has not—or this member has not been transparent, and he's not been transparent in his reasons for bringing this forward.

So I return to where I started, and that is to just maybe we can get an explanation from a member of the government. Is this multiple factions that aren't speaking to one another?

Maybe they're angry they didn't get into Cabinet, they're not at in the Cabinet table. Maybe they can't get an audience with the Premier (Mr. Pallister). Maybe the Premier's not listening on issues like health care or education, things that I know that members opposite care about for their own communities. Maybe that's the case. Maybe it's a faction, or maybe he's concerned that Bill 19 is the wrong way to go. Maybe he's scared that that bill's not going to pass.

Well, you know what, Madam Speaker, this is not the right way to bring it before this House, and I'm surprised the member would do that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to talk on this Bill 200, The Planning Amendment Act.

We're ready to, you know, support this as a minor amendment which would bring things into line around the province. At the same time, we note from the MLA's comment, from the member's comment that most municipalities are already achieving the 90-day time frame, and that this, you know, may not make all that much difference, in fact, given that most municipalities under most circumstances are already meeting the standard that he's looking for.

I think it's a little bit ironic that the member is bringing this forward to shorten the time, at the same point when his government is decreasing funding to municipalities and at the same time as his government is bringing in measures which would bypass the requirement which has been there for many years to have notices in local community newspapers. That requirement for notices in local community newspapers is tremendously important and this government potentially, you know, by not having notices in local community newspapers— as the other bill that they have before us is making that change—by not having that requirement and at the same time shortening the period that there would need to be a response in is actually going in a direction which would potentially, you know, make it harder for people to be aware of what's happening in terms of meetings and in processes at the same time as the time for approval is being shortened.

Nevertheless, I think that there is reason to believe that the 90-day approach is a reasonable one and we'll support it in spite of that.

I had expected the member, giving his past background working with people with disabilities, that he would bring forward a bill which would enhance access by people with disabilities to information from municipalities.

There is a whole world of work at the moment which shows how you can make Internet sites more accessible to people with disabilities, and yet this is actually not required of municipalities at the moment. And I think it's important that we bring greater awareness to this so that Internet, public Internet sites, actually are more accessible because

this is a bigger issue than many people realize. I mean, you realize you think about Internet access and how you see things on an Internet page. For example, a fairly common disability is, if you want to call it that, a special ability, is people who are red-green colour-blind, and if you have an Internet page which has got red and green mixed in, it is very hard, then, for somebody with a red-green colour-blind issue to be able to read red writing on a green background or vice versa.

And it is simple things like this which can be attended to and which can actually make a big difference for those individuals with red-green colour-blind problems. And there are simple things which would apply to a whole variety of individuals. Somebody who is blind, having information in Braille or, now quite commonly, in—on audio, on Internet sites so that people can listen to them or convert digital to audio so they can listen to it. I mean, this can be quite important. Somebody who is both deaf and blind, we need to be able to be cognizant of being able to get information out to people in a way that they are able to access that information. So I had hoped that the member would be bringing forward a bill which provided for greater access to municipal information and particularly for those with learning disabilities.

I thought of another idea that the member could have brought forward. You know, in a world where you want people to get information about measures that are being put forward at a municipal level, I thought perhaps the member was going to bring forward a bill which would provide for municipalities to collect email lists of their residents, handle those with appropriate privacy concerns and measurements and then require that when there is a notice of a—what's happening within the municipality of a proposal coming forward, that there would be a requirement for the municipality to email out to residents who have submitted their email and clearly want information so that they can be informed about what is happening at the municipal level and what is happening with procedures. And it would also be a vehicle for making sure that not only notice of meetings but more information about the planning proposals and so on could be wider circulated to people who want them instead of setting up a system, with your cutting off the access to people for information through local community newspapers, and making it harder for people to find information.

And so I had expected that the member might go in different directions, promoting the access to

information, promoting the public discussion and the public awareness of what's going on. But, sadly, that was not the case. And so we are left with this bill which will make a relatively small change to bring rural municipalities into line with the city of Winnipeg. I mean, it could be asked of the member that maybe if you had the ability to get emails to people quickly and that they would be aware of what was going on quickly, you could actually even speed this up further.

* (10:50)

But what is important, we must remember, is that matters of public concern at the municipal level have got due consideration by the public of the events which are going on and are enabled to have input and that there be a thorough consideration of options, of circumstances where there are proposals coming forward at the municipal level.

So I think that that really needs to be our objective, here. The objective of this member is to shorten the time. Okay, I say, but I think let's not forget that the goal is, in fact, to have enhanced public discussion, enhanced public participation and enhanced public involvement at a local, community and municipal level. And that really should be our goal because when you have wider involvement of people you get better overall decision-make—you take people's concerns into account, you're enabled to do things better for all people in a municipality. And that really should be our fundamental goal, Madam Speaker.

Those are my comments on this legislation, and I pass it on to others to provide comments, as well.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm pleased to rise and speak today about Bill 200.

I will confess to being pleased that the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) began his comments—the bill talking about a private member's bill that I'd brought into this House before the last election, amendments to the consumer protection bill. On the one hand, I'm flattered that the member would raise it. I'm also pleased because I think by doing that, the member has pretty much made our point as to some of the concerns we have with the bill.

The private member's bill that I'd brought in that the member for Morris referenced was indeed a bill to make sure that gift cards purchased from shopping centres held their value over time and that it was not possible any more to have an administrative charge which could actually take the gift card that someone

receives from a family member or from a friend or wins and then gets to the shopping centre and finds out there's nothing left. That bill was all about consumer protection, and it was really all about making sure that Manitobans aren't surprised.

And that's one of the concerns we have as we debate Bill 200, is that this bill would increase the likelihood—in connection with Bill 19, which I'll have more to speak on in a few minutes—that's going to make it more likely Manitobans are going to be surprised about developments which might happen nearby their community or even right next to their property and have a real impact on their lives.

Bill 200 would change The Planning Act to provide that if changes to a development plan bylaw, zoning bylaw or secondary plan had been initiated, an application for a development permit may now only be held for up to 90 days instead of 125 days if the proposed development does not conform with the pending changes.

Well, it's permissive, as I believe other members have already spoken about. The municipality has the ability to hold a permit for up to 125 days at present, but it sounds from the debate that, indeed, most municipalities in most situations would issue the permit sooner than that.

What kind of permits would they be less likely to grant quickly? What permits would they be most likely to hold on to? Well, quite frankly, it's those developments which would have the greatest impact on the people living in that rural municipality or in that urban community. And that might be a development that would make a major change to parkland. It might be a change that has a major impact on the nuisance grounds by providing noise or odour or other problems which would make it less likely that people living in the area would be happy with what happens to the property values, what may happen to their own personal health and well-being.

So Bill 200 may not have a huge impact on many applications that don't conform with the existing—or, the existing bylaws and zoning, but it would have an impact on those developments which would be the most concerning for people living in communities.

And that's why, when we consider the synchronicity of this bill coming forward this week, the same week as we know that there's dozens and dozens of concerned Manitobans coming down to

talk about Bill 19, certainly give us as the opposition cause for concern.

Of course, we want to ensure that Manitoba municipalities are strong and prepared for the future so they can grow their local economies and help us create good jobs. And, Madam Speaker, I've been very proud to see the incredible economic growth both inside and outside of the Perimeter over the last two decades, which we hope is not now grinding to a halt.

And, certainly, I'm an urban MLA; I represent the West End of Winnipeg. But I'm always pleased to travel around the province and sometimes surprised by the amount of development that's happened in the last 20 years.

I think you know, Madam Speaker, my family has—my wife has family down in Morden. So I travel down there quite a bit. The development on the east side of Morden, as Morden and Winkler slowly and inexorably become one metropolis, has been quite amazing to see. I started driving down to Morden in the mid-90s, and the difference over the past 20 years is quite incredible.

If you visit the town of Winkler, you can't help but be struck by the amount of new development. I know that there were certain members, including the member for Morris (Mr. Martin), who ran the Winnipeg police half marathon on Sunday—maybe the two of us will drive down to Winkler and we can do the Winkler Thanks for Giving half marathon on Thanksgiving weekend. I was amazed by the amount of development on the edge of town. I was also very pleased when Mayor Harder, who, even though I know will never be of the same political persuasion, I was very pleased when he recognized me at that race and thanked our NDP government for support we've given to the community of Winkler for some of their enhancements.

You know, I drive through Selkirk quite often, and it's quite exciting to see the amount of development going on on the outskirts of Selkirk as new businesses choose to locate there and new hotels are built, exciting things happen. And, of course, driving into Brandon on 18th Street, I am struck by the amount of development in that community since 1999. You drive in and see the commercial and retail development off 18th Street or you see the amazing developments on the north hill of the Assiniboine Community College, of course, which happened because of investments.

But for all those communities, big and small, across the province, we know that development planning is a delicate balance. Municipalities want to attract business; they want to attract opportunities; they want to attract people to move to their communities but also find reasons for young people to stay.

And it's a difficult balance. Any changes with respect to development planning should be made with the intention of sustainability, community partnerships, increasing density so communities are more efficient, healthy living and local empowerment. And empowerment is the key word because this bill would decrease the amount of time developers must give notice to residents when they intend to build any new developments. And, again, I think it's clear that there are not many municipalities that would hold a permit for the maximum time, but those that do would be the ones which, in political terms, we would consider to be hot issues, issues where the mayor or the reeve and councillors are receiving information from people. They're concerned about the impact on people and they're concerned on the future of their communities.

Planning and zoning bylaws exist so communities can control what growth looks like. Growth is good, but unchecked growth can be a concern. And by shortening the amount of time that a board or council can consider development—proposal for new development—municipalities do run the risk of not fully considering how it will impact families, businesses, schools and public spaces in the area.

Now, it's one thing for the City of Winnipeg, which we know has a large staff, which have more resources than a lot of other communities. And perhaps, for a developer who's anxious to build a huge new livestock operation or to build a new factory which might have a negative impact, 125 days might seem like a long time. For the family who lives next door to that project who may or may not actually be given notice at the start of that period of what's going on, that's not a very, very long time at all.

And that's why, as I say, there's a strange synchronicity, as my friend the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) has pointed out, that we're debating Bill 200 this morning, yet just a little more than 24 hours from now, there's going to be Manitobans from all over the province lining up at the microphone to talk about their concerns with Bill 19. And what is one of the things we know

we'll hear? Well, one of the things we're going to hear is concerns how certain notice requirements are now going to be weakened and that instead of publishing notices in the newspaper, in many cases it's going to be publication on the Internet, if somebody happens to know where to look. And we're going to hear people from all over the province.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have one minute remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 12—Celebrating Freedom Road

Madam Speaker: The hour's now 11 a.m. and the time for private member's resolution. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution Celebrating Freedom Road brought forward by the honourable member for the Interlake.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): I move, seconded by the member from La Verendrye,

WHEREAS the community of Shoal Lake 40 did not have sufficient economic development opportunities due to a lack of road access; and

WHEREAS upon completion of Freedom Road the community of Shoal Lake 40 will be able to achieve higher levels of economic opportunity and prosperity; and

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg and the Federal Government have worked collaboratively with the current Provincial Government; and

WHEREAS the previous Provincial Government neglected to provide Shoal Lake 40 with a road to economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS the current Provincial Government has successfully negotiated a funding agreement for the construction of the Shoal lake 40 Freedom Road; and

WHEREAS construction on the final phase has begun and the reserve portion of Freedom Road has been completed six weeks ahead of schedule and under budget.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the Provincial Government for recognizing the importance of Shoal Lake 40 Freedom Road project and urge it to continue working with Indigenous communities throughout the province under a framework of mutual respect and meaningful consultation to ensure that Manitobans have access to economic opportunity.

Motion presented.

Mr. Johnson: I rise in the House today to discuss Shoal Lake and the importance of the Freedom Road project. Shoal Lake 40 is a First Nation community situated on the Manitoba-Ontario border, roughly two hours east of Winnipeg, and it has on-reserve population of about 290 people.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Between 1912 and 1919, the original Ojibwe village located in the mouth of the Falcon River at Shoal Lake was displaced and moved to a peninsula which would later become a man-made island.

A parcel of the band's traditional land, about 3,000 acres, became City of Winnipeg property and split the reserve into three separate parcels. This land was then used to construct the Shoal Lake aqueduct. Completed in the 1919, the aqueduct provides Winnipeg with all of the water the city uses on a day-to-day basis.

First Nation communities of Shoal Lake inhabit a man-made island, accessible only via barge traffic during the summer from Shoal Lake 39 First Nation's dock located in the community in Ontario. Throughout the winter, though, Shoal Lake 40 is accessible by ice roads from the very community in which Winnipeg gets its water from. They find an—from the very community which Winnipeg gets its water from, they find an inadequate availability of clean drinking water, only temporarily remedied by the constant restocking of bottled water.

The community of Shoal Lake 40 does not have its own water processing or—plant—or sewage treatment plant either. So without a local water treatment facility, the local inhabitants are left importing large water jugs at their own expense.

The Shoal Lake 40 has been under a drinking watery advisory since 1998. The lack of an all-season road access has made it 'prohibitably' expensive for the community to build a water treatment plant. As a result, the very community that

provides nearly a million Winnipeggers residents with clean drinking water have not been able to enjoy the same luxury.

Currently, the inability to access the island year round has led to a buildup of garbage, contributing to the environmental degradation of the area. The Shoal Lake tripartite agreement was established on June 13th, 1989. The agreement was designated to protect the water of Shoal Lake by promoting sustainable development in the lands adjacent to Shoal Lake.

The inability to transport materials, goods and service providers by road has made it not only physically difficult, but also financially costly to develop the community's homes, facilities and infrastructure. These barriers have created an inadequate environment for community and economic growth and prosperity within the isolated community of Shoal Lake 40.

However, the by-products of the inaccessible island community stretch beyond inadequate drinking water or undeveloped infrastructure. Without year-round road access, these people of this island risk their lives in a costly gamble while crossing the ice. Sadly, this has led to the drowning of at least nine residents from Shoal Lake 40 over the years.

Furthermore, inhabitants face the risk of an inability to 'accase'—access emergency medical services such as the ambulance. The consequences, obviously, from that can be dire.

For Manitobans that live in a remote location, even ones faced with a medical emergency may have the ability to drive to a hospital if an ambulance cannot reach them promptly. However, for members of the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, this is not the case. Its members face the constant risk of inaccessibility to primary services such as emergency medical staff as well as frequent pre- and post-pregnancy support for parents.

Furthermore, police and fire services have a much more difficult time responding to incidences within the community. As a result of the serious and urgent circumstances of the Shoal Lake 40, the City of Winnipeg, as well as the Province and the federal governments, have partnered with Chief Redsky and the Shoal Lake 40 community to build what is being called Freedom Road.

The project is set to cost \$30 million. The funding will be shared equally by the City of Winnipeg, the Province and the federal government.

The current Progressive Conservative government has successfully negotiated a funding agreement for the construction of the remainder of the road. The City of Winnipeg and the federal government have worked collaboratively with the current provincial government in order to see the crucial project through to completion.

The 24-kilometre road that will connect the community of Shoal Lake 40 to the Trans-Canada Highway is more than halfway complete. The on-reserve portion of the road, situated on Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, was finished in December of 2017. This preliminary portion of the bridge was completed six weeks ahead of schedule and under budget, exemplifying the determination of all those involved in its life-changing project.

Shoal Lake 40 and the federal government may have a water-treatment plant built for the community by 2021. This will result in autonomy for the First Nation community of Shoal Lake 40, alleviating them from the burdensome task of importing large water jugs, costing a significant portion of their annual budget, not to mention garbage removal from the First Nations.

The purpose of the Freedom Road is for the community of Shoal Lake 40, that they will be able to achieve increased level of economic opportunity and prosperity, assured by the ability to cost-effectively navigate materials and service providers to and from the island.

The previous provincial NDP government neglected to provide Shoal Lake 40 with a road to economic opportunity for their entire tenure, failing the community and its members. This resulted in nearly two decades of inadequate opportunity for the First Nations people to develop alongside their surrounding communities as well as depriving them of their basic access to the crucial services I mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, the NDP failed to make meaningful progress on Treaty Land Entitlement obligations. No land was transferred under the Treaty Land Entitlement process during the last three years of the NDP tenure. No land—now we find ourselves on the cusp of completing the revolutionary Freedom Road that will liberate the inhabitants of the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

The provincial government wants to take this opportunity to recognize the importance of the Shoal Lake 40 Freedom Road project and urge to continue

working with indigenous communities throughout the province under the framework of mutual respect and meaningful consultations to ensure that all Manitoban communities have access to economic opportunity.

Furthermore, the Assembly—this Assembly would like to pay its respects to all of the community members of the Shoal Lake 40 nations who have faced tragedy and—as a result of inadequate access to the mainland.

* (11:10)

This project is key to a safer future for the current and next generations of Shoal Lake residents. This project exemplifies the potential of harmonious co-operation and communication between First Nation communities and various levels of government.

The collective efforts for both private and public entities, along with the guidance and knowledge of First Nation chiefs and other First Nation community leaders, will result in effective and sustainable infrastructure projects for all Manitobans. It is only when we come together as communities, municipalities, provinces and, ultimately, a nation that we can truly achieve the highest standard of living.

This government will continue to work in co-operation with Chief Redsky and the Shoal Lake 40 First Nations councillors to ensure the completion of the Freedom Road in order to create a sustainable future for the residents of the Shoal Lake reserve.

Winnipeg, and all those who dwell within, owe Shoal Lake 40 their gratitude, and, as such, we will continue to support the independence and economic development of Shoal Lake 40.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period up to 10 minutes will be held, and the questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question must be asked by a member from another party, any subsequent questions must be asked in rotation between parties, each independent member may ask one question, and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'd like to ask the member, the resolution called for the government to work co-operatively with indigenous communities in

mutual respect. Why, then, does the Premier (Mr. Pallister) spark concern about a race war and call indigenous organizations special interest groups?

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): 'Reconciliation'—reconciliation means more than just words and gestures. It's—it starts with listening, learning, understanding and relationship building, but it also means taking real concrete actions on moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and true partnership, and that is exactly what our government is doing.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Can the member provide an update on the status of Freedom Road's construction?

Mr. Johnson: Yes. The project is going extremely well, and the reserve portion of the road has been completed six weeks ahead of schedule and under budget. Once complete, this 24-kilometre road will connect the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation with the Trans-Canada Highway west of Falcon Lake in Manitoba.

This road includes a bridge. The bridge not only serves the community, but it symbolizes a bridge in reconciliation.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the member, the resolution calls for co-operation with indigenous communities, but how does this government intend to do that when they've cut transportation for indigenous Manitobans across the province, highway spending was slashed by hundreds of millions of dollars and northern Manitoba is seeing deteriorating access?

Mr. Johnson: This portion of Freedom Road that was built, it actually cost us about \$800,000 a kilometre, give or take, where, if you compare it to the east-side road, it was 5 million—give or take—dollars per kilometre. So at—they were at six and a half times the price of this road, and that's how you stretch the dollars and you make more infrastructure projects completed for Manitobans.

Mr. Smook: Can the member tell us what partnerships were involved in this process of building Freedom Road?

Mr. Johnson: Yes. The City of Winnipeg and the federal government, they have worked 'collaboratively' with the provincial government. This is an example of something positive that can be done when we work together. The Shoal Lake 40

and—First Nation and Chief Redsky obviously played a major role in the completion of not just the First Nation portion of Freedom Road but also the portion being completed as we speak.

Mr. Maloway: Why is the Pallister government selling off our northern airports, making life harder for indigenous Manitobans living in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Johnson: Our focus here today is on Freedom Road. If he wants to talk about failures, there's lots of examples. For example, Shoal Lake has suffered the lack of road access for 17 years while this government did nothing. We are working to correct that and we will soon have a road for Shoal Lake First Nations.

Mr. Smook: Has the community of Shoal Lake expressed support for the construction of Freedom Road during this time?

Mr. Johnson: Absolutely. The chief of Shoal Lake 40 has expressed his excitement and support quite clearly, so let me read a quote: It's amazing; it's been a long, long journey to get this—to get—sorry, let me start that again so it's a proper quote. It's amazing; it was a long, long journey to get to this point and many, many leaders before me, including my dad in the '50s when he was chief.

So this has been brought on by many generations and of course the existing Chief Redsky is ecstatic about getting this road completed.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The member talks about access for this community and how important it is for their economic development. Are there any other communities in Manitoba that have recently, say, within the last year or so, lost access and that limits their economic ability? And could the member explain, then, exactly what his government has done to help get that access up and running? And I'm talking specifically about the rail line to Churchill.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, the situation with the rail line in Churchill, admittedly it's common knowledge it falls under the federal government's jurisdiction. It is our position that the federal government should fulfill its obligations to rectify the rail line to Churchill.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it is good that the Freedom Road is continuing to be built and will be built in the not too distant future. When I have asked about the east-side road, where construction appears to have stopped, the minister has said that, oh, don't worry about the east-side

road; we're building Freedom Road. So I'm interested; I want to make sure that even though Freedom Road is built, that there is attention to completing the east-side road.

Can the member help us as to when the east-side road is going to be built, completed?

Mr. Johnson: We've invested roughly \$70 million into the east-side road since taking office, and we've also completed under budget the Freedom Road by a drastic amount. We have cost only \$800,000 per kilometre, where the previous government was well over \$5 million per kilometre for their east-side-road authority. We are—have moved it to Infrastructure to enable the people who build roads to build roads, not build government.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask this member why the Pallister government is privatizing its fleet of water bombers that keep indigenous and northern communities safe.

Mr. Johnson: Like I mentioned earlier, our focus here today is about Shoal Lake 40 Freedom Road and reconciliation. As I mentioned earlier, it means a lot more than just words. It starts with listening, learning, understanding and relationship building, and that's what we're doing. That's what this government's about, but it also means taking real, concrete action, as you see in Freedom Road, moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and true partnership. That's what this government is about.

* (11:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for river—Fort Garry—Riverview.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry—Riverview): You tend to make that mistake every once in a while; I wonder if we're starting to look alike over here.

But I want to ask the member if he could explain to us why the Harper government, a Conservative government, refused time and time and time and time again to participate in the construction of Freedom Road.

Mr. Johnson: I think if he looks back, that time period had an NDP provincial government, and it took our government to work with the federal government, along with the City of Winnipeg, Chief Redsky, to get things done. And that's what this government is about—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Johnson: —is getting things done. We're not about building bureaucracy; we're about building roads and getting economic opportunity to all Manitobans.

Mr. Lindsey: Interesting that the member talks about getting things done. Well, there's a railroad that he's done nothing—his government has done nothing and has no intention of doing anything to support not just the town of Churchill but several other First Nations communities along that rail line. He talks about words not meaning anything for reconciliation. Well, they most assuredly do mean something, and the words that the member speaks leave us somewhat wanting.

Can he explain how his vision of reconciliation will work with some of the northern communities, when they're selling off water bombers that protect them, they're selling off airports that they use for access, they're refusing to provide—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Johnson: I'm glad he brings up reconciliation one more time, and I can't stress these words enough—the— because it's more than just words; it's gestures. It starts with listening, learning, understanding and relationship building. It also means taking real concrete action, and that's what we have done with Freedom Road: real concrete action and moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and true partnership. This was—road was done in a partnership and reconciliation, and that is what our government is about.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for question period has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The debate is open. Any speakers?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I have to say I think all of us in this House are glad to see that this road is finally being built. It's been a long, long time, and for the member to make a statement that, you know, this was an issue, you know, in the 1950s, well, I'd like to remind him that since the 1950s, the Conservatives were in government under Duff Roblin; they were in government under Sterling Lyon; they were in government with Gary Filmon, and so, you know, and none of those governments were able to get this job done. And my friend, the member for Riverview,

just pointed out that the federal government under Stephen Harper, you know, resisted getting this project done.

But I do recall, a few years ago now, in the last four or five years, maybe a little longer, church groups got active in this cause. Just goes to show you the power of the community when they want things to get done. Churches got involved, supporting this issue, and it's too bad that there weren't more church groups and more—getting involved in more issues like this, but in this particular case, they certainly got results, and this brought this issue forward, and at a certain point, the governments just had to deal with it because it wasn't going to go away. So I—seems to me that the Conservatives are kind of late to the table here and they're trying to play catch-up. You can see the wheels spinning underneath, as if the car is up in the air and its wheels are spinning and they're trying to get into the issue here when they have been not involved in it for—at all.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Shoal Lake have been cut off from opportunities for economic development and reliable road access. We're pleased that we announced this project, and we support its completion. This is certainly a co-operative effort on the part of the federal government's involved in this, as well as the Province. Shoal Lake 40 was cut off from the mainland more than a century ago for an aqueduct that supplies Winnipeg drinking water, and I think that that's where, you know, the fairless—fairness issue was very apparent and very stark for many people, that we would be getting our water for the last 100 years—a reliable water supply. And the people were cut off because of this aqueduct and they were left out there without proper consideration, and that now is partly, you know, being resolved, and it's taken 100 years to do that.

Right now the residents are relying on a barge which frequently breaks down—that's been certainly reported many times—to get on and off the island. And our team certainly understands the suffering that the people of Shoal Lake 40 have faced over the years. But there are many, many more Shoal Lake 40 examples that we have to deal with, you know, not only in Manitoba, but right across the country.

Investing First Nations communities in—investing in First Nation communities is a decision that benefits everyone, especially communities like Shoal Lake 40—been waiting for governments to listen to their voice. And, you know, I'm hearing

comments across the floor and I'm not going to respond to them. The reality is that—I guess, you know, it's been said that it's never too right to do the right thing, and that's what's being done here.

We understand that Manitobans want reconciliation with indigenous Manitobans and want actions that move us closer to that goal. Freedom Road addresses unfairness in Shoal Lake First Nation. Winnipeg's been able to get its drinking water from Shoal Lake, yet indigenous people have lived there in isolation. Shoal Lake First Nation deserves all-weather road access to their community as soon as possible, and we're happy to finally see that the project is in its final stage.

We're concerned that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) fought over funding with the federal government and failed to connect the project from the Trans-Canada on time. Our NDP team wants to see the people of Shoal Lake 40 connected to the rest of Manitoba by road so that they have the same economic opportunities. Freedom Road will provide huge economic and social benefits for the community.

We support—as I had indicated before, we support the building of this road. We believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I've said before, that this is an issue that has taken far too long to achieve a resolution and—but now it's there. We should proceed, finish this project and immediately look forward to completing other projects that similarly require attention that have been out there and not dealt with for a long, long time.

The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), you know, talks about the railway to Churchill—certainly, another issue that this government is certainly hiding from. He's brought this issue to their attention many, many times and, basically, their solution here is to blame the federal government and basically leave the issue with the federal government to try to seek a resolution. Well, that's not what the role of this government should be. This government is elected with its 40 seats over there to represent everyone in this province, not just certain areas, certain interests. And because—[interjection] Well, you know, the member's chirping from his seat once again. You know, he's—I guess what he's been—what—his activities recently over there, he's lucky to be having a seat over there. I would think they'd be putting him back over here on this side of the House. Maybe that'll happen soon to the member.

But the reality is they are sensitive over there about this issue with the railway to Churchill. I

mean, had this been a—had this been an NDP government, we would have seen action by now. Absolutely, and the federal government would have been forced to participate in it. What they've done—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —is they've just simply walked away, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just walked away from the road to Churchill and—the railway to Churchill. They've walked away from it and they've said, okay, this is a federal responsibility. Let the feds deal with it.

* (11:30)

Well, that's not putting pressure on the federal government. What the—this—the political situation demanded was a provincial government to step up and say, you know, Churchill's part of Manitoba last time we looked. It's part of the Manitoba map, and it's time for you, as the government, to treat that area fairly and take action, demand that if this issue is not deal—dealt with in a timely manner or commitments made, that some other part of our relationship with Ottawa would suffer as a result of it.

I mean, that's how things get done, and the members opposite haven't done it well because they don't represent the area. They never have and they probably never will, so it's easy for them to put their heads—collective heads—in the sand and ignore a problem which is certainly hurting the economy in northern Manitoba.

And, you know, since they've been—and you know the member likes to talk about the cost of the roads on the east side and so on, but he fails to recognize the community benefit agreements are—it's a different concept than, you know, building a kilometre of road on a flat prairie, you know, in Winnipeg versus building a road up in northern Manitoba where you have to haul equipment and you have muskeg issues. There's all sorts of complications, even with the railway, even with the building the railway. Anybody that's ever ridden on the train to Churchill knows that even at the best of times this train—probably sometimes I could run faster, and that's saying a lot. I could run faster than the train and have run faster, I think, than the train because it's a—there's muskeg up there.

But, by the way, you know, there are studies that should be done back talking about Churchill now, if you look at the latitude that it's at, there are a number of Russian ports at the same latitude that don't seem to have the problems we have. So, maybe, you know,

we should do some investigating, some studying, on some of these reports on these Russian ports to see why it is that they are successful.

Like, what is—they know how to build concrete better than us? Is that why they're able to have successful ports—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: And I think we're looking at a number of ports up there. I mean, I don't know what the number is exactly, but I think it's quite a number of Russian ports at the same latitude that don't seem to have the problems that we're having here. So obviously we don't—aren't studying the problem correctly and we're not going to get a solution unless we start.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I would like to thank the member for the Interlake for bringing forward this resolution celebrating Freedom Road. This project is happening in the constituency that I represent, La Verendrye, and I'm honoured to put a few words on record celebrating Freedom Road.

Freedom Road is something our government is proud of. We are working together with the City of Winnipeg, the federal government and Shoal Lake First Nation. This project is just one example of what can happen when government works with people and not just tell them what is good for them but actually listens to what the concerns are of the people and then works together with them.

Reconciliation means more than words and promises. It starts with listening and understanding what the needs are and then taking concrete action to move forward.

Shoal Lake 40 is a First Nation community along the Manitoba-Ontario border with an on-reserve population of about 290 residents. It's not a large population, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it is an important one. I mean, Shoal Lake 40 has, over the years, given up many things, and one of the biggest things was the water for the city of Winnipeg. It was cut off from the mainland in 1915 when a nearby channel was cut by the City of Winnipeg in order to bring drinking water to the city.

Since 1915 Shoal Lake 40 has endured many hardships not having road access to get in and out of their community. Even though they live near the city of Winnipeg's water supply, they have no potable

water themselves and must ship in all their needs, and this is not easy when you don't have a road to get in or out.

They must use ice roads in the winter and ferries in the summertime. But then there was freeze-up and spring thaw. Having worked in northern Manitoba, I know exactly what this is. When you have no access, you have a winter road, you take chances on going on possibly rotten ice or you take chances on going before the ice is frozen. Once there's a bit of ice, you can't use the ferries. So it is an important thing to have road access. People have died to try to get in and out of their community when it was not safe to do so.

Lack of road access greatly reduces the ability of a community member to seek medical attention when needed. Police and fire services have a difficult time responding to any emergencies in the community. I have spent many weeks in northern Manitoba on First Nations. One of the things that's the most scariest is when forest fires threaten those communities. And it's not fun when you don't know how you're going to get out when smoke fills the skies and pilots can't see to land or take off. I've had that personal experience. There are just some of the reasons—these are just some of the reasons Freedom Road is so important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Freedom Road is being constructed in two parts: the on-reserve part, which has been completed, and I must say, six weeks early and under budget. The off-reserve part is being worked on now.

On January 23rd of this year, Sigfusson Northern was awarded a contract to construct 15 kilometres of new road at a cost of \$12 million. This section of road was designed and tendered by—it was tendered and designed by—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Smook: —our engineers—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Smook: —from the Department of Infrastructure and did not need a special department like the East Side Road Authority to do the work. No duplication of services for political reasons.

Once completed, this 24-kilometre road will connect the Shoal Lake First Nation 40 with the Trans-Canada Highway just west of Falcon Lake. I look forward to the completion of Freedom Road. This will give the residents the road they have waited

a long time for. I am proud of our government for seeing the need for this road, then working with Shoal Lake 40, the federal government and the City of Winnipeg to make this road a reality, a road that should be both on time and within budget, something that the previous NDP government had no clue as to how to achieve.

Shoal Lake 40 suffered a lack of road access for 17 years while the NDP did nothing. And this takes me back to the East Side Road Authority, listening to members opposite—more than \$400 million spent on just 88 kilometres of road. Can you imagine how much road they could have built with the money that was spent by the East Side Road Authority? More than double the amount of road should have been built.

I remember sitting at the Fort Garry Hotel while sitting in opposition, and members from the government were there saying, oh, it shouldn't cost more than about 160—or 160—\$1.6 million dollars per kilometre of road. Well, obviously, that didn't happen: \$400 million for 88 kilometres. We should have built more roads. There should have been more northern communities with access to—with roads. Freedom Road should have been built a long time ago, judging from the amount of money the previous government spent and really got nothing for it. But I guess it wasn't an NDP priority.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the completion of Freedom Road will give Shoal Lake 40 the opportunity for much needed economic development. It will bring new opportunities for the communities—or for the community.

I would like to read some quotes from Chief Redsky: The road will mean everything. It's a life-and-death situation. It will bring hope for our youth. It will save lives. It will bring water treatment. It will bring economic development. It will bring prosperity. It's everything for us. We will be able to take the garbage off the island. We can manage our community and rebuild the community and catch up to the rest of Canadians. We are looking forward to the day when we will be able to drive home 365 days a year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these quotes are about things that most of us take for granted because we're fortunate enough to have all these services today. When you listen to these quotes, you know that our government is on the right track to repairing relationships with indigenous communities and

moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and true partnership.

* (11:40)

I would once again like to thank the member for the Interlake for bringing this resolution forward and our government for helping unlock new economic opportunities for First Nations communities. We must all work together to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): So I am pleased to put a little bit of words on the record in respect of the member's private member's resolution, Celebrating Freedom Road. I do think it's a bit early to be presenting a resolution in respect of celebrating Freedom Road when Freedom Road isn't actually finished. So it's a little bit premature. But it does seem to be what this government does. They try to celebrate accomplishments that aren't really there, and they try to kind of do circus and bread in respect of diverting from the cuts that they're doing, those egregious cuts, and their austerity plan and try and present something as if it's something to celebrate when actually there's really nothing to celebrate just this yet, just at this moment.

I do want to comment on a couple of things. I had the great opportunity to travel to Shoal Lake 40 and actually do a tour, and so they actually have—because they've had so many individuals over the years go and visit Shoal Lake 40 in an attempt to try and get a better understanding of what the issue is and how it impacts on the community, they've developed a plan or a tour that they give individuals, and it includes a museum that they have, that they have created. And if—when you walk in, it literally is a chronological sequence of events across the room to kind of look at what's happened to Shoal Lake 40 in respect of diverting water so that Winnipeg can have clean water. And I think that that's very important for us to understand and recognize and appreciate the fact that our water has come at a great cost to indigenous peoples who—we have always been here. And, certainly, the folks at—the citizens of Shoal Lake 40 have always been in those territories. And it's come at a great, great cost. And I would suggest to this House, at a great cost that none of us, I'm sure, want.

So I had the opportunity to, a couple of times, but certainly on this tour, sit down with Chief Irvin—Erwin Redsky at his house, and on a picnic table, just

sit there for a little bit and talk about the impacts that it's had, actually generationally, on his own family. And really appreciated Chief Redsky's obviously, like most of our people, welcoming people into our communities and into our homes and his openness to talk about the issues that have been—the community has been facing. So I do want to put on the record how I appreciate Chief Redsky taking that time to meet with myself and one of my staff members.

And it's certainly a beautiful place to be sitting there, and it's almost a 'juxtaposition' of, you know, sitting in beautiful territory and feeling connected to the land but at the same time knowing that where you're sitting has faced numerous struggles and issues and hardships. So it's kind of a disconnected feeling in some respects because you are there to show your respect and to listen and to learn, but you're also acutely aware of how this has impacted on the community.

We also met with Stewart, and Stewart is just a phenomenal human being who has so much information, and he's the one that kind of drove us around and allowed us to see the territory and the impacts that it has. And one of the things that was very, very acutely obvious and that I actually hadn't even thought about, and I think that that's a consequence of being so divorced from the issue, while the folks, citizens, at Shoal Lake 40 deal with this on a daily basis, us here in Winnipeg and certainly even as a First Nations person here or an indigenous person here in Manitoba, I was divorced from what my relatives were going through in the community.

In that sense, I mean, it never occurred to me that the community of Shoal Lake doesn't have a way to get out garbage. And so there's actually—to get garbage in or out of the community. And so he brought us to an area in the bush and it was filled with garbage, and it is simply because there's no ability to get the garbage in and out of the community. There's certainly no ability to recycle and have recycling in and out of the community.

So I have to say—have to be really honest that I felt really embarrassed and ashamed of myself that I didn't realize that, that I didn't realize that people don't even have the ability to get garbage off their community. And I apologized. I remember telling Stewart how sorry I was that I didn't realize that, particularly as an indigenous woman.

And so actually it causes—just that one piece of this, you know, huge issue causes a lot of issues

because you will have, you know, all kinds of things hanging around there trying to look for food which can create unsafe situations for community members that happen to be walking by. So that was an eye-opener, and like I said I did apologize and thank Stewart for showing us that.

They—Stewart also took us to different parts of the community, but this one part in particular where they had—the community themselves had started bulldozing or making a road. And it was, you know, not a road in the sense that how we would understand it, but it was certainly a path through the bush and it was all mud. And it happened to be raining when we were out there, and it had happened to be raining for a couple of days.

So we were in Stewart's truck and he said, well, he was going to take us to this—down this road which actually leads to the bridge that had been built. So you actually had to go through this piece, this section of road—in quotations. And again, you know, kind of an indication of how divorced we are from the reality that many indigenous peoples face, it was something that I had never experienced in the sense that it was all mud. And I actually got really—a little bit nervous because the truck—and luckily had a really, you know, good, hardy truck and it got us through there, but you're kind of going all over the place. And again, it was another kind of poignant moment where I just realized.

You know, I'm from Sagkeeng First Nation, and Sagkeeng First Nation's about an hour and a half from here. We have paved roads, we're close to the city so, you know, I hadn't necessarily experienced that piece. And I think that what's so—for me, personally, on a spiritual level, was that the water that I drink every day, that water that my children drink every day, the water that I use every day—to, you know, to see that—you know, the garbage in pristine, beautiful bush, or to see this road and try and make your way through to get to another aspect—I just felt bad. I just felt incredibly guilty that in order for us to have water to drink, that my relatives were suffering. And so I felt like I was complicit in that, and I put on the record how sorry I am for that.

So, you know, I think that when we talk about reconciliation, you know, there's a fundamental piece that we have to understand. In order for us to have true reconciliation that it changes moments in our spirit and in our heart and it brings us and draws us to a deeper connection, it is to also look at how we have benefitted, how we have been complicit, how

we have contributed to whatever the particular issues are.

And so, you know, I don't think that it's enough for Manitobans, or Canadians, or anyone in this Chamber to not see their own privilege, and their own role and their own responsibility in the path to reconciliation or in the manifestation of reconciliation.

* (11:50)

And so, certainly, I think that once Freedom Road is completed which—as the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has said has been multiple governments that have been a part of that—I think that that is cause for celebration not only for us here in this Chamber, but certainly for us here in Winnipeg to acknowledge in a very wholesome way our role in that and move towards a better path with indigenous peoples in Shoal Lake 40.

Miigwech.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it is incredible and also sad that members of the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation have not had road access in more than 100 years, since the canal was built cutting off land access to the community at the time that the aqueduct for the city of Winnipeg was built.

I remember quite a number of years ago supporting people from Shoal Lake 40 who were present at the site of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights—I think when it was under construction still—and the discussion then of how we were building a museum for human rights, and yet we had failed in so many years to provide people from Shoal Lake 40 with the human right of access to clean running water and access to their own community by land.

Thankfully, the road is moving forward. Credit goes to many, many people, but I think especially to the residents of Shoal Lake 40 First Nation who have campaigned for so long and so hard for so many years, and we should credit them as being, really, the prime movers behind this effort, and we need to thank them for the many years they have put in in order that this could now be a reality.

I was a little surprised at the MLA for Interlake speaking of the provincial government having spent or spending \$70 million on the Freedom Road. My understanding is that the cost was about \$40 million, and \$20 million coming from the federal government, \$10 from the City of Winnipeg and

about \$10 million from the Province. Now, I'm sure that the member for the Interlake or others will have some corrected or updated figures, but I was not aware that the provincial government had put up \$70 million and I think that if that's true they should be congratulated. If it's not true, the member for the Interlake should be ready to share credit instead of trying to take as much as he's trying to take.

Imagine a world, a lifestyle where you lived so close to clean, drinkable water, but were unable to use it. Imagine having to be cautious of the water you do have or having to rely on less efficient means of travel, even when there's a major road not far away. This may seem difficult to imagine, but it has been a reality for those in the Shoal Lake 40 community for many years.

We are hopefully now less than a year away from the expected completion of Freedom Road. Shoal Lake 40 has long been considered a remote community, despite being only about 15 kilometres from the Trans-Canada Highway.

Shoal Lake 40, of course, became isolated from the mainland a century ago at the time of the building of the aqueduct for Winnipeg's water supply, and that has had rippling 'effects' in the community as they've been under a boil water advisory since 1997 and travel to and from the community is of great difficulty, as currently the only mode of transportation available is by boat and of course across the ice in the winter, and the difficult conditions of the ice before and after freeze up and in the spring, that the thaw has created problems, including there has been some loss of life, which has been very sad.

We, unfortunately, placed the needs of Winnipeg and Manitoba above those within the community of Shoal Lake First Nation, one of many examples where First Nations have been neglected to benefit others.

The construction of Freedom Road is of great significance to the community, as road access will allow people in the community to have a better quality of life, to have their basic human rights met, as well as create opportunities for economic viability.

Once the road is built, there are plans to build a water treatment plant for the community, and that will, hopefully, end the over-20-year boil water advisory.

People have been advocating for the construction of Freedom Road for many years, too often being ignored. However, in December of 2015, at the Manitoba Legislature, municipal, provincial and federal governments voiced their commitment to the construction of the Freedom Road. That, of course, was under the former government, and the PC government has, fortunately, carried through with those NDP plans, just like they did with the Peachey report in health care. But we're much more positive about them carrying through the Freedom Road, not so positive about a lot of elements of the Peachey report, which we're quite concerned about.

The construction of Freedom Road is an important step on the path to reconciliation, and it's long overdue. It's a milestone in improving the lives of First Nations communities. However, we need to realize that the fight to bring roads and clean water to communities is far from over. Shoal Lake 40's problems are not unique and affect a significant number of communities in our province, one way or another. Many First Nations still lack the necessities of clean water and are without year-round access to roads.

In this context, I need to make sure that the concerns of the MLA for Kewatinook—to make sure that the east-side road is completed—are voiced and voiced loudly. Much bush has already been cut for additional parts of the east-side road, but this government seems to have stopped construction. It is important that this government moves forward to complete the east-side road and to make sure it is in their planning.

Now, in less than a year's time, we'll begin to see how much difference one road can make in a community. Hopefully, there'll be a new era of prosperity for Shoal Lake 40, one that will not depend on using boats or ice roads to come and go from the community.

Many are looking forward to the opportunities that a road can create. And myself, along with my colleagues, the MLA for Burrows and the MLA for Kewatinook, wish Shoal Lake 40 the best in their new future, and we celebrate this new future with them.

Thank you, merci, miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question?

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Let's be perfectly clear. This private member's resolution has really nothing to do with Freedom Road. This private

member's resolution is strictly political grandstanding at its worst. This member brings this forward to congratulate themselves for something they haven't completed yet.

I'm sure there's more important things we could discuss in this Legislative Assembly today; it's unfortunate that both things that have been discussed today should have been done elsewhere or not at all.

The member, in his PMR, talks about what great opportunity this will be for the folks at Shoal Lake 40, and, absolutely, it should have been done a long time ago; it will be a great benefit to those people.

Let's ask the government, though, what their plan is for other communities in the North that rely on winter roads, like Tadoule Lake, for example, whose winter road never really got in this year. They

had to borrow home heating fuel from Manitoba Hydro.

So what's the plan for that community and other communities? We've already heard the government's plan for things like communities along the Churchill rail line, and that is they don't have a plan; they just plan to ignore those people in the North.

So it's very unfortunate that instead of talking about something substantive today that could have real—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

When this matter's before the House, the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) will have eight more minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., the House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 8, 2018

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