

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

Vol. LXI No. 53A - 10 a.m., Thursday, June 4, 2009

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BLAIKIE, Bill, Hon.	Elmwood	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 4, 2009

The House met at 10 a.m.

Mr. 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, 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.

Orders of the day. Private members' business.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to debate Bill 217.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to move directly to Bill No. 217, The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act? Is it agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it's been agreed to.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 217—The Hunting, Fishing and
Trapping Heritage Act**

Mr. Speaker: So I will now call resumed debate on second reading, Bill 217, The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Selkirk, who has eight minutes remaining.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It's a pleasure to conclude my comments on this, on this legislation, and I want to congratulate my colleagues for, for speaking to this earlier on in the session, Mr. Speaker. And I, myself, as I mentioned in the, in my earlier comments, am a, am a hunter and a fisher person. I'm not much of a, I'm not much of a trapper, but I have, I have set the odd trap when I was, when I was younger, primarily for skunks. But as, as it was

said, we—[interjection] Well, I'm not speaking, I'm not speaking about the Conservatives here, but I guess I could be, when you, when you—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order. Let's pick our words carefully here. We're all honourable members.

Mr. Dewar: If you—I do, Mr. Speaker, I do, I do, I do apologize to my, I do apologize to all members in the House for that reference. I don't know what came over me, but I do, I do apologize, and I'm sorry to you and to all, all my caucus colleagues.

But, as I was saying, it is a part of our province's heritage, both in terms of a sporting activity, Mr. Speaker, which I know many individuals enjoy, as well, it's an activity that many Manitobans rely upon for their, for their food, for their, for their income. I know of many individuals in my own community that are, that are outfitters, and every fall, of course, they, they eagerly anticipate the arrival of American hunters and, and fishers.

And our own Governor General recently took part in a—in the harvest of a, of a seal, and it drew attraction from around the world as she took part in the slaughter of a, of a seal and, in fact, she even ate part of the heart, the raw heart of a seal. So this is the—she recognized the importance of trapping to the—to the Inuit and to all Canadians the important part that trapping has played in the heritage of our, of our, of our country.

I, I hunt usually every fall. I bought a licence last year, and I go out at the Oak Hammock Marsh area into my mother's property, and I go for geese and ducks and upland game bird. I'm usually not particularly very successful at it. I seldom ever bag any, any, any game, but I enjoy, you know, like all hunters, I enjoy the colours and the smells and the sounds of a, of a Manitoba fall. And when I do, when I do get the odd goose, snow goose or a, or a Canada goose, I, I do take it to a friend of mine in Selkirk who eagerly awaits my arrival. So he's, he's eagerly awaiting my arrival with that goose. As I said, Mr. Speaker—and I enjoy watching the annual migration of hundreds of thousands of Canada and snow geese every fall.

Fishing, of course, is a very important industry to our province and to, and to my own community, both commercial fishing and recreational fishing. As members will know, that some of the best and the finest fishing in the world exists in the Red River and the Red River near Selkirk. And locals call it the Golden Mile, and that is the area of land, area of the river between Selkirk and Lower Fort Garry, and this, of course, draws fishers from across the world, both in the summer for canal—excuse me, channel catfishing and in the fall for the run of the greenback walleye. And, Mr. Speaker—

An Honourable Member: Really?

Mr. Dewar: Well, I'm—the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) should perhaps come down and I'll take him fishing. Because I took—I went fishing there last, last summer and took my nephew out and we had a great time. He caught, many, many fish, and at the end, I was able to catch a large canal—channel catfish. In fact, I took the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) out fishing one time, and he, he caught a master angler catfish on half a shrimp, and he told that story several times in this, in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, but it's, it's an important—I think it's an important story and one that I believe deserves retelling.

But nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, it's, it's classified as a world class fishery, and it's also the livelihood for many individuals who, who serve as outfitters and guides. It's recognized in the inside walleye magazine, for example, and they regularly list rivers and lakes across North, North America, and the Red River—plus, as well, the, the Lake of the Prairies near Dauphin are always recognized within the top 10 as being one of the 10, as they say, top 10 walleye fisheries in, in North America.

And trapping, is 'cause people need to—I think all of us need to remember that trapping is what drew Europeans to this province and to this region at the, at the beginning of the history of our province, Mr. Speaker as they came in quest of the beaver pelt which they then, of course, converted into felt, which they made those famous beaver hats, which were all the, all the craze in, in Europe. And my ancestors came from—to Manitoba at that time. They were Hudson's Bay men from the Orkney Islands and from the Shetland Islands in northern Scotland, and they left their homes and travelled to this region, and the great amalgamation in the early 1820s when the Hudson's Bay Company amalgamated with the North West Company, they lost their jobs. And I remember

my story of my great, great, great, great grandfather, William Robert Smith. He worked for the Hudson's Bay Company and he lost his job, and so he did not return to England or did not return to Scotland. He stayed here in, in Manitoba and he had—he was married twice to Aboriginal women and he had 21 kids, and they all lived in the Selkirk area, and that's why everyone says I'm related to everybody in Selkirk. And I think, I think it's probably true because, because of that one connection.

* (10:10)

But there's many more names in Selkirk that you can trace back to those European—to the Shetlands and Orkney Islands: The Sinclairs and the Houries and the Fletts and the McLeods and so on, so on. The Slaters.

In fact, we had a delegation here a couple of years ago from the Orkney Islands and it was a great—we met with them here in the Legislature then they came to Selkirk for a reception. And, Mr. Speaker, it was a great time for us to, to meet with our blood brothers from the Orkneys. And they met many people in our community that shared a common name.

So there is much to be, to be, I think, it, to support this legislation because of the heritage of our province. And the, as I said, the fact that this has been an important part of both the hunting, the fishing and the trapping, it's a very imp—important part of our community's herigen—heritage. Thank you very much.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put a few words on the record of Bill 217, The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act. And I'd like to thank the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) for bringing forward this.

And I'm not going to regale you with any great fishing stories or hunting stories. Those are, those are better left, those are better left for the evening with a little bit of imbibement. With—it helps to enlarge the, the catch or the shoot, whatever it happens to be.

But I think this, this bill is very important because, as we get a larger urban population and a much smaller rural population, there's that disconnect now between the land and the people. It's important that we have an act like this on, on the record so that, that the rights of, of our citizens to, to be able to hunt, to fish and trap, whether it be for a living.

And I actually, coming from south central Manitoba, I actually do have a couple of people who do run traplines in south central Manitoba and they do make a good portion of their living off of that trapline. So it, it's not just in the north or any particular area.

We all know how important fishing is, both as a recreation and as a, and as a tourist attraction. There is a great deal or great number of people that come into our province, both from within the province and come into the province to recreation fishing. The commercial fishing is vitally important to our provincial economy too. So, to have an act like this which, which enshrines the right to do this, and the ability to do this, it's—that's what this bill is all about. Hunting, hunting is, is, again, it's an important tourist attraction for those coming out—from outside of the province, and for many of us within the province. And, there's nothing like a good venison steak or, or a—some hamburger on the grill, venison hamburger, as far as I'm concerned. And, and I do, I do enjoy those and do some hunting.

But, also, from the landowners side of this, the hunting, in particular, in terms of hunting, we need to, we need to have the right to be able to hunt and also that landowners, landowners be respected in terms of land where we have permission to hunt on the land.

And I know that in my own constituency right now, I'll be meeting with a constituent on Friday who has had some rather unfortunate experiences with—people have been out. Well, they call it hunting, but it's sort of shooting off the road and in close—by to their—to the yard. And it's giving, it's giving the good hunters a bad rap out of this. And I will be meeting with this constituent. And although I'm not sure what I can really do about it, it is a concern that we need to bring forward to, to be able—so that all hunters don't get the, the reputation of being irresponsible. Because that is, just like so many other things, it's a very, very small number of people who make it difficult for everyone else. And—but—and, and ultimately, the, the anti-hunting or anti—the people who are opposed to hunting will use those examples of why we shouldn't be able to have any hunting at all, and so we have to be very proactive to this. We cannot just sit back and say, well it's only a few people that are doing it. We need to, to be able to go out there and address the, the problems that are there and so that we keep the ability there so that people can go out and, and, enjoy hunting, fishing, trapping, whatever.

This, this bill—and this is, this bill is one way of the start of it. We need to be able to say that this is enshrined in legislation, that we actually do have the ability to hunt, to fish, to trap in this province because, if we don't have that inherent right within legislation, again the anti-hunting, fishing, trapping people will, will, they're not going to stop their lobby to, to, to stop hunting and trapping, fishing. They have no understanding of, of, this is in most cases, this is a matter of not just of recreation, but it's, it's of, for those who actually enjoy the wild game and fish that—and it is, it is a way of managing our wildlife to have our—we have an annual harvest right now. It's called Autopac and hitting deer on the road, and that's not a very efficient way of managing our deer population, and particularly around Winnipeg if, if you are out on the highways here and even within the city actually, any time in the evening or during the night there's, there is an overabundance of deer within, around, in and around Winnipeg and, and this, this is a problem that's come about from the deer moving in habitat and it's from lack of, of a, of a sustainable harvest of these animals and the inability to, to be able to hunt them within close proximity to the city here.

In my constituency the, the hunting zones stop at Highway 13 and, and in towards, then east towards Winnipeg is, is a very, very limited hunting season down there. It's only for, for the shotgun slugs, and it's not for high-powered rifles and, and that's over, over my lifetime I've seen where we never had any deer. It was very rare to see any deer out in the Red River Valley and now there's huge herds of them out there and, and it comes from a, comes about from lack of hunting pressure is one thing, and favourable habitat and, and just the inability to be able to go out there and harvest them in a, in a hunting season.

So, so again, if we need to have this right to be able to hunt there's, there's lots of things that can be done to, to be proactive in this. I, I do—I am concerned that, with the large deer populations within and around Winnipeg here and in the Red River Valley that, that we are, the ability to spread disease and that is, is a concern also and, and I think we with this bill and with this act it's one way of being able to, to put the right to hunt out there and, and we need to encourage this.

We know that you only have to go south of the line and, and hunting is a huge industry down there and, and the, the tourism aspect of it, the recreation aspect is much larger than it is here in Canada and in Manitoba. So it, you know, this, this bill again is, is a

good first step to, to be able to do that. I would encourage all members to, to support this bill.

My understanding is that there is agreement to pass this bill on to committee and, and we certainly look forward to that, to that happening, and I would encourage all members to support this bill as, as just the right to be able to hunt and fish and trap. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I really look forward to speaking on this bill because, first of all, I want to make it very clear, I think not only is hunting, fishing, trapping an important activity in this province, it's an important part of our way of life. It's part of our culture, heritage, our traditions, and coming from northern Manitoba, there's no, no region in this province where, where that is more true.

* (10:20)

And I have a bit of an—or—a bit of an advantage, perhaps, over some because when I was growing up in Thompson, I lived in Thompson since I was a kid and, you know, in those days we didn't have live TV, you know, 50-channel satellite television. What did you do? Well, you hunted, you fished, you trapped, you went to target shooting. That was very much a part of growing up in Thompson. *[interjection]* Well, I did do other things, for members opposite, before my interest in, in, in, in politics. But, you know, that is the case in a good part of northern Manitoba, a good part of rural Manitoba. There are many people living in our urban centres that still have a strong tie to hunting, trapping and fishing.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, I, I think we'd be very naive if we didn't assume that there are some that have different views. And when I say naive, we all know of some of the anti-trapping efforts, and if it hadn't been for the, the pushback, yes, our provincial governments, our federal government have been part of that, but, particularly from trappers' organizations and particularly from, from Aboriginal people, we would have lost part of what defines Manitoba and Canada in terms of trapping. The Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) pointed the fact that the initial European contact was very much based on the fur trade, and trapping goes back to that time with the, with the advent of the Hudson Bay company.

It is very much a part of our history, but there were people that targeted trapping, that went and raised significant amounts of money with the same

kind of tactics that are being used against the seal hunt today and, Mr. Speaker, we, we came that close to losing the trapping industry. Now it has rebounded, and I had the opportunity in, in Thompson to visit the fur table. You, you really see the difference there. But, you know, if it wasn't for people understanding that not everybody supports the traditional way of life, it would have been a very different, different situation.

Now when it comes to hunting and fishing, it's a tale of two, two activities. One is on the fishing side, where actually, particularly in Manitoba, we are a province where we've had an increase in the number of people fishing recreationally year after year after year. You see that with a lot of the, the promotion of fishing that's done, Mr. Speaker, fisheries enhancement initiatives and, in particular, family fishing events. So we've seen that urban, rural and northern Manitobans are taking advantage of that. We have some of the best fishing anywhere in the world.

And when I look, Mr. Speaker, at my area of the province, I had an opportunity to, to share a ride into Thompson from the airport one time, with an American who came from Florida, and as we came across the Burntwood Bridge, there's the float plane base, a very beautiful part of Thompson as you enter it, he turned to me, and he says, you know, you're sure lucky to live in a place like this. And he was actually from Florida, and I was thinking, oh, yeah.

You know, you tend to forget that this is an American that came thousands of miles to spend thousands of dollars to go fishing in northern Manitoba. And we don't often realize how lucky we are in terms of that fishing.

But, you know, the situation in terms of hunting is considerably different. And I want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that should be of concern to anyone is the decline, year over year, in terms of number of hunters. I remember, at one time, we had about 40,000 goose hunters. It's down to about 10,000. And, in fact, in many parts of the province, we've seen fewer and fewer hunters and, in fact, we have a unique phenomena—

Some Honourable Members: Because they're all in the city.

Mr. Ashton: Well, yes, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Blaikie) is mentioning about the impact of the city on this. But, you know, what's also happening is we're ending up with more problems with problem

wildlife. We have taken out of the chain, if you like, some of the balances. And having, and I drive home on a regular basis, having hit a, a bear and a deer on Highway 6, just over the last 18 months. I have some knowledge of some of the consequences of that. And there, there are many areas of the province with this significant amount of—*[interjection]* Well, you know, and the funny part is the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) was asking about the bear and the deer. The ironic part is I had a lot of people ask me how the bear was after the collision, and I said, well, you know, I must admit I didn't stop because I figured either the bear was dead and there was nothing I could do about it or it was going to be a really, really angry bear, so I kept moving, but you know, it proves my point.

If you go to the Interlake today, you will see significant numbers of deer that are creating significant problems, again, because of that. Well, there's a number of reasons why I think that has happened. Part of it, by the way, is we still kept antiquated restrictions on hunting until just recently. I was very proud, as Conservation minister, to bring in Sunday hunting, and I was told at the time, by the way, this would be very controversial, Sunday hunting.

You know, my response to that is you could go to a grocery store, you can go and buy, you know, beer at the beer vendor. You can go to a restaurant on a Sunday, but you couldn't hunt? It was just ridiculous—except for some parts of the province—but you can go hunting on a Sunday. You can have an alcohol-free Sunday hunting, and what we were finding, by the way, was a lot of younger, you know, adults, because of time constraints, perhaps having moved to the city, you know, various things, that one time they could go hunting was on the weekend, and we abs—I think it's one of the best things we've done when we have province-wide Sunday hunting, Sunday we hadn't even heard of 10 or 20 or 30 years ago. That is taking proactive steps.

Now I also think, by the way, that a fair amount of what is happening, too, is just the increased complication of everything you have to do, and it's not just, you know, gun registration, it's, for example, the FAC process. Has anybody gone through the FAC process? You know, in northern Manitoba, I loved when a lot of elders were going through the FAC process and taking these courses from people had been hunting, may—you know, and operating firearms for maybe five or 10 years, their entire lives they were doing it, and I think it's important to

recognize how many barriers we've created, and one of the goals of this bill which I support is making sure I believe that we make an affirmative statement that hunting and fishing and trapping, quite frankly, are parts of our way of life.

Now I do want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, I also have the privilege to represent many Aboriginal people in northern Manitoba, and I think it's also important that we make it very clear that nothing in this bill detracts from treaty and traditional hunting rights because there are many people in northern Manitoba that continue, many Aboriginal people, to exercise their treaty right, their Aboriginal right to hunt on a year-round basis, but particularly in the fall, and it's part of the culture.

So what I want to do is, if I could, as MLA for Thompson, representing an area of the province where hunting, fishing, trapping are very important, I want to indicate my support for this legislation, and I also want to stress, by the way, that I don't want to see in 10, 20, 30 years from now, hunting and fishing and trapping in a museum somewhere. I want to see it maintained as a way of life, and the way to do that, Mr. Speaker, is not to be denied. Just like we did with trapping, is to make sure that we make affirmative statements like this and that we fight back against any efforts to take away from Manitobans' rights to practice what has been part of the Manitoba history and culture and tradition and way of life for many years, and that includes most definitely hunting, fishing and trapping, and whether it's First Nations Manitobans in terms of treaty rights, whether it's recreational hunters and fishers, whether it's registered trappers, we have to make sure that Manitoba is a place in which hunting, fishing and trapping will continue to be part of our way of life for many years to come. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this Bill 217, The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act. We in the Liberal Party support this bill. It provides for recognition of the traditions going back many years in Manitoba, the right to hunt, to fish and to trap in accordance with the law, and I think it's appropriate that we are recognizing this right. I think that it's important that we recognize that the right is available to all Manitobans.

* (10:30)

I had the occasion recently to be dealing with the Minister of Conservation about a situation in which

it is important that there be opportunities for people with disabilities to hunt.

And, sadly, the Minister of Conservation is engaged in making decisions at the moment which would limit the access of people with disabilities. So, hopefully, when the minister reads this law and thinks about it a little bit more, he will change his mind and, hopefully, there will be some presentations during the committee stage related to this very fact of the importance of making sure that all people, including those with disabilities, are able to exercise the right.

The—it is important that this bill mentions the Migratory Birds Convention Act and The Wildlife Act, The Fisheries Act, the Canadian act. There are some concerns that I've been hearing lately of—with respect to the migratory birds convention and some actions that may be taken under the Harper government to undermine these acts.

So important that we reinforce the importance of these acts and the important role they have played in making sure that we have a North-America-wide approach to making sure that migratory birds are looked after and supported and respected properly.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, certainly we, in the Liberal Party, would like to support this legislation. We believe that it's timely, and it's a provincial effort, and we should support it.

Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas): I would like to take a few minutes to speak about this, this Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act that's being proposed.

Mr. Speaker, I grew up in, in an era when survival in the north depended on how good a hunter and a fisher and a trapper you were. It was common in my community, for example, for entire families to, to go out during the season, trapping seas—season, for example, fall hunting season, summer fishing camps and so forth.

During those times, all, all, all members of the families would go out to these, to these camps. I, for one, had the opportunity to, to go to these different camps with members of family and other members of the community.

During those times, I, I had the opportunity to learn about, about the environment, about wildlife and how, how things grow and move in the wilderness, and I was taught to, to learn about the

different species of animals and birds and fish, in my area anyway, at least.

What I learned was, was very important that there is no conservation, so to speak, in maintaining the health of the wildlife. There would be nothing for the future generations. This was a, a teaching that was taught to all of us in our, in our community—to be aware of, of what we come across and what we take for food only. And this is what we were taught.

Mr. Speaker, my community, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, has taken this issue very serious in, in recent years. And, in fact, it was my community that, that encouraged conservation in, in different areas, including the moose management program that we have in our community, that we entered into with the Province of Manitoba.

Through that program, we were able to educate many members of our community that we need to be very cautious about how we do things in the wilderness in, in taking the animals for food.

To this day, to this day, many young people have gained a lot of—from that experience.

As well, we also went into a program with the, the sturgeon fish management program with the Province of Manitoba. Again, with the hopes that managing these kind of resources would provide an opportunity for the young people and the young families in the future to, to benefit from. We did this at the, at the advice of elders in our community so that in future years those resources would be available for the, for the young people.

Mr. Speaker, I've also been involved in other areas that promoted safe hunting, safe trapping, safe boating on, on the rivers and lakes, and I have benefited immensely from those teachings as well. I believe that the programs, such as hunting, fishing, trapping, also provide other opportunities for learning how to live with nature, how to live with the environment and how to protect the abundance of wildlife for future use.

There's, there are many lessons to be learned when we enter into initiatives such as this one that is being proposed. When we, when we have this, this act in, in place, it will forever put in place a practice that'll be common in, in all, all levels of society, including the Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal communities, that this is something that we need to protect. This is something we need to ensure that future generations will use these resources to their, to their benefit.

In my culture, food is extremely important from this area because this is something that we grew up with, and our, our systems have gotten used to this kind of food. My uncle, the late Lawrence Whitehead [*phonetic*], used to tell me about the importance of treaties, and one of the, one of the, the finer points of, of treaties is not the fact that you can go and hunt and fish and trap anytime you feel like it. But, but the reason why they entered into that, into that arrangement was to ensure that that food would, would continue to be available for First Nations because it's something that is within our system from generation to generation to generation, and if we move away from that food we will get sick, we will have heart disease, we will have diabetes, we will have all kinds of problems. And this is what he told me, and I believe him, because today that's what we have. So, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we, we continue to maintain this lifestyle, but under the protection of some act that makes provision for future use of these resources for our people.

Lastly, I want to say that, because of, of my growing up in this, in this environment, I was a Boy Scout at one time, and as a, as a troop member, as we were going into a program called the wildlife excursion program, I was automatically made a leader because I knew the bush. I knew the wildlife. Mr. Speaker, I didn't know the bush that well, you know, because I took the troop out into the bush 1.6 kilometres and gathered up some species of wildli—trees and plants and so forth, but when I turned around I forgot where I came from, so, so I waited, but I knew enough that there was a railroad track where we came from so I waited long enough for the train to come by. When, when that train came by, well, I took my troop back out in different direction but we got back to the same place and they were, they were amazed at how I was able to do this.

Mr. Speaker, there is much to learn from wilderness and wildlife. We have to have something like this act to protect that so that we continue to live with wilderness, environment and wildlife in harmony. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the Member for the Lakeside for bringing forward this very important piece of legislation, and for allowing me the opportunity to, to talk about this particular legislation. And I do also want to thank the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) for allowing us some extra time this morning to discuss this legislation.

* (10:40)

Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk a little bit about the, the riding of Turtle Mountain, and in the riding of Turtle Mountain we have Spruce Woods Provincial Park and we also have a lot of federal property belonging to the Department of National Defence. And certainly those areas are, are a tremendous resource for the white-tailed deer population. We also have a fairly significant herd of elk that, that use that area and also it goes south into the, towards the, the Tiger Hills and that Ninette area.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a number of lakes and the Assiniboine River, the Souris River running through that constituency and certainly they have been over the years a tremendous source and resource of, of both walleye and, and jackfish and certainly there's been a lot of master angler walleye come out of the Assiniboine River.

And really, Mr. Speaker, and some of the members this morning did talk about it in terms of recreation and, and the tourism aspect here in Manitoba, and it is certainly something that we should be working on. I know the Minister of Conservation, we've been working with him on a number of issues, Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick), as well, who's responsible for stocking some of the waterways and it's a very important aspect to, to that area.

And in particular when we talk about fishing, Mr. Speaker, the, the whole area of the Pelican Lake and Rock Lake have historically been, been a very good so—resource. Unfortunately, though, in Pelican Lake we had a severe winter kill a few years ago and the stock of walleye have never really come back. And it's unfortunate because we had just a tremendous amount of American tourism coming into that area for sport fishing. And it's really, unfortunately, negatively impacted the area in terms of the economy.

So we're hoping the government of the day will certainly recognize that it's a, it's a serious situation there, and we hope that they will continue to work to restock that particular lake and do the other things that need to be done to get that resource back to where it should be.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about hunting and fishing too. It's really, it's really an important part of the tradition in Manitoba. It's one thing that's been passed on from generation to generation here in the

province of Manitoba. I can remember the, the first time that I was out white-tailed deer hunting with, with my father and it was, it was quite, quite an event. And I certainly still remember the first buck that I took down, and actually I was very fortunate enough to, to win an award for that particular deer head. So it was, it was quite an exciting time for me being a young hunter.

The irony was my father hunted for 30 years and never ever received any kind of an award for, for the deer he'd brought down over the years. So it was, it was kind of an interesting time.

Mr. Speaker, too, when I talk about deer, I should mention—I know the Minister of Conservation, we sent him a number of letters. We do have a, a serious white-tailed deer population explosion in a number of communities, and what's happened is the, the deer have moved right into the communities and, and are feeding on, on people's yards.

In the communities of Wawanesa, for instance, I know there the people have been forced to, to fence their gardens and fence their trees to try to keep the, the deer out. And the communities of Baldur, you know you can drive into Baldur and the white-tailed deer are running right down the road in Baldur. You can go to the community of Killarney and Killarney is facing the very same situation. In fact the, the municipality of Killarney, Turtle Mountain just passed a resolution and I know they're very adamant that something has to be done with the deer population in Killarney, and they've basically laid the ultimatum up to the Minister of Conservation.

So after the middle of this month, if something significant isn't done, there's going to be some undertakings by the municipality there to, to try to rid the deer population there of, of some of the damage they're doing in that particular community.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I just wanted to say, I do want to again thank the minister for Lakeside for bringing forward this very important piece of legislation, and it's an, an important legislation for, for future generations here in Manitoba. And I know my—we were just cleaning out the garage last weekend and my son came across the fishing rods and they said, boy, dad, it's probably time we should get out and get some fishing done. So that'll be this weekend. We'll get a fishing licence and if the weather permits, we'll get out and have an opportunity to take the family and, and try and catch

some of the walleye that are prevalent out in that area in Turtle Mountain. Thank you very much.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 217, The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, do I have to ask leave to, to debate Bill 226?

Mr. Speaker: Okay, is there leave of the House to go directly to Bill 226, The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act? Is there agreement?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, there is agreement. The honourable, the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, and it—I do want to thank the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) for bringing forward this particular legislation, and I do want to acknowledge—

Mr. Speaker: No. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

We have to go according to our Order Paper. I have to call the bill, okay? I didn't realize you wanted to speak to it, because I have to go—I have to call the bill and then we have the speakers.

Bill 226—The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I'm calling Bill No. 226, The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Wellington (Ms. Marcelino), who has five minutes remaining.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Wellington?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, that's been denied. Now open for speakers.

The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the clarification on that. I was just so eager to speak to this particular legislation, I did not—sidestep some of the rules of the House.

Again, I do want to thank the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) for bringing forward this particular piece of legislation, and I do want to thank the members of government for, for agreeing to pass this legislation too. It, it is a very important piece of legislation.

Over the last week or two, we, we did have a chance to debate this bill earlier in the Chamber, and the members did get up and speak quite passionately, quite eloquently about this particular legislation. And I believe that all of us, as members, have some story, some personal story, about infant loss, and it is a real trying time for parents and for families when these types of events do happen.

And the intent of this bill is just to bring the issue to the front and allow parents and families an opportunity to, to grieve. Quite often in society, we try to put these things behind us. When an event like this does happen, it can be a real tragedy and we quite often try to put those events behind us and try not to think of them again. But we know, Mr. Speaker, that those families, those mothers and fathers that are impacted emotionally, quite dramatically, that they can't let go. We know that those parents are thinking about their lost son or daughter, probably on a daily basis, and what this piece of legislation would do would be to allow those parents that have suffered a loss an opportunity to, to grieve with other members of their family, with other members of their friends. So it actually would set aside a day for us to recognize and to stand beside those that have lost infants.

Mr. Speaker, it's all about an attitude of, of recognition and of support for those families that have lost a child, and we know that it's a real tragedy when these events do happen, and each family has their own way of dealing with those, those types of tragedies. But I think we should stop and reflect and, and take an opportunity to celebrate the lives of those children that have been lost.

We know that other jurisdictions in Mani—across Canada and in the United States have similar legislation in place where they do set aside a day to, to have people mourn over the loss of loved ones, and we think it's very important that we do the same thing here in Manitoba.

* (10:50)

Mr. Speaker, when we do celebrate the lives of someone that has had a long, long life, we do, we do celebrate that life, and it's probably the same thing we should be doing for, for lives that are not as, as long. I know it, it's a, it's a difficult thing to do, and we never know if those opportunities are going to present themselves again, whether people are going to have an opportunity to conceive another infant and whether things will develop as they should. So we should take the time to remember those, those very short lives.

And I do want to, again, thank the, the Member for, for Minnedosa for bringing forward this important piece of legislation so that hopefully people that have suffered a loss, this, this will help in the process of healing. And we know that the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day is about paying tribute to the memory—memory of those babies and the enduring love their parents will always feel. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity just to add my story to this. I, I do believe that it is probably the, the need for recognition of pregnancy and infant loss, and I think particularly pregnancy loss is always un—underestimated, and I have to admit that I was probably just as guilty as the next guy until I experienced one myself. Now, I had already had three children, so I'm not sure if that's easier or harder, because your first, of course, you're anticipating and have great hopes, and after you've had three you realize what these little creatures grow into and the potential, so I think it's probably equally hard, just in different ways.

And I was just looking at what kinds of services—we have a number of services in Manitoba, a number of compassionate supports, and the one that triggered my memory was that all hospitals in Manitoba have grief and bereavement counselling services available for women who experience a loss, including miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death, and these resources are co-ordinated through their spiritual care departments. Now, when I had experienced my loss, I was very surprised to be approached. I had no idea that this kind of support existed, and I can tell you just having that acknowledgement—recognizing, too, that in something like that, there is a hormonal imbalance that really accentuates and exaggerates your feelings and creating even more of a need that people who

haven't experienced recognize, and I appreciated so much what I got out of that recognition and counselling that I think another piece to it is that that was, oh, 20, more, years ago and I still have just recently had a family member experience the loss and I, I immediately go and recognize that loss as something greater than, like I say, some people actually realize.

And one of the suggestions that I received was that one plant, for instance, go and plant something in your yard so you have that physical sense of a place to go and remember and it—that remembering need—like I say, we're talking way more than 20 years ago—it's still there. And I was able to go to this family member and [*interjection*] suggest the same thing and I think—[*interjection*] I'm sorry, I find it difficult, laughing when we're talking about such an important bill—and I just remember the look on her face reminded me of how I felt. And I don't know if they ever did plant a tree or anything, but just the suggestion and recognition of that life, that potential life that was gone is, is very important.

So, how much—again I think remembering—a loss remembrance day, is a, is a very appropriate sentiment.

And so, I do support this bill certainly. Again, I just want to touch—well, I think I've made my point, Mr. Speaker, again, this is an important awareness that needs to be recognized. And having—gee, October is my birth month too so how appropriate is that. I would just like to congratulate the Member for Minnedosa on raising this important issue.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to say briefly that I and the Liberal Party are strong supporters of this effort. I want to recognize Janice Desjarlais and the people at Heaven's Little Angels for the work that has been done to bring this forward and certainly, the MLA from Minnedosa, for initiating this legislation. You think, just about all of us have, in our family or extended family of friends, some examples of infant loss or pregnancy loss and it's time we recognize it. Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Absolutely. You bet.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House, is Bill No. 226, The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act, is it—it is the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and ordered.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I suspect you might find the will to call it 11 o'clock so that—

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. It's the will of the House to call it 11 a.m.

RESOLUTION

Res. 15—Removal of Provincial Sales Tax from Certain Services Used by Manitoba's Municipal Governments

Mr. Speaker: So now we will move on to resolutions and we will deal with Resolution No. 15, The Removal of Provincial Sales Tax from Certain Services Used by Manitoba's Municipal Governments.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I move, seconded by the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), the—that

WHEREAS Manitoba municipal governments continue to struggle with deteriorating infrastructure such as roads, bridges, recreational facilities, water and wastewater systems, among others, leading to the multi-billion dollar infrastructure deficit; and

WHEREAS Manitoba municipal governments are continually upgrading or replacing their infrastructure, a process that can lead to these governments accessing professional services such as architects, lawyers, accountants, electricians and engineers; and

WHEREAS in the budget 2002 the government of Manitoba added the resale, retail sales tax to the labour component of all mechanical and electrical contracts used by municipal governments; and

WHEREAS in budget 2004 the government of Manitoba further extended the application of the RST to certain legal, accounting, architectural, engineering, and security and private investigation services used by municipal governments; and

WHEREAS to Manitoba municipal governments, the application of the RST is—as-mentioned services is essential—is essentially viewed as adding a tax on top of a tax; and

WHEREAS in 2004 the government of Canada removed the goods and service tax from all municipal purchases, which resulted in some \$700 million in savings in municipalities across Canada annually.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the government of Manitoba to consider immediately developing a plan to remove the retail sales tax from the services provided to municipalities that were exempt prior to the 2004 and 2000—the 2002 and 2004 provincial budgets.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Can I ask leave of the House to accept the resolution as printed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, that's been agreed to.

WHEREAS Manitoba's municipal governments continue to struggle with deteriorating infrastructure such as roads, bridges, recreational facilities, water and wastewater systems, among others, leading to a multi-billion dollar infrastructure deficit; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's municipal governments are continually upgrading or replacing their infrastructure, a process that can lead to these governments accessing professional services such as architects, lawyers, accountants, electricians and engineers; and

WHEREAS in budget 2002 the government of Manitoba added the retail sales tax (RST) to the labour component of all mechanical and electrical contracts used by municipal governments; and

WHEREAS in budget 2004 the government of Manitoba further extended the application of the RST to certain legal, accounting, architectural, engineering, and security and private investigation services used by municipal governments; and

WHEREAS to Manitoba's municipal governments, the application of the RST to the aforementioned services is essentially viewed as adding a tax on top of a tax; and

WHEREAS in 2004 the Government of Canada removed the goods and services tax from all municipal purchases, which results in some \$700 million in savings in municipalities across Canada annually.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the government of Manitoba to consider immediately developing a plan

to remove the retail sales tax from the services provided to municipalities that were exempt prior to the 2002 and 2004 provincial budgets.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, so it's been moved by the honourable Member for Ste. Rose, seconded by honourable Member for Arthur-Virden,

WHEREAS Manitoba's—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

* (11:00)

Mr. Briese: We continue to hear concerns from municipalities about deteriorating infrastructure and their limited financial resources to deal with the infrastructure deficits. Now, Mr. Speaker, every Manitoban knows that municipalities have the responsibility to provide front-line infrastructure, waste disposal, water and sewer, roads, et cetera, but, beyond that, municipalities are expected to provide the facilities such as rec facilities, libraries, museums and countless other facilities and services to the residents.

Mr. Speaker, over a period of time, municipalities have found that, at a time when infrastructure costs are rising, their ability to actually raise revenue has remained relatively stagnant and hasn't, to some degree, even been eroded. The NDP government has constantly tried to get their hands in the pockets of municipalities and access revenues raised from property taxes. And a number of those situations over the years would certainly include the removal of property taxes from universities. The Province removed the need for the requirement for universities to pay property tax on their properties and announced it as funding going to universities, but that really wasn't what happened. What it, what happened was the, the property taxes that were forgiven were trans-shifted onto other properties in that same school division, and so residential and commercial properties school tax actually went up in those areas.

The—another area where the, the Province tries to put a great spin on is on increased funding to education, and I went back in my own municipality. I looked at three properties, and I looked at three properties for five years, one being a farm property, one being a residential property, and one being a commercial property. And whenever school tax isn't removed from all properties across the board, you end up with a transfer from one classification to

another. And, in our case, and this is actually one of my own properties, this is only on the school tax on a farm quarter, if, from 2005 to 2009 my property tax on that, my school property tax on that quarter went from \$340 to \$474.

Now the Province will tell us that they have given a 75 percent rebate on those taxes on farm properties, and so, actually, that one is lowered. On the residential property, the Province, there's been increases every year for the last five years, and on the residential property, the school taxes actually went up by a considerable amount and there has been an increase in the residential rebate, the school property tax credit, which somewhat offsets that. But what happened in the whole overall picture was a shift to commercial properties. They went up. There's been nothing to move them down, and they went up more than the other two reductions combined. So, once again, we have a shift and more reliance on property taxes from the school costs.

Now, members opposite are going to say they have increased funding to municipalities, and on a global scale, that may be somewhat true, but when you look at it a little closer, the issue, you find that funding to municipalities as a portion of provincial budget has actually declined under this NDP government. That's when the real picture emerges. Mr. Speaker, not only has the funding percentage declined, the provincial government, as I said earlier, has actually attacked municipal property tax revenues by increasing the numbers of goods and services to the municipalities that are subject to provincial sales tax.

In 2002 the government of Manitoba added retail sales tax to mechanical and electrical contracts used by municipal governments. That was a first step. Second step hit in budget 2004, the government further extended the application of RST to legal, accounting, architectural, engineering, security and private investigation services used by municipal governments. Now these are hits on municipalities. These are hits at funding that municipalities depend on coming out of property taxes, and we have the provincial government coming along and putting their hand in their pocket and taking away some of that money that those, those municipalities raised to, to spend on infrastructure costs in their municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government, in 2004, moved to remove all goods and services tax from all purchases of municipalities—a very good move. Up

till 2004, municipalities were paying 57.14 percent of the GST on their purchases and being rebated for the rest.

Now, they are paying zero on, in goods and services taxes to the federal government and that resulted in a saving to municipalities, across this country over a 10-year period of, of \$700 million. That's substantial money. That's substantial money going into developing infrastructure in those municipalities.

The federal government gets it; the provincial government apparently doesn't. They want to continue their assault on, on, on municipal property tax. And the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) in, in discussions about his budget a number of years ago, when I was still with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, literally admitted that. He sees property taxes as, as being a very good source of revenue, and he really wanted to get his hands on some of them. So, a lot of these things that have gone into place under this government have, have addressed that, that wish of the Minister of Finance's.

I might add that at the federal level, both the Liberal and Conservative governments over the last decade and a half have recognized the, the problems municipalities were having meeting infrastructure needs. As early as 1995, they started a number of cost-shared programs to assist municipalities, and there were quite a number of them. The Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program was one, and I had the privilege of sitting on the selection committee for the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program for six years, from about '99 to 2004, 2005; 2004, I believe. And it was a program that worked very well.

The, the provincial government likes to take credit for all those projects, too, and they are actually in them for one-third of the funding. But the municipalities are in for one-third, and all those programs were precipitated by the federal government, not by the provincial government. The, the federal government realized the needs out in municipalities and went out and did some things to, to try and help address the infrastructure shortfalls in the municipalities.

Now, I know the NDP, as I said earlier, like to take credit for all that funding, but the federal government did do quite a number of other things over the years in the same way, one being the Prairie Grain Roads Program, what's resulted in some \$67 million of federal money coming into this

program, into this province that did address a lot of our infrastructure shortfalls.

Last fall, municipalities passed a resolution asking the Province to commit one percent of provincial sales tax toward municipal infrastructure, which wasn't met with a very positive response. But, I think this resolution that I'm proposing this morning does look at—and I've heard the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton) use the phrase creative financing. This is one way we can be a little bit creative in helping the municipalities take away a tax on tax and, and start a long-term plan that would look at taking provincial sales tax completely off, off of municipalities and take away the requirement for them to pay it.

It is a tax on tax, and there is only one taxpayer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague, the MLA for Thompson for, for letting me rise.

Mr. Speaker, as those in the House know, I also served with the Member for Ste. Rose on the Association of Manitoba Muni—Municipalities, in a previous life, and I do appreciate the member's concern for municipal governance, although I will part ways with him on the political nature of this particular resolution.

* (11:10)

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Manitoba municipalities received the largest unconditional grants as a percentage of total revenue in Canada and the highest percentage of total grants in Canada. Those are facts. Due to the high level of revenue for provincial grants—this is also a fact—Manitoba municipalities have the least reliance on property taxes of any jurisdiction in Canada.

Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. We in this province have got and have had, historically, very generous provincial governments, no matter who holds office here, whether it's the members opposite when they're in office or, or those of us on the New Democratic side of the, of the, of politics in this province.

Municipalities have had a very favourable relationship with the provincial government. In fact, it's so favourable, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, I was interested to read in the *Free Press* today, that the mayor of Winnipeg is calling for even more provincial engagement in, in the City of Winnipeg on

all sorts of issues because, quite frankly, this government at least is seen as the go-to level of government in this province.

Whenever there's a problem at the municipal level, at the federal level, this is the government, this is the, the place where Manitobans come to look for assistance and redress and that, that happens in the City of Winnipeg; it happens in Brandon; it happens in other jurisdictions in the province. This is a, a can-do government, and it is seen as the go-to level of government for support by Manitobans for whatever challenges that they may have individually, municipally, or with the federal level of government.

Mr. Speaker, I should also say, besides the facts that I put on the record a moment ago, that the Province has increased support to municipalities by over 50 percent in the last five years by \$99 million over the last five years. From 2004 to 2006, \$99 million more has gone directly into municipal coffers. This is about a hundred times greater than the estimated cost to municipalities of the, of the 2002, 2002 and 2004 taxation measures.

Mr. Speaker, transparency's also important when we're talking about anything to do with policies in this Legislature or anything to do with financial transactions in the province. And transparency is, in fact, enhanced and more certain when one provides—when the Province provides direct support to municipalities, there's direct transparency in those dollars that are flowing between the provincial level of government to our, our junior partners, the municipal level of government. So, direct support to municipalities is, is a, is a more transparent procedure to follow in terms of providing financial support vis-à-vis exempting municipalities partially from the provincial sales tax.

Also, Mr. Speaker, sharing provincial revenues from a variety of funding sources, including income and fuel taxes, provides municipalities with a stable and predictable funding stream every, every year. Manitoba is the only province—and this is again another fact—Manitoba is the only province to share income tax revenues with the municipalities, and in 2005, this expanded, expanded its revenue sharing by the ma—Building Manitoba Fund to include fuel taxes. The Province also shares a portion of video lottery revenues with the municipalities on an unconditional basis. Municipalities, of course, have benefited from the stability of, and the growth in, these shared revenue sources.

So, Mr. Speaker, as, as I've indicated here in my remarks, Manitoba is the most generous jurisdiction in Canada when it comes to sharing revenues with, with municipalities. We provide more revenues to municipalities than any other jurisdiction in Canada on a per capita basis and as a base, and as vis-à-vis provincial revenues.

In terms of unconditional support, Mr. Speaker, the most recent data available from StatsCan shows that Manitoba provides the highest per capita level of unconditional grants to municipalities amongst any provinces, and I know that as a former municipal official—I served as a city councillor for three terms in Brandon—unconditional support is always welcome at the municipal level. It allows municipal councillors to make decisions unfettered by, by strings to those fundings.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, when we do put strings on, on monies that go to municipalities, it's usually for a good reason. And I say that also as a, as a former municipal official in the city of Brandon. I was always, and I was there during—the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), he was the mayor when I was a city councillor in Brandon. I sat through the terms of, of, of three mayors when I was coun—was part of three—no, that's not correct, that's not correct, because the current mayor in Brandon wasn't elected till mayor until after I was out of city politics, but certainly, with the Member for Brandon West, when he was mayor and, and, and with Reg Atkinson, who's now a reeve in western Manitoba, but, at the time, when I was a councillor was mayor in the city of Brandon. I was, as a city councillor, very happy when Mr. Filmon's government, previous to our being in this office, or, put strings to some funding support to the province, because—or to the municipality, because, you know, the senior level of government, generally speaking, take a broader view than, and I say this as a city councillor, take a broader view than municipal officials. Generally, not always. There are exceptions to that rule, but generally.

So, when strings are attached to, and I'll use three examples that spring to mind right away. The Province, for the first time in history, the Province of Manitoba directly funds police officers in the city of Brandon and the city of Winnipeg. I think that's a good thing. I think it's a good thing that we put strings attached to dollars that are, we want as provincial, provincial leaders to ensure that money allocated for protective services, actually goes to the

City of Brandon Police Service, or the Winnipeg Police Service.

Likewise, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a good thing when we tie strings to dollars that are allocated for firefighting personnel. It's money that's meant for protective services, and I think it's positive that it be directed to those services. Same thing with ambulance, ambulance, ambulance fleet enhancement. Same thing with, with support to transit services where we put strings in monies allocated to the City of Winnipeg transit service, to the City of Brandon transit service. In those areas, it's positives that we put some strings.

Having said that, we have, in Manitoba, the largest chunks, or the largest segments of unconditional granting support in Canada, and that does provide municipal officials with the degree of flexibility in using our dollars, which is positive as well, Mr. Speaker. So it's a balance, it's a balance in terms of how we direct money to the municipal level of government, but the most important fact is the fact that Manitoba provides the most generous support to the municipal levels of government in Canada.

I appreciate the member from Ste. Rose bringing this PMR to the Legislature for us to debate today as a political gesture, because that's what it is, Mr. Speaker. It's a political gesture; it doesn't reflect factual reality. The fact is that Manitoba provides the highest level of support to municipal governments in Canada, and I'm proud to be part of a government that has established that record. Thank you.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm really glad to follow the member from Brandon East, because he's certainly given me a number of top-speaking points to be able to use in this kind of a debate. It's unbelievable. He actually believes that he's actually helping the R.M.s more than any previous government in Manitoba's history with his government's moves or implementations that it may have put in place.

I want to, though, digress and go back to speaking, first of all, and congratulating the Member for Ste Rose (Mr. Briese) for bringing this resolution forward. I'm very proud to second this, this private member's resolution in the House because, of course, it speaks about the shortfalls of infrastructure that we have in Manitoba.

Now, we have many good things going forward with us, for us in Manitoba. A lot of them are government initiated with, certainly, a greater, or a

smaller sector of private dollars moving forward, I guess, if you will, in these areas, which means that there's a greater burden being placed on Manitoba taxpayers to accomplish what we're doing today. But government's role is to provide infrastructure in some areas, Madam Deputy Speaker, or pardon me, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, my role as critic for Infrastructure and Transportation in the province, I take very seriously in dealing with the minister in that area, government services and dealing with CentrePort and development and future development a bit as well.

* (11:20)

And I guess, when we look at it, at a number of these areas, we see that the, that the—you know, in spite of what the member from Brandon East has said, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, just this past February, at the—has, in a submission to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), government services, and I want to quote, as I think the member from Ste. Rose did as well, I think it's very important to have this on the record, and I quote, "insufficient investment in Manitoba's deteriorating infrastructure has created a major burden for municipalities in the form of a severe infrastructure deficit." End quote.

Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Well, Mr. Speaker, we always—we know that there's probably seven, eight times more requests for dollars on infrastructure in Manitoba than there are actual dollars. We've seen a great commitment to this by the federal government and the Building Canada funds that have been announced this spring. We've looked at Manitoba's share, in the \$123-million range, in some of those areas as well.

But the fact remains that across Canada there's about \$123-billion shortfall in infrastructure development, and our share of that in Manitoba is, from my experience, is, is, as being involved in intergovernmental affairs before my honourable colleague from Ste. Rose in this area as well—was around \$4 billion at one time in roads alone. Now it's \$7 billion today, Mr.—Madam Deputy Speaker. We had a \$2-billion or \$3-billion shortfall on top of that \$4 billion for roads and water and sewer, and today we've got three to 3.4—almost three and a half billion dollars, for a total shortfall in Manitoba alone of \$10.4 billion—10.5, ten and a half billion dollars, and that's, I guess, a, in my estimation it's, it's a great lack of understanding of the provincial responsibility.

In regards to water and sewer, we give a lot of lip service. We hear it from the—from the governing party today, about how great they want to be in areas of green—greening Manitoba—of trying to provide resources to clean up our waters and sewers. And I would say that we are in the circumstances of, of where we've seen a lot of that infrastructure deteriorate because it's been there for 40 or 50 years. Certainly in roads it's—a good deal of it's been there for 30 and it does need some upgrading.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, the work that we're seeing this year in the increased budget, you could say, is a benefit of the fact that we've got the \$4 billion, or the, the \$4 billion in transfers and equalizations coming from the federal government. If one was to be a sceptic and, and say that, well, the Manitoba government has realized that they have to put some of that money into infrastructure in Manitoba because they are getting it as, as, basically, payments from the federal government in that area. And I think they want to get it in before it—because I think that because they brought summary budgeting in, and because, of course, the budget that they've come in this year, and that they've reduced the debt payments tremendously in their own legislation, they realize that things—they actually realize that the economy is slowing down, in spite of the fact that we always hear how it's holding its own in Manitoba. And I guess it is because we can be thankful for those transfer payments, because, if it wasn't, the provincial government would have to rely even more on increased taxes on a lot of the, these fees and services that I've expounded on a number of times in this House, but, certainly, my colleague has clearly put forth in the resolution that's before you today.

And, and, and this government, we don't know where the next, next tax increase is going to be, whether it's in Hydro rates as a hidden tax there, Madam Deputy Speaker. We know, though, what's given to us today is that they've got \$265 million out of Hydro into this year's operating budget to try to come up with this \$48-million balanced budget that we know isn't balanced. And we know that the, that the Government of Canada recognized the need for support in rural municipalities because, of course, they cancelled the goods and services tax from all municipal purchases back in 2004. One of the first things the federal government did when it came into its minority government position was to, to do that and recognize that this is a very important transfer back to municipalities to allow them to do the long-term planning that they require and get things done.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to go back to what the member from Brandon East said, and that's only because, you know, the, the longer to—R.M.s are rural—and he knows, rural municipalities, including the cities that are—and towns that are involved here are people who are very conscious of what's needed in their communities and their local regions, and they spend considerable time talking to people, understanding the needs and actually putting money away. They begin savings accounts in those communities in their rural municipal boards. They try to put funds away so that they have funds when a major project comes up.

Instead of having to go to their taxpayers and say, we need, you know, a particularly large amount of money here all at once, they plan over time. But, you know, the problem with this government over the last 10 years, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the more they plan and the longer out that they put, that they plan for, the further they fall behind in the actual amount of money that they've got to spend.

Now they may have the actual dollars built up, but my point is, the longer they plan out, the less value that money has for their project because this government continues to increase the taxes on things like they did in 2002, labour. They continue to tax it as they did in 2004, on legal accounting, architectural engineering, and security and private investigation services, like municipal governments, Madam Deputy Speaker. And so this means that there's a lot more things when they go to build a, an arena or a, a sewer, a new sewer, new lagoon in a community or rural municipality, water projects. The longer they wait, the fewer, the shorter distance those dollars actually go because they're, they're being eaten up on the other side by fees that that municipality has to pay.

A prime example is in the reduction of education taxes on property, Madam Deputy Speaker, where they're leaving a million dollar bill to the municipalities every year just to collect the small amount that's being left. Doesn't matter whether it's 100 percent or 10 percent of that area it's a—it means that those dollars go, go less distance they did in the past.

And I just wanted to speak for a minute in closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, about the fact that this government has indicated, and I did talk earlier about the 500-and-plus million dollar budget that they think they have in Manitoba this year, and I would commend the minister for that if in fact that

was actually going to end up being the number that was spent, but the history of my five or six years as, as Transportation critic in the province of Manitoba clearly shows me—and I only have to look at the third, at the third and fourth quarterly reports that come out each year from the government's own statements—that they lapse dollars in spending on infrastructure and, and in building transportation needs in this province and they don't carry them forward.

The minister in Estimates clearly pointed out to me that they don't get, he doesn't get to say, well, if I, you know, if, if because of weather, or whatever reason, I don't get to finish that road this year, there's \$50 million in my budget. I don't get to carry that over. I lose it at the end of March every year and, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's certainly been the case this past year where the government had a \$435-million budget and they lapsed over a 100 million of it in, in highway development and so—in infrastructure development.

And I believe that that's what Manitoba citizens need to know that they could have great announcements but it's actually walking the walk on the ground that provides results for better sewer and water, for better roads in the province of Manitoba, and that's why I say that, that this government, in spite of its protestations about how great it is, it also, it may be the most generous in sharing, expanding on some of the projects that the previous governments had started but it's also the government that takes the most, Madam Deputy Speaker, in the kinds of taxes that they have enforced on municipal governments across this province. Thank you very much.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Madam Deputy Speaker, I first of all want to say that I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak on this resolution. It's always a pleasure to speak on what's happening in Manitoba and then the many good things that are happening with our municipalities and the many initiatives we've taken as a Province to provide additional resources to 198 out of 190 of our municipalities in this province and I want to start on that basis.

I also want to thank the member opposite for bringing forward a, a, a, an issue. I certainly respect the member both in his current role, in his former role as the president of the AMM, but if I could make a suggestion I, I, I always say that we have a

choice when we look at issues, whether we look at the, the forest or the trees.

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that unfortunately, on this matter, I think the member opposite is not even looking at the trees. He's, he's, he's looking at, at one isolated bush in an entire forest because, you know, I think it's important to note that yes, there may indeed be a, an issue with services that were exempt prior to 2002 in terms of mechanical and electrical contracts and specialized professional—I don't want to, I don't want to be critical of that whatsoever. I, I will certainly undertake with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to look at that particular issue.

* (11:30)

But, Mr. Speaker, to then have a motion on this, the resolution in the House, and not reference the huge improvements we've made to funding of our municipalities. *[interjection]* Well, I was being generous. I said the member had—instead of focussing on the forest, I said he was looking at a bush. I think he's probably found a twig on the forest floor, and he's taking that as somehow being indicative of the entire forest. Well, you know, if I could continue this analogy, I think this, this resolution will be, in the broader scheme of things, like a twig falling in the forest because I don't think too many people are going to be following this because, you know what, let's put in perspective what we as a Province have done in the last number of years in terms of funding.

Our total support of municipalities has increased by 50 percent in the last five years, 2004 to 2009. You know what, that's huge. That, by the way, is about a hundred times greater than the estimated cost to municipalities of those budget measures. Okay, so remember, forest, twig. Let's get this all in perspective. Now I know the member opposite is probably saying, well, I don't care about the 50 percent. I know, you see, Mr. Speaker, they don't like to hear that, 50 percent.

Mr. Speaker, hundred times, 100 times the issue that the member's raising here, but that's fine. That's fine. They don't want to do that. I want to stress one of the reasons is because we have a share of growth revenues, a share of growth revenues, and that has been in place since the Schreyer government. The original PMTS, provincial-municipal tax sharing. Now it's in the form of the Building Manitoba Fund. Because of that, municipalities get a share of all of

the growth revenues we've seen over the last number of years.

Now, did the member—well, you know, the designated revenues, and well, the member wants to argue which taxes are part of it. That is unique across Canada. The member knows that. We are held up at—I was at the FCM annual meeting last year, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Mr. Speaker. You know what? The reason I was invited, not because I'm the greatest speaker or you know, the most popular local government minister. I was invited because they wanted Manitoba on the stage because we're a model for municipal finance. I'm not naive. You know, I did my best. I tried to give a reasonable speech. I tried to make sure I lived up to their expectations, but they were there because wherever I go, and the member knows this, the current president of the FCM will validate this, or quite frankly, you know, the fraternal relations with other organizations that represent municipalities. I know Don Johnson from Alberta, you ask any of them, and they say in their legislatures, we want what Manitoba has. We want what Manitoba has. So no reference to that. No, no, no reference for members opposite. You know, but that's fine. They, you know, they found a little twig in the forest. You know, they want to focus in on that. *[interjection]*

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know the Member for Brandon, Brandon West, loves speaking from his seat. I just want to reference again that I have a lot of sympathy for the member opposite. It's pretty tough being the Finance critic in the Conservative party when, you know, when we have a government that's having it both ways, economic stimulus and a balanced budget. I know it's tough being a former mayor of Brandon with what we've been doing in Brandon in terms of municipal finance. I know the member opposite probably wished he was mayor again because he would have—when he was mayor of Brandon, he didn't get any of the kind of support that we have. *[interjection]* There was no 50 percent increase in funding from the, from his friends in the Conservative government of the time. None, nothing. The member knows that as well.

So I understand, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, when I hear the volume of contribution coming from the member from his seat, there's a certain amount of anguish that goes with the fact that, you know, he's sitting here with an NDP government that's doing far more for Brandon than any of the government of the '90s that he had to work with as mayor. So you know, I know it's tough. I mean, you know, he is the

Finance critic, and I wish him well trying to find arguments when we have balanced budgets and we're doing way more for municipalities, including the city of Brandon.

But, you know, I want to stress we have the highest unconditional grants. That's well known but you look at some of the other things we've done, and I know the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), I'm sure, will be wanting maybe—he probably wishes he could bring in an amendment to this resolution.

We have, Mr. Speaker, we have funded additional police officers. We've done it in Winnipeg and Brandon. For the first time a couple of years ago, we moved to fund firefighters in Winnipeg, in Brandon, in Thompson and Portage—for the first time, designated funding for firefighters. That's huge.

I want to stress, Mr. Speaker, the work we've done in terms of working with communities and municipalities through Neighbourhoods Alive!, Brandon, along with Thompson, along with—designator was Winnipeg, was part of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program from day one. But we've expanded it, and I can tell you, I've been out in Portage and it's a huge success in Portage, and I'm sure the member from Portage will be the first one to be, be agreeing with that. It's a huge success in Dauphin, in The Pas, in, in Flin Flon and in, in Selkirk. These are programs that are working with the local communities and municipalities and making a real difference.

I want to stress some of the stuff that we're doing in terms of recreation, Mr. Speaker. We, in our last budget, for the first time, had designated funding for inner city rec directors in Neighbourhoods Alive! communities. And we provided additional funding to all of the Neighbourhoods Alive! communities in terms of recreation funding. That is direct support for partnering with our municipalities.

I want to look at the Building Manitoba Fund, funding that we brought in for our ver-rec and library facilities, and, Mr. Speaker, I look around the province—and the member knows in Brandon. Again, Brandon has done very well with support there in terms of recreational facilities under the Building Manitoba Fund. And I know it's tough being a member, you know, for Brandon West because, you know, we are doing a lot of things. Renaissance Brandon, again, we are, we are funding the renewal of downtown Brandon and I know the member opposite will be supportive of that. I would hope he

would. I certainly know the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) has been there. We're doing lots in, in the, in our second city, our second largest city in terms of that.

And, Mr. Speaker, you can compare us to what was done before, you can compare us across the country, and the reality is that we have some of the highest unconditional grants, the highest per capita support of municipalities. We are a model in terms of the finance sharing of growth revenues, and we provide direct funding for things that are not funded in other provinces, and I say with pride that when we fund police and, and our fire services—we actually moved this year on ambulance services as well, because municipalities have said it's unfair that they have 25 percent of the cost, and we moved this year in a very significant way in Winnipeg—and that applies also to Brandon and to Thompson and Portage—to address that.

So, to conclude, Mr. Speaker, the member had the choice. He could have brought in a, a wide, sweeping debate on municipal policy for the next year or decade or 20 years. He could have looked at the forest. He could have actually even looked at the trees. Instead, he chose to pick up a twig and take an issue that we will certainly look at but dwarfs in comparison to the dramatic increase in support for our municipalities, the tremendous partnership we have across this province.

So I appreciate the member's resolution, Mr. Speaker, but it is a twig falling in the forest. It misses the mark. Manitoba is a leader when it comes to municipal finances, and I'm saying, as Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and as part of this government, it's something we're very proud of.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I'm pleased to rise to support the resolution that has been brought forward by my colleague the member from Ste. Rose, who through his life has had considerable experience in municipal politics and probably understands it far more intimately than does the minister who's responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs today.

And I would have to say that the minister doesn't really understand the issue if he thinks that this issue is so nebulous that it's like a twig on the forest floor. Now, I think that's a quote that needs to go back to municipalities, Mr. Speaker, because it, it realizes, I think, the fact that this minister doesn't have any

notion about how important this issue is to all municipalities across this province.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister boasts about how much funding they've increased to municipalities. But let's take a look at the global budget of this province, and let's compare the percentage that goes to municipalities today against the percentage that went to municipalities in the 1990s, and you would find that less percentage of the budget goes to municipalities today than it did in the 1990s. So the minister hasn't got a great deal to boast about, because his own budget has, has more than doubled since they have taken office some short 10 years ago.

* (11:40)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think municipalities have raised this issue time and time and time again. They raised it during the 1990s, that there was an unfair tax being collected from municipalities as compared to what is being kept by the Province for its own infrastructure and it need—at that time, by the federal government. Today, the federal government has moved on this issue and they have rebated the GST or, or have stopped collecting the GST from municipalities. Well, why did they do that? Because it's simply a tax on tax, and I think the federal government, in its wisdom, realized that all of this is doing, is doing is circulating money and instead of doing that, they have saved municipalities some—what is it?—

An Honourable Member: \$70 million.

Mr. Derkach: —\$70 million a year in terms of the GST that was—and, and the other charges that were being collected by the federal government. And municipalities, I think, through their lobbying, both at this government level and us as opposition members, have indicated that this is a thorn in their sides and it should be dealt with.

And I think this resolution speaks to that and it's not a, a harebrained resolution. It, it, it, it's talking about the provincial government not collecting the provincial sales tax on items that municipalities buy, and that's a common practical approach. Now, if we took that approach, Madam Deputy Speaker, we'd all benefit from it because then there would be more money for such things as the failing infrastructure that we have in our cities, in our towns and in our rural municipalities, and that's going to have to be addressed some way and the, and the provincial government can address it.

Now, the minister also talked about the tax sharing that was introduced in the Schreyer years—a good move; nobody would say that that was a bad move. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I under—I know that during the Pawley years when revenues to the province fell, the revenues then to municipalities went down. We corrected that in the 1990s. We said that if in fact the prov—the provincial revenues go down, we would not reduce the payment to municipalities. In other words, their revenues would not fall. And I think that was a, a major step and it was a good step, but I'm—I have to reiterate that that step that was taken by the former Premier Ed Schreyer, in, in the days when he introduced that tax-sharing agreement was a good step for municipalities and it was a good step for the province.

And so today, we—this resolution is asking this government to take another good step, and that step would be to eliminate the provincial sales tax for municipalities and we would all benefit by it. We would benefit to the extent that some of the needs that municipalities have could be addressed in a more timely fashion. We would stop the deteriorating infrastructure, perhaps, or curtail some of it, and if you look at the deficit in infrastructure today compared just to a few short years ago—I think 2004—you would find that the deficit in infrastructure has doubled, and we can't continue that way.

And so, therefore, this resolution is a pretty sensible resolution and it calls on the government to do something positive and constructive. Now, the government continues to tell us that they have good revenues coming in to them as a province, so this is a time to do it. There is a need out there with municipalities today trying to address the infrastructure needs. I think it's been recognized by both the provincial and, and federal governments that infrastructure is something that has to be addressed and that is why significant sums of money have been put into this program, and we're asking the provincial government to do—to take the next step and to eliminate the provincial sales tax for municipalities so that, indeed, some of these deficiencies can be addressed.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm going to cut my time short because I know that the member from Brandon West would still like to contribute to this dialogue, and I simply want to say that—I want to congratulate the member from Ste. Rose for taking the bold step and introducing this resolution because I think it's one that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and his colleagues should take very serious

consideration of. And if they can't support this resolution, then I'm—I, I'm, I'm challenging them to come forward with a step that's going to assist municipalities by eliminating the provincial sales tax which really doesn't make any sense for municipalities because it's money that—they're paying tax on tax. So with those few comments, I thank you for the time.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): I thank the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) for that, that show of confidence and—anyway.

Mr.—Madam, Madam, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's, it, it's in some ways an honour to come and speak here this morning on the PMR brought forward by the member of Ste. Rose, because I think we should have good, fulsome debates in terms of the, the financing of our budgets, the financing of the programs—that I think are supported by the people of Manitoba. And I think it's important that all 57 members of this Legislature have an opportunity to contribute to that debate. My, just because my, my constituents in the Dauphin-Roblin area are very concerned about how their tax dollars are being spent. And I think we have before us, just in listening to the last—[interjection]

You're darn right they should be because we don't want to go back to those days where, where the, the provincial government of the day starved programs one after another. We don't want to go back to those days where people saw cuts to programs and had an actual worsening of an economic crisis through the decisions that were made by the previous government. We do not want to go back to that. My constituents don't want to return to those bad old days, Ms. Deputy Speaker, so I agree with the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese), that, that it, that they should be concerned.

Madam Deputy Speaker, just in listening to the two speeches that preceded my few, few minutes here this morning, the, the minister for Intergovernmental Affairs and the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), both MLAs who, I think, have concerns that they bring forward on behalf of their constituents; both MLAs who have been here for a while in, in this Legislature, have, have had many opportunities to speak on these issues in the House, many opportunities to think about some of the things economically, financially that we need to deal with here. But each come from it from a very different perspective. Shouldn't surprise members opposite that I'm more in tune with the perspective

put forward by the, my colleague, the minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. I think he makes some very good points. I think he, his message was one of a lot more hope for Manitobans, a lot more support for the desires of Manitobans—I think reflects better the Manitoba view in terms of how we approach budgets.

The Member for Russell, with all due respect, brings forward, I think, a much more short-sighted view of budgeting and is, is reflective of those bad old days in the 1990s, those bad old days in the 1990s when—those, those, those, those bad old days in the 1990s, Madam Deputy Speaker, where, where they set out to deal with an economic crisis and only ended up making it worse, only adding to the natural cycle of economic crises by compounding the, the restriction of money, the restriction of support, compounded their problems by, by not putting adequate resources forward for programs that could stimulate an economy. I, I want to say that we're not making that mistake today, and I want to give credit where credit is due so I want to include local municipalities, our provincial approach and, and the federal government who, who have been participating with us in terms of economic stimulus. Those infrastructure programs that, that will, will do two things in my view: first and foremost, a, a, a quick, within two-year kind of a shot to our economy. That's the stimulus part of this. But many of those announcements that we've made, while being good—a good quick shot to our, to stimulate our economy, will also produce good long-term, down-the-road permanent benefits.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I'll just throw one quick example out in my own, in my own constituency where we, together with the federal government through a federal-provincial program, the knowledge information program, KIP, we made a very good announcement in Dauphin to, to redevelop and expand not just the site of the Parkland Campus of Assiniboine Community College but we've entered into a discussion about some new programming that we can, that we can offer in our community of Dauphin for our Parkland region.

Yes, it's a good, economic, short-term stimulus package for our community. Three and a half million dollars is nothing to sneeze at, especially in a community the size of, of, of ours in rural Manitoba, but it will also allow us to be positive contributors in terms of training, in terms of apprenticeships, in

terms of those programs that will then spin off into other forms of economic stimulus over the long haul. I think that is a much wiser economic approach than what we saw when our friends across the way were, were, were handling the levers of power in this, in this province.

* (11:50)

One of my colleagues referred to it the other day as having their hands on the wheel. Well, as opposed to—you know, they had their hands on their wheel at one time; now they simply have their hands on the horn and that's it. Mr. Speaker, we need to not slip back into those, those bad-decision days of the '90s when the Tories were running this province.

The, the premise of the speech from the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) was that—was based on percentages. He says that we're not putting in the kind of support for municipalities—we're not putting enough of support in because the percentage of our budget has decreased. Well, sure, Mr. Speaker, if you go back to the '90s and look at what the Tories did, they, they shrunk the size of their budget. They cut programs. They, they cut programs to fund doctors at universities. They cut programs that trained nurses. They fired 1,500 nurses. They cut programs that affected everything from water inspections to natural resource officers right across the board. They cut those programs and they shrunk their budget so that their percentage of money that they put into municipalities increased. It wasn't, it wasn't—

An Honourable Member: Just wait until next year. Wait till the transfers dry up.

Mr. Struthers: I can't wait till next year because we have a Finance Minister who understands this, all of this, and makes good decisions. So, so the Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen) I think should be worried about next year because this government—

An Honourable Member: I am worried about next year. You guys—

Mr. Struthers: —because this government will continue to make good decisions that actually impact positively on our economy and the people of Manitoba who depend on us to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Russell can play with the numbers and he can use percentages and he can, he can support an approach that shrinks services to Manitobans so that they can say that their percentage to municipalities was good, but that's a phony argument.

Our government is committed to providing the municipalities of our province with, with support. We, when, when—and I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to give delegates and leadership of the AMM more credit than what the Member for Russell seems to do.

In conversations I've had with the leadership of the AMM, they've been very clear that the support from this government has been, has been exemplary. *[interjection]* Now they will, they will—*[interjection]* and you know what, Mr. Speaker? In his more honest moments, I think even the Member for Ste. Re—Ste. Rose would even—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Struthers: *[inaudible]* on that. But Mr. Speaker, they, they have made requests of us and those, those requests are—they're legitimate. We have open conversations with the leadership of the AMM, that they've told me directly that, that there's, there's no other province that has the kind of support that what we put forward. They've been open about that. I think the Tories, the Tories should be too.

Mr. Speaker, just to wrap up, I'm very proud of the support that we've put towards our municipalities. We understand the pressures that municipalities are under. It's not going to be our approach to restrict that support. It's not our approach to restrict the amount of money that we put into programs, into this, into this province. And it's not our intention to take, to take measures that are half thought out, like I see in this private member's resolution.

So, I appreciate the time I've had to speak on this. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): I do wish I had more time to refute quite a number of the inaccuracies that were put on the record by, by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton). There are a number of inaccuracies and I, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that I can speak probably with, with more authority, if you will, with respect to municipal financing and municipal laws and the, the operations of a municipality than either one of those two ministers who really haven't had any real experience at the municipal level.

I can, I can honestly say, however, Mr. Speaker, that it's the municipalities themselves that provide the services, the front-line services that constituents of all of ours demand on a daily basis, they—the municipalities under some severe financial stress,

'cause really municipalities only have one revenue stream, only one, and that's property taxes. They don't have the numbers of revenue streams that a provincial government have, such as sin taxes, such as corporate taxes, such as personal income taxes, and such as provincial sales tax or—which is now being referred to as the retail sales tax.

So the provincial government has a lot of different revenue streams, where municipalities have only one revenue stream and that's that of property taxes. And what this government has a tendency of doing is forgetting that there's only one taxpayer, there's only one taxpayer that we have in the province or in the country. We have one taxpayer, and that taxpayer pays all the freight of all the taxes, and they certainly pay the freight for the municipalities under their property taxes.

And this government has decided arbitrarily that they would like to generate more revenue out of one of their revenue streams, the provincial sales tax, by again attacking the municipalities, broadening their base of revenue coming from different services that are provided by the municipality and having a provincial sales tax attached to that.

It's wrong, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what this resolution speaks to. It's wrong. As a matter of fact, it's so wrong that the federal government has even identified the fact that it is not right to tax the same taxpayer twice. They have legitimately removed GST from certain products and services that are purchased by municipalities. What a great, great thing that the government—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Our rules re-request us only one hour to deal with, with-order, order.—with resolutions, and the hour has expired.

So when this matter is again—*[interjection]* Order. Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) will have seven minutes remaining.

Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock? *[interjection]* It is 12 o'clock. No, it's not, but—*[interjection]* Oh, yeah, okay. *[interjection]* 'Cause we called it 11 o'clock at—yeah. So, it is, it is 12 o'clock now according to our House rules.

So, the hour being 12 noon, we will recess and we will re-reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 4, 2009

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY	Korzeniowski	2625
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS	Gerrard	2626
Debate on Second Readings–Public Bills	Resolution	
Bill 217–The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act	Res. 15–Removal of Provincial Sales Tax from Certain Services Used by Manitoba's Municipal Governments	
Dewar 2617	Briese	2626
Pedersen 2618	Caldwell	2629
Ashton 2620	Maguire	2630
Gerrard 2621	Ashton	2632
Whitehead 2622	Derkach	2634
Cullen 2623	Struthers	2636
Bill 226–The Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Act	Borotsik	2637
Cullen 2625		

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

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