

**Fourth 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. LXII No. 51 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 26, 2010**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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.
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, Hon.	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, Hon.	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.
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	N.D.P.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2010**

*The House met at 1:30 p.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 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.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 231—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act  
(Denial of Licences—Outstanding Warrants)**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I move, seconded by the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 231, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Denial of Licences—Outstanding Warrants), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, at any given time, there are 10 to 12 thousand outstanding warrants. Many of those warrants are for very serious offences like violent offences and sexual offences against children. This bill would prohibit anyone in Manitoba with an outstanding warrant for a serious indictable offence under the Criminal Code of Canada from obtaining a valid driver's licence, which would otherwise provide mobility and government-sanctioned identification. This bill is intended to make it harder for those who have warrants for serious offences to continue to evade the law.

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

**Bill 232—The Employment and Income Assistance  
Amendment Act (Restricting Assistance—  
Outstanding Warrants)**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Also, I wish to announce or to—I move, seconded by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), that Bill 232, The Employment and Income

Assistance Amendment Act (Restricting Assistance—Outstanding Warrants), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, currently in Manitoba, there is nothing that prohibits individuals who have outstanding warrants for serious offences, like violent offences and sexual offences against children, from receiving taxpayer-funded welfare. This legislation would restrict, in most circumstances, an individual who has an outstanding warrant for a serious offence from receiving taxpayer-funded welfare. The bill is intended to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are not being used to help serious criminals avoid the justice system and avoid facing their charges.

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

**PETITIONS**

**Mount Agassiz Ski Area**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and the Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operation of Mount Agassiz ski area was very important to the local economy, not only creating, but also generating, sales of goods and services in—at area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for core provincial government services and infrastructure which benefits all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened, and Parks Canada is committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by G. Ray, A. Beck, B. Clark and many, many other fine Manitobans.

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

### Waste-Water Ejector Systems

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they want to be assured that provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009, the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulations under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba Conservation official stated in the October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, "Have we done a specific study? No."

These regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that the review can take place and ensure that they are based on sound science.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition of waste-water ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And this petition is signed by C. Brown, G. Brown, B. Clark and many, many other Manitobans.

### Multiple Myeloma Treatments

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved the use of Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

This is signed by M. Varnes, A. Cain, O. Slavutskiy and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

\* (13:40)

#### **Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Community-based medical clinics provide a valuable health-care service.

The closure of the Westbrook Medical Clinic has left both Weston and Brooklands without a community-based medical clinic.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider how important it is to have a medical clinic located in the Weston-Brooklands area.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by M. Santos, M. Honcho and J. Medeiros and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

#### **Waste-Water Ejector Systems**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they want to be assured that provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009, the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba

Conservation official stated in the October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, quote: "Have we done a specific study? No." End quote.

These regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that a review can take place to ensure that they are based on sound science.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition on waste-water ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And this petition is signed by O. Champigny, L. Shoemaker, D. Winters and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Bipole III**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been forced by the NDP government to construct its next high-voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba, a decision for which the NDP government has not been able to provide any logical justification.

Since this will cost Manitoba ratepayers at least \$640 million more than an east-side route and given that the Province of Manitoba is facing its largest deficit on record, the burden of this extra cost could not come at a worse time.

Between 2002 and 2009 electricity rates increased by 16 percent, and Manitoba Hydro has filled—or filed a request for further rate increases totalling 6 percent over the next two years.

A western Bipole III route would invariably lead to more rate increases.

In addition to being cheaper, an east-side route would be hundreds of kilometres shorter and would be more reliable than a west-side route.

West-side residents have not been adequately consulted and have identified serious concerns with the proposed line.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the cheaper, shorter and more logical east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, to save ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars during these challenging economic times.

This petition is signed by J. Christie, J. Harrower, C. Parr and many, many other Manitobans.

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** I am pleased to table the report of the Ombudsman on the Employment and Income Assistance Program of the Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 2009 Annual Report of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### Provincial Mining Week

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines, I am pleased to proclaim the week of May 23rd to May 29th, 2010 as Provincial Mining Week.

Our mining/petroleum industries make essential contributions to our economy and to the people of Manitoba. The zinc-rich core sample given to each MLA is from HudBay Minerals' Lalor deposit near Snow Lake. The mineral industry is Manitoba's second-largest primary resource industry, totalling more than 1.9 billion in economic output in 2009. This industry employs 5,400 workers directly and another 18,000 in spin-off jobs.

I'm pleased to note that on May 27th I will be at The Forks to announce the launch of the Mining Matters program in Manitoba, designed as a

grade 7 resource. This will help provide a solid basis upon which teachers and their students can gain an understanding of the vital importance of Manitoba's abundant mineral resources.

This year also marks 50 years of the mine rescue competitions in Manitoba, a profound milestone for the mining sector. Mine rescue services have been provided in Manitoba since 1933. On Saturday, May 29th, the Manitoba mining industry and San Gold Corporation will co-host its 2010 Manitoba Provincial Mine Rescue Competition at the Union Centre parkade. I invite you to attend this event, which is open to the public.

I would like to invite all members and their families to celebrate Manitoba's mineral industry at this year's Provincial Mining Week activities at The Forks. The free Manitoba Rocks! activities are on May 27th, 28th and 29th, and include gold panning, mineral and fossil collecting, Rock Doc presentations on Manitoba's geology, a mining IQ wheel, heavy mining equipment, poster displays and prize draws.

I would like to thank our industry partners who work with my—the department's Mineral Resources Division to make Mining Week a huge success year after year. Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand today and recognize Provincial Mining Week 2010. This week provides an opportunity for Manitobans to recognize the important contribution of mining to our economy and the industry's role in Manitoba's history. The mining industry plays a significant role in Manitoba's economy. It is the second largest primary resource industry in the province. In 2009, as mentioned, the combined value of mineral production for metals, industrial minerals and petroleum total over \$1.9 billion. The province's mineral industry employs about 23,400 direct and indirect jobs.

Our province, Mr. Speaker, produces 28.3 percent of Canada's nickel, 16.4 percent of Canada's cobalt, 10.2 percent of Canada's copper, 11.4 percent of Canada's zinc, 4.1 percent of Canada's gold, 100 percent of Canada's lithium and tantalum, 6.1 percent of Canada's silver. It is important that the Province of Manitoba makes it attractive for mining companies to operate in our province. The Province should encourage growth in a manner that respects our environment.

Mining is the foundation of many of our northern communities and continues to drive the

economies of these communities. Even the town of Flin Flon's name can be traced back to the mining industry. The name of the town was based on a character from a novel that as—that an early prospector was reading, Josiah Flintabbatey Flonatin.

\* (13:50)

The International Nickel Company, Inco Ltd., was responsible for the development of the city of Thompson. Inco paid to construct the infrastructure when the city was founded. Inco still owns the city's water treatment plant and provides millions of dollars grants in lieu of taxes to the city each year. The city that developed to support Inco's mining operations now acts as a service centre for residents of northern Manitoba.

Some of the other companies that have played an important role in Manitoba include: Anglo American, CanAlaska Uranium Limited, Crowflight Minerals Inc., DeBeers Canada, EagleRidge Minerals Limited, Gossan Resources Limited, Graymont Western Canada, Halo Resources, Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting Limited, Mustang Minerals Corporation, Pure Nickel Inc. and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

We must continue to support and recognize this valuable industry. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave?

**An Honourable Member:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it is timely and significant that the core sample that was provided today from HudBay Minerals from their Lalor deposit near Snow Lake, because this is a major deposit.

And it has been quite interesting to be in Snow Lake a number of times over the last few years. And it wasn't very long ago when things were looking very gloomy—mines were closing, people were being laid off, a lot of people were leaving Snow Lake and the value of property was plummeting—to what's happening now with the Lalor deposit, with the expansion projected in Snow Lake and a much brighter future than it was. And so this core sample provides for a brighter future in terms of not only

mining but for Manitoba, and is timely on this week which is Provincial Mining Week.

I'd like to congratulate those involved in the mine rescue competitions in Manitoba, who've been involved now for 50 years. That's quite a bit of history, and it's quite an accomplishment. Certainly, it's important that the skills are kept up-to-date and that we're reminded day-to-day of the important procedures that we must be following to ensure that mining is done safely.

I join others, Mr. Speaker, in saluting the mining industry and those who work in the industry and recognizing this important week.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from King Edward Community School, we have 35 grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Paul Vernaus. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Also in the public gallery we have from Kelvin High School, we have 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Miguel Bérubé. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you all here today.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Addictions Treatment Wait Lists

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, about five years ago the NDP government was warned of a looming crisis in the area of opiate addiction. Two years ago they were warned again that resources in place were insufficient to meet the exploding demand in this area. In the past two years, since that warning, at least 25 Manitobans have died from accidental overdoses. At least half of those individuals were on waiting lists waiting for treatment under this government.

I want to ask the Premier: Why did he and his government ignore the warnings that they've been getting for the past five years on this looming crisis?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we take the warnings and the concerns very seriously from members of the addictions treatment

community, which is why in this budget we increased our resources to the Addictions Foundation by 9.4 percent. And I need to mention, just for the record, again, that the parties opposite vote against that increase of resources.

We also have built a new addictions treatment centre in Thompson, an excellent, first-class facility. We also have put more money into people that work on the front lines with addictions and mental health issues, an additional 20 staff. And, Mr. Speaker, we have also entered into additional training for doctors, so that more doctors can administer methadone treatment in their practices and in the community and that more people can have access to services.

We do take these kinds of advice seriously, and we have dedicated resources to that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we— you know, if he wants to play politics, I think we need to be clear. We need to be clear with his political response. What we voted against was NDP mismanagement that would lead to the resignation of people like Dr. Lindy Lee, one of the leading experts in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have a very serious crisis today. We learned this morning in the media of the resignation of Dr. Lee. Dr. Lee, this morning on radio, was asked what was the final straw? And she said, and I quote: Repeatedly asking for resources and a conversation in which I was told I would probably have to wait at least two years for anything to happen.

I want to ask the Premier to set aside the rhetoric; set aside the finger pointing; don't do what his minister did yesterday and try to blame previous governments for something that has arisen over the past five years; take responsibility; show leadership; take urgent action, to deal with this looming crisis. Will he do that today?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, Dr. Lee has provided a very commendable service. I'm glad to hear that she will continue to be working in the addictions field. She has played a very important role in providing treatment at the Health Sciences Centre. I'm glad that that treatment unit will continue operating.

There is no question that they needed additional resources, and we were the government that provided additional resources. We were the government that also moved the accessibility to OxyContin to a part 3 requirement so that there were more stringent controls over access to that drug if a person wanted

to have it through Pharmacare, in order to reduce the amount of people that were getting hooked on that drug. We are very interested in all measures that reduce access to the drug, provide more education to people and more support if they happen to require treatment.

And we want to ensure that there is a minimal amount and actually no drug addiction in Manitoba, but it requires ongoing partnerships with our professionals, with the citizenry and with our health-care system. We are committed to doing that, and we are committed to providing the resources to do that. The member calls it political—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure. Maybe the Premier didn't have a chance to be briefed before he came into the House today. But he—if he had been, he would know that Dr. Lindy Lee, who is heading up the out-patient program at Health Sciences Centre, has resigned. She's indicated that she resigned because of a lack of resources. She was told that it would be at least two years for anything to happen.

Mr. Speaker, rather than trying to blame the opposition for what's happening under his watch, rather than trying to do what his minister did in the House yesterday and try to blame Gary Filmon for things that have arisen over the past five years, will they get over those political games, and will he today indicate what plan he has, what strategy he's going to take, starting from today, to resolve what is a major crisis?

Will he first acknowledge that there's a crisis? He seems to think everything is fine. Will he acknowledge that there's a crisis as a first step, and will he commit himself today to enacting that get-'er-done attitude that he had on the stadium, to deal with this very serious crisis?

**Mr. Selinger:** I was very pleased that our Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) in March, before this issue arose today, took very specific action to address the abuse of OxyContin in our community. He did things that restricted access to it through Pharmacare. He took additional measures to work with the health-care system to train more doctors to administer methadone treatment.

We have built extra addiction treatment breads in this province. We have trained additional doctors and nurses to be available in this province. We have put a new addictions treatment centre in place in



Thompson, and, in addition, we have a youth stabilization act for those children or those young people that are addicted to drugs. Their parents can bring them into care. With their guidance, with parental support, we can bring those young people off the street into care and proper treatment.

Members opposite, they like to say that's political. We call that concrete action, and they have opposed us every step of the way on putting these resources into the community.

\* (14:00)

### **Addictions Treatment Wait Lists**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Dr. Lee said quite clearly no new resources were available.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has ignored front-line addiction experts for years, and now Manitoba is paying the price. Dr. Lindy Lee, a well-respected expert in her field, has now resigned as a result of this government's incompetence. Dr. Lee said this morning, and I quote: The problem is with the upswing in opium addiction that has occurred in the province. There are no organized services for this at all, and the methadone clinics cannot meet the need at all. I think it needs a whole organized clinic to address it, an out-patient clinic. And although we've asked for that, it's not happening and the workload is no longer manageable. Unquote.

Why has the Minister of Healthy Living repeatedly ignored Dr. Lee?

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors):** Actually, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct the record.

What we did was we actually had a working group that had doctors, that had addiction specialists, had pharmacists on it, and they made recommendations. What they recommended was that we have community clinics where people have been stabilized, get treatment out in the community. The first training session is June 10th. We will continue to expand methadone treatment in the community just as Dr. Lee has suggested and we'll continue to enhance the addiction service in the future. What we're doing is making steps to decrease the amount of OxyContin out on the street and we're expanding treatment out in the community as was recommended by the working group.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Actually, the minister mentions the task force or the working group. Well, what Dr. Lee

said, and I quote, it didn't come up with the results I would have liked to see. So there, Mr. Speaker, is the results of his working group.

Mr. Speaker, the addictions community is losing an outspoken advocate who says the government is precisely the reason she is leaving. Dr. Lee said this morning that the reason she quit is that she has been repeatedly asking for resources and was repeatedly denied by this government. If this government had listened to Dr. Lee years ago, maybe we wouldn't have people dying on wait lists for treatment.

Why is this NDP government letting people on wait lists die instead of listening to experts about what needs to be done now, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite doesn't understand that we got together a working group early this year. They made a report which we received and we acted upon it. The first action was to move OxyContin from part 1 to part 3. In March we made that announcement where pharmacists and doctors have moved the system from part 1 to part 3 to restrict the drug.

The second part was to expand treatment in the community. We have now identified 10 to 12 doctors who are going to take the training starting June 10th and that training will be accessible when their licence need. Training will be expanded in the community which will provide additional space for the AFM addiction treatment centre.

So we have looked at experts. We've listened to experts and, Mr. Speaker, we've basically doubled the funding from the—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Rowat:** What Dr. Lee said, out of that working group, was not enough was coming out of that process.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Lee said that this problem has not yet peaked in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba. She says we're still going to see more people addicted to pain killers. She also said that it's going to take months or even years to really change doctors' prescribing habits. There are no organized services. So if you're already addicted and seeking treatment, this government's plan is not going to work for you.

How many more Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, have to die in a wait list for this government to get its head out of the sand, listen to the experts and address Dr. Lee's concerns?

**Mr. Rondeau:** When we listen to the experts, which comprises of Dr. Lee and many other people in the pharmacy, other doctors, other people out in the community, we get the fact that they want to see further expansion of treatment. We're doing that, Mr. Speaker. We are moving treatment out into the community for people who are stabilized on methadone.

Number 2, we've restricted the drug, Mr. Speaker. What happens on treatment practice is the doctors, now, when they prescribe, have to phone to Manitoba Health and get a second opinion, to listen, to make sure that it's prescribed correctly. That's exactly what the doctors and the specialists have recommended and that's what we're doing. And it was presented to us in early February and by March we had acted. And that is in real time and we're taking action on addictions in many different ways.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### **Addictions Treatment Wait Lists**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, experts wouldn't be quitting if they were being listened to.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Healthy Living just doesn't seem to get it. Yes, we need long-term services, but we also need short-term services today; 25 people have died on the waiting list in the last two years. There are waiting lists for treatment today. People on those lists are dying today.

So I'd like to ask the minister: Where is his solution for today?

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors):** I'd like to let the member know that the AFM is working with 80 people out in the community today, to provide additional information and expertise on OxyContin and other opiates—today. What we're doing today is we've found and recruited 10 to 12 doctors who are going to get specific training on methadone dispensing today.

So we've found the doctors. The training's scheduled for June 10th. They will be licensed, and, Mr. Speaker, if the member is saying that what we should be doing is having untrained people provide methadone, that's not appropriate and that's not safe.

We're going to train and work with people to make sure their skills are there, make sure they can

dispense it safely and have an appropriate health-care and addiction system.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, this problem has been growing for five years, and we haven't heard very much from this government at all.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Healthy Living said that there wasn't enough money for addiction services, yet the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) can ramp up RHA administrative spending. She can double the number of ADMs in her office and she can double the number of political staff in her office, but today Dr. Lindy Lee, an addictions expert, quit her job because of a lack of resources for patient care.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Healthy Living to tell us: Why is there monies for administrative and political agendas, but there isn't enough money for patient care?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that since 1999 we've nearly doubled the funding for addiction services. I'm pleased that we had a 9.4 percent increase to the Addictions Foundation in this year's budget. I'm pleased that we have now a new stabilization facility. I'm pleased that we have a RaY program. I'm pleased that we've almost tripled funding for the Addictions Foundation—I'm sorry for the—and I'm pleased that we're going to continue to provide funding to all the agencies, a number of which weren't funded under the previous government.

I think we've had a commitment to addictions. I know that there's—we want to continue to improve it, but, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have been improving the system, and it's been a continuous effort to make sure that we have the resources—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Healthy Living really does have his head in the sand.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has a poor track record when it comes to addiction services in Manitoba. In 2004 they closed 14 beds at the AFM and laid off staff despite warnings that waiting lists would increase. They closed many AFM services this past Christmas. They've slashed addiction services in 65 schools. They cut counselling in rural Manitoba. They mismanaged the Magnus Centre project. They promised 50 more beds and they failed

to deliver. Now an addictions expert has quit in frustration.

So why is it that the longer this NDP government is in power the worse the problem gets?

**Mr. Rondeau:** Mr. Speaker, if we have doubled the funding to addiction services, that is a positive treatment. Number 2, we're looking at issues such as OxyContin, and we assemble a group of experts from the community who have expertise in that area. We get a report, and we act upon the report. And the report talked about education, talked about prevention, talked about treatment, talked about follow-up support, and we're acting upon that.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have expanded services, like into Thompson. We just have a new facility in Thompson. We're expanding services in other areas. But the deal would be is we want to work with youth, which the program is similar from other years. We want to look at other things—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

\*(14:10)

#### **Addictions Treatment Wait Lists**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, improving the system, so why are addiction experts like Dr. Lindy Lee quitting?

Mr. Speaker, this government has failed front-line addiction providers across the board. Wait lists for women's residential addictions treatments have soared to three to four months, and this government has done nothing to increase treatment capacity.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Healthy Living explain why he has completely ignored a proposal from the Behavioural Health Foundation to add 15 beds to their Selkirk facility?

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors):** I was pleased to receive the proposal about an increase to women's addiction services and, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear what they are having to say, and that's part of the dialogue that was ongoing.

So what we want to do is, we received it, we're looking at the proposal and we're evaluating on how that fits in the complete spectrum of services. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very familiar with the program. I am familiar with the proposal and we're looking at how we can incorporate that in the whole spectrum

of services that we currently offer and continue to expand.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Speaker, the Behavioural Health Foundation has for years had empty space in the Selkirk facility. They have made several proposals to this government to make use of the space.

They made a proposal in 2006 for men's beds and received no response. They made a proposal again in 2007 and, again, received no response. Then in March 2010, this NDP government suggested that they put forward yet another proposal. They did so, and almost three months later, they once again have no response, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, wait lists have soared. The demand is there; the beds are there. Why is this minister giving so little attention to treatment when it is obvious that there is an immediate need? Why is—what is this government's priorities and what action are they planning to take? We need action today.

**Mr. Rondeau:** When we talk about working on the system, we're doing prevention in the schools. So we're in 65 schools to provide services; that's prevention.

Number 2, we're continuing to work with all the providers, and if we weren't working with the providers, we wouldn't be getting these proposals to expand service, and we are expanding services. And, Mr. Speaker, a doubling of the resources to the addiction networks and to the community services is a very positive step.

Now, I know we've only expanded to five new addiction services since we took government, but that's a positive step, and we continue to hope to expand to other areas, and we will. We want to listen to the different partners, we want to work with them and we want to continue to enhance addiction services, and we've doubled it since when you were in power.

**Mrs. Rowat:** From what I see, this government is ignoring the experts. They're ignoring proposals and they're ignoring solutions. Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a pattern from this government of ignoring the experts and letting Manitobans languish and die on wait lists for treatment.

This minister's arrogance is incredible, Mr. Speaker. The Behavioural Health Foundation is a well-established organization. They have beds, but this government is ignoring them. Hundreds of

Manitobans are waiting for addiction treatment and this government is just sitting on its hands.

Is this government going to continue to ignore the huge red flags being sent by experts within the community? Why is this government continuing to ignore the people who need help today, now, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Rondeau:** The funding of the system is about \$24 million. Here's some of the new enhancements. We have a new addictions youth centralized intake; that's new, and that's to improve the system. We now have voluntary and involuntary youth stabilization; that's new. We have a new program and a new site in Thompson that's in the north, Mr. Speaker, and that's new.

We have continued—20 additional beds to the addiction system which has now increased the total number of beds to 449; that's new, Mr. Speaker. And we've improved the centralized intake where people spend more time with clients so that they can be referred to services when they get in the intake, and that's new, Mr. Speaker. And those are all enhancements to the addiction services that weren't there before.

#### **Addictions Treatment Wait Lists**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, we've had the cancellation of the Point Douglas addictions treatment project. We've had the Behavioural Health Foundation putting forward a proposal. They've been waiting for a response; to date, they can't get anybody to return their calls. We have the head of the out-patient treatment centre at Health Sciences Centre resigning because she couldn't get the resources to meet the growing caseload.

And in this House today, the Minister of Healthy Living gets up and says—not once, not twice, but six times—that he's pleased with how things are going in the province of Manitoba when it comes to addiction treatment.

Will the Premier step up? Will he admit today that his minister is a complete disaster? Will he take over this file and will he find some solutions, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Healthy Living just identified things that have improved the services in Manitoba. There's no question that there's more work to do, but the reality

is that in this budget there were additional resources for the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. There were measures taken as a result of the OxyContin working group that have restricted access to the supply of that opiate. There are additional training resources being put out there for physicians to be able to administer methadone treatment. There are additional beds that have been put into the system.

The members opposite now claim that they want more services. They now claim that they think there should be more expenditure. It was just a few weeks ago that they voted against the budget, said we were spending too much money, said there was too much money going into the health-care system and the education system.

The reality is we have focussed resources, based on views we've got from the experts, in a place that they will make a difference.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Well, Mr. Speaker, he's carrying on the sort of political rhetoric employed by his minister.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who today need his help. There are people in the community today who are at risk of dying because of their addiction.

So I want to ask the Premier if he will, just for a moment, put aside the fact that he's in the Legislative Chamber having a debate with the opposition. Will he look into the camera and give a direct answer to those people who today are waiting for his help and will he today commit to giving those people his help?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, we will provide additional services to people that have addictions, including OxyContin. We will find additional—we will train additional physicians to provide methadone treatment; that process is under way as we speak. We have expanded beds. We will look at additional measures to provide additional treatment.

We will and already have put in place measures to restrict access to this opiate called OxyContin, the commercial name. We want to make sure as few people as possible get inappropriate access to this medication in a way that will impair their ability to operate independently. So we are very committed to finding additional measures to protect Manitobans from highly addictive drugs such as OxyContin.

And the member opposite says that it's politics to mention the fact they voted against additional resources for it. I don't like using the word

"hypocrisy," Mr. Speaker, but it may apply today to the members of the opposition.

**Mr. McFadyen:** And he's continuing to want to take political pot shots.

The issue, Mr. Speaker, is that there are people in the community today who are waiting for help. We have the head of the program who has resigned, indicating that she couldn't bear the guilt.

Mr. Speaker, this is a—he's been Premier for only seven months. He has a unique opportunity. As a lot of these issues didn't arise under his watch as a Health Minister who was negligent, a Healthy Living Minister who was negligent or his predecessor who failed to show leadership, he has a unique opportunity today.

Having been Premier for only seven years, will he set aside the old—*[interjection]* Seven months.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's have a little decorum, please. Order.

\* (14:20)

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, they—he's been Premier now for only seven months. He has a unique opportunity to set aside the usual tactics of finger pointing, blaming prior governments, blaming the opposition, and showing some real leadership as a leader of this province.

Will he set aside all the old stonewalling games and get on with some real solutions for the people who need his help today?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that within the last seven months we have provided an additional nine and a half percent of resources to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. There's more work to be done, but that was a commitment we made at a time when the members opposite were demanding that we cut the budget and balance it.

I'm pleased that there was an OxyContin working group that brought forward very specific recommendations, which we have implemented, to restrict access to this drug which is highly addictive, to move it to a place in the Pharmacare program where it requires special permission to have access to it.

I'm—I think it is important that we train more doctors and I'm glad more doctors are being trained.

Mr. Speaker, 10 to 12 more physicians will be trained on how to administer methadone treatment, which is a way to get people off of the addictive OxyContin. We will look for additional measures.

The Minister of Housing (Ms. Irvin-Ross) has put forward a program to help people with mental health and addiction issues get off the street with a HOUSINGFirst program, and we will build additional housing units.

We have put mental health workers into the community in this budget to help people who have addictions on the street. We will do more. They will vote against it.

### Gang Violence Reduction Strategy

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, as long as dozens of addicts die on a waiting list, yes, we will vote against that.

The link between addictions and gangs is clear. Long before the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) failed addicts, the Minister of Justice failed to get gangs who were selling drugs on the street off of the street.

Yesterday a horrific daylight shooting took place which took the life of a 16-year old. Justice officials are warning that this is just the beginning of a summer of gangland violence that residents are going to have to endure and that they endured over the last few years.

After unveiling nine failed gang strategies, can the Minister of Justice give any assurance to residents of Winnipeg that they will not have to endure another summer of heightened gang violence on the streets and in the neighbourhoods of Winnipeg from these gangs who are trying to sell drugs to our kids?

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, for Manitoba to be the leader, which it is across this country, dealing with gangs and organized crime takes—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We need to hear the questions and the answers, please.

The honourable Attorney General has the floor.

**Mr. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It requires action on a number of fronts. The first is laws. Manitoba is the leader at innovative legislation that

takes on gangs and organized crime in the province of Manitoba.

Manitoba is a leader at dealing with the federal government. I want to commend my predecessors, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), for proposing strong changes to federal criminal law. For example, Ottawa has already taken action on five key recommendations making gang murders automatic first degree murder, creating a new drive-by shooting offence with increased penalties, clarifying judges can impose tougher conditions to protect the public when granting recognizance orders, toughening bail provisions in gun crimes and increasing jail terms for those who are involved in large scale drug operations.

Those things wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for the government of Manitoba being a strong, clear voice nationally to make our streets safer, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The only thing that this minister and his government and his predecessors lead in is failed gang strategies. That's what they lead in.

Mr. Speaker, the last—clearly, the last failed gang strategy which revolved around advertising to soccer moms and soccer dads on daytime soap operas didn't have much effect. They are warning—justice officials are warning that there is going to be more violence this summer as a result of gangland violence from gangs who are fighting to sell dangerous and deadly drugs to our children. Manitobans deserve to know that after seven, eight, nine failed gang strategies that this time, maybe this time, this NDP government has a strategy as we go into this summer.

Does this minister actually have a concrete strategy to try to get these gangs off the street, to try to stop the shootings, to try to stop the drugs, that gives some assurance to Winnipeggers that this will be a safer summer than they've seen in the last few, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Swan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, when gangs like the Hells Angels came to town when the Filmon government was in power, they did nothing. What was their response? The government of the day set up what they called a gang hotline. It was an answering machine that nobody answered. That was their response.

What have we done? We've created the Manitoba Integrated Organized Crime Task Force in April 2004, given more resources in 2006, working

with the RCMP, working with the Winnipeg Police Service, working with the Brandon Police Service. You know, I didn't hear any questions from the member opposite when Project Divide went down and took out more than 30 gang members and put them away. I didn't hear a single thing from the member opposite. He should listen a bit more closely, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Many of these young gang members weren't even alive for most of the 1990s, and still this Minister of Justice wants to go back, back, back.

The president of the Winnipeg Police Association said that—several months ago—that they needed to double the number of police officers on the gang unit. He said only then would they have a full-time unit able to go after these full-time gangs, who are out there on a full-time basis trying to sell drugs to our kids, and fighting it out to have the right to addict our children to very dangerous drugs. Winnipeg residents know that these gang members are out there to try to hurt their kids and, in the process, they could hurt many, many other residents. They are fighting to addict kids to meth and OxyContin.

Why wouldn't this minister heed the warning of the Winnipeg Police Association and double the number of people on the Winnipeg Police gang unit when he had the chance to do so?

**Mr. Swan:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy any day to talk about—this government stands shoulder to shoulder with police in the province of Manitoba. And the members opposite should listen, because we are funding 219 more police officer positions in Manitoba than were being funded in 1999. In Winnipeg, for the RCMP, for First Nations policing, for Brandon, we have invested in policing in the province of Manitoba. We've also assisted in setting up those specialized units such as—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. If the members wish to have a conversation, we have the loge here. There's members up there trying to listen to the questions and the answers, and they're actually shaking their heads because they can't even hear. I don't think that that's very fair. They come from a long way to hear the questions and the answers, and we have the viewing public on TV that are trying to hear. Let's have a little bit of co-operation, please.

**Mr. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the member opposite doesn't respect our police and

doesn't respect our Crowns. We do. As of February this year, the gang prosecutions unit has achieved 1,207 convictions or guilty pleas; 766 of those individuals are now serving jail time here in Manitoba.

We take this issue very seriously. We don't just talk about it. We do something about it. We make the necessary investments, Mr. Speaker.

### **Employment and Income Assistance Program Ombudsman's Report**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, just under two years ago, 12 non-profit organizations had to approach the provincial Ombudsman because of the serious nature in terms of this government's failure to assist in low-income people and people that were in need. In fact, some of those organizations include the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Harvest, Women's Health Clinic. There is a situation that is very serious and the Ombudsman came down with 68 recommendations.

My question is directly to the Minister of Family Services: Can the Minister of Family Services tell this House—because we know he's been aware of these recommendations for a number of weeks now—can the minister tell us how many of those recommendations does his government intend on—to act on?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** Well, I want to, first of all, commend the Ombudsman for this voluminous work. It was a tremendous effort. It was done collegially, collaboratively with the department as part of the government's ALL Aboard poverty reduction strategy. We had a common interest in looking to see where our strengths and shortcomings were in the welfare system.

And I'm pleased to see, first of all, that there is certainly a vindication of our Rewarding Work initiative, which really is a fundamental shift, as the Ombudsman notes, from just providing assistance to actually enabling people to get off welfare and into work. But it appears that the recommendations, on their foundation, address the need to both expand the Rewarding Work approach and, as well, to better communicate it.

So I think that the recommendations are very warmly received by the government, and changes are going to be planned in light of, of course, the needs of taxpayers and claimants both.

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that this report is something that actually is fairly significant in the sense that it says that the government has really failed those individuals in need. You have 14 organizations that had to go to the provincial Ombudsman because this government, these ministers, were not listening to the needs of those people that needed to get the attention, and that's somewhat sad. What it meant is that instead of children being able to have money allocated for their food budgets, that they were actually having to have that money allocated out to shelter allowances.

Can the minister tell this House: Does this government have any intentions on increasing shelter allowances so that single mums or single parents will be able to have food allocations actually allocated for the purchasing or the acquiring of food?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I don't know if the member's reading the same report, Mr. Speaker, but there certainly are recognitions within government, as well, of the need to ensure that there are the right incentives and no perverse incentives built into the welfare system, so that people can get off of welfare and into work.

In terms of the shelter benefit, it was introduced actually by this government, the Manitoba Shelter Benefit, and we will be increasing it further, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm to the House. But we also are obliged to remind the House that this government has, since coming into office, enhanced supports for low-income Manitobans by \$76 million and, most importantly, though, is the Rewarding Work initiative that the Ombudsman says is the right way to go, and that's what we will pursue.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I've had the report for a half hour; you, Mr. Minister, have had it for days. Let me read a direct quote from recommendation 34: "It is recommended that the department determine whether participants are required to use benefits allocated for basic necessities to supplement benefits allocated for rent, and if so, how frequently and to what extent" does this occur?

Mr. Speaker, we've known this has been the case for years. Only this government and this minister has closed his eyes, and at the cost of children; that's what this is all about. Children are not being able to get the food that they require. That's why Winnipeg Harvest's cupboards were bare only a few weeks ago, Mr. Minister, because your government has failed to

recognize that money needs to be allocated so that children in this province can be fed.

My question to the minister is, as opposed to trying to be smart with his answer, tell us: What is he doing to ensure that children in the province of Manitoba are being adequately and properly fed.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, maybe the best way to—the best—*[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, you know, there are people watching in this House and he degrades us all.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that when we talk about welfare and welfare rates we recognize that if we're going to get people off of welfare we can't build a better trap. We have to put in place incentives to get them off of that system. For a family of four on welfare, they get \$1,000 from welfare; they get an additional \$800 from the other low-income supports. That's a 38 percent increase since 1999. We are recognizing the needs of children and, for example, one of the most significant changes that we have made is to allow families to keep the national child tax benefit, something that, until we came into office, was being, unfortunately, clawed back.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### St. Norbert Founders

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, this week the efforts of many people with ties to the community of St. Norbert will come to fruition with the unveiling of a commemorative cairn to St. Norbert's founders.

The Métis and pioneers of St. Norbert have played a large part in the founding of our province, as many were avid supporters of Louis Riel and the Red River Resistance of 1869 to 1870. The old St. Norbert Cemetery was the final resting place for 1,267 pioneers between 1859 and 1906. Sadly, little remains today of the glorious heritage of these founders.

The original St. Norbert Cemetery was severely disturbed in the great flood of 1950 and the construction of the ring dike during the 1960 flood. Many of the monuments and tombstones were destroyed, taking with them any reminder of the people buried at the cemetery.

Many dedicated members of my community did not want to see this important part of St. Norbert's history forgotten. The late local historian and

activist, Mme. Jeanne Perreault, and Heritage St. Norbert worked long and hard to ensure a special monument was erected to honour the Métis people and pioneers buried at the St. Norbert Cemetery. A Métis woman herself, Mme. Perreault wanted the Métis settlers to be remembered. After her death in 2008, key groups in St. Norbert, including Heritage St. Norbert, the St. Norbert Parish-La Barrière Métis Council and the Knights of Columbus, continued her fight.

I am very happy to be taking part in an important ceremony this Saturday to unveil the new cairn at the cemetery on Rue St. Pierre. The monument is made of fieldstone collected from a farm in St. Labre, Manitoba, to symbolize the strength, tenacity and perseverance of the Métis people.

I would like to congratulate my community for their hard work and dedication to ensuring this important reminder of our heritage is placed prominently for all to see. I would especially like to thank Brian Cyr, the members of Heritage St. Norbert, the St. Norbert Parish-La Barrière Métis Council and the Knights of Columbus for their devotion to the preservation of our past. Their ardent efforts will allow St. Norbert community members and others to learn about our history and familiarize themselves with our Métis founders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Maple Leaf School

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** It's my pleasure to rise today to extend my congratulations to Maple Leaf School, who was chosen by the Winnipeg Police Service this year as the city's top School Patrol Safety program. In addition, Kaitlyn Cochrane, Maple Leaf School's patrol captain, was this year's recipient of the Louise Staples Award.

The school's program was judged on its ability, professionalism and technique by the school education section of the Winnipeg Police Service. In 2010, there were over 7,000 patrols across the city and more than 14,000 across the province. There is a school patrol unit in almost every school in Winnipeg.

This year marked the 36th anniversary of the School Safety Patrol Awards. One of the first school patrol programs was started right here in Winnipeg in 1936. It was started and pioneered by Louise Staples, a teacher at Greenway School. The award for the most efficient captain bears her name.



CAA Manitoba, MPI and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees make this program possible by purchasing and distributing the equipment which includes flags, high-visibility safety vests, booklets and more.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Maple Leaf School on winning this year's award and Kaitlyn Cochrane, the recipient of the Louise Staples Award. I would also like to invite all honourable members in this House to join me in thanking the over 14,000 patrollers across the province that ensure the safety of their peers on a daily basis. Thank you.

#### **J.H. Bruns Collegiate Coffee House**

**Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale):** On Thursday, May 6th, I was delighted to take part in a coffee house at J.H. Bruns in support of Winnipeg Harvest. The event was organized by SHOW, Students Helping Our World. SHOW is the school's dynamic student humanitarian group.

The students of SHOW turned the school library into a dimly lit coffee house complete with jazz music by student band Ready or Not! Kevin Not 10, and jewellery for sale, hand made by the school's art students. People were encouraged to bring canned food or a silver donation and there was a variety of fruit, dainties and coffee available to buy. All the money made went to the support of Winnipeg Harvest.

The event wasn't just about raising money, though; it was about raising awareness of poverty. David Northcott, Harvest's executive co-ordinator, spoke to the crowd, and the students set up a display explaining what Winnipeg Harvest does in the community.

Mr. Speaker, the students at J.H. Bruns showed not only empathy for others less fortunate than themselves but also determination to be part of the solution. I want to congratulate students and staff at J.H. Bruns, especially SHOW, and their organizing teacher, Marlene Schellenberg. The future of Manitoba is in their capable hands.

\*(14:40)

#### **Carol Peters**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Five months after West Park School physical education teacher Carol Peters was named Manitoba's physical education teacher of the year, Carol has been recognized nationally. Carol is one of the three national PHE

Canada and Wintergreen Physical Education Teaching Excellence Award winners.

Mr. Speaker, Carol Peters, a grade 5 and 6 health and physical ed teacher-instructor-at the West Park School in Altona has been recognized for her innovation and leadership in teaching physical education, including the ability to motivate children and youth to participate in physical activity.

Carol has been involved in 25 years of organizing and advocating various forms of physical activity through her teaching but also in other programs, such as: In Motion; Wonder Fitness; Go Active Fitness Challenge; Jumpstart; Jump Rope for Heart; Hoops for Heart; and Kids in the Kitchen.

She has also helped organize numerous other events, is a member of the curriculum planning committee and is on the Manitoba Physical Education Teachers Association board as a middle-years rep and central rep. She is the treasurer of the Border Land Teachers Association, a member of Manitoba Ag Safety planning committee and is on the Altona Chronic Disease Committee. She also works with Curves as their health consultant and instructor.

According to the PHE Canada president, Mark Jones, said: Carol is developing the physical literacy skills in our children and youth so that they can enjoy physical activity and have an appreciation for the importance of leading a physically active life.

West Park School principal, Gord Sawatzky, describes Carol as an advocate for healthy living and a model for a healthy lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Carol for her extraordinary work and for inspiring our children to lead healthier lives. Thank you.

#### **Employment and Income Assistance Program Ombudsman's Report**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I speak to the Manitoba Ombudsman report on Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance Program.

The report is a sad testament to the major deficiencies in the Employment and Income Assistance Program under the last 10 and a half years of this NDP government.

One can read in this report the frustrations of many organizations in Manitoba who deal with

people on the Province's EIA program, who filed a systemic complaint about the NDP-run EIA program to our Ombudsman. The systemic complaint highlights the negative impacts of the NDP's EIA program on many EIA recipients.

The Ombudsman's report, itself, documents many instances where there's a lack of consistency and a lack of fairness in the way the EIA system is applied. The shelter allowance is so far behind the reality of today in Manitoba that many participants must use funds provided as a basic living allowance to cover the cost of shelter. This means that individuals on EIA and their children must often go hungry or use food banks in order to be able to survive.

The policy and procedures for ascertaining if a participant is in a common-law relationship are invasive and gender-biased, problematic. It is further clear that a lack of transparency and consistency about the EIA program guarantees that participants are treated differently and that this reality contributes to the feeling of powerlessness of the person on EIA and takes away from any sense of being served by the program. Added to this is the problem of caseloads being so high that many participants have not even met their case co-ordinator.

I'd like to thank the many organizations who came forward with the systemic complaint and the Ombudsman for the thorough and comprehensive report.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

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

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader):** The business of the House today will be a continuation of debate on second reading of Bill 31.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 31—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Orders of the day: Today we will resume debate—[interjection]—resume debate on Bill 31, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010, and it's in the name

of the honourable member for Ste. Rose, who has three minutes remaining.

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I certainly wish I had more time to speak to the—this bill.

I just wanted to add a couple of things in closing. Through the budget debate, the vacancy rate in most government departments was 6 to 12 percent. At the same time, we heard that the First Minister—or the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) talk about 29,000 additional man-years of work in the province and 1.78 billion over four years. In Estimates, the Minister of Finance actually admitted that the 1.78 billion was existing budget over the next four years and the 29,000 jobs were people who are already there.

Instead of actually producing new jobs, stimulating the economy by creating a better business climate for private business, this government is concentrating only on covering their own butts. The budget and Bill 31 actually cut jobs and services, increased debts, destroys any semblance of balanced budget legislation that remains in this province. We have serious problems in health care, addictions, justice, agriculture, economy and many other areas of mismanagement in this province. In spite of all that, the main priority of the NDP government is protecting their ministers' salary. That's why they're promoting Bill 31 and none of the other bills on the agenda. They have to get this one through to protect their salaries.

For those very reasons, I cannot support Bill 31. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** I was kind of hoping that a member of the government would get up and speak to the BITSA bill, because it's their opportunity to put forward what their feelings are with respect to the budget and the BITSA. But, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it seems that they can't get out of their chairs to even defend the budget that they put forward on March 23rd, which I find fairly ironic considering they keep talking about voting against the budget on this side of the House. I'd like to have some ideas as to why they vote in favour of it, but obviously the cat has their tongue and they aren't going to stand up and take that opportunity.

I know the member from Ste. Rose would also like to thank the member from Pembina and the member from Emerson and the member from Turtle Mountain for support that he had with the final three minutes of his debate of this BITSA bill. And it's

always a good thing, Mr. Speaker, to have support of your own caucus colleagues when you're, in fact, talking about an important piece of legislation like the BITSA bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for those people—and probably the majority of people on the government side—who really don't know what BITSA is, the BITSA bill is, in fact, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act. Now, members of the government side probably haven't seen the bill, probably don't understand the workings of a BITSA bill. So I'll try to give them a little bit of a refresher course, because, you see, on March 23rd when the Finance Minister tabled the budget—the budget deals with a lot of variables and assumptions, but really what it is is it's revenue in, expenses out, and at the end of that, you either have a surplus or a deficit.

Now, in that budget, they have to identify the revenue streams and they have to identify the expenses. As part of the revenue streams is taxation, as we all know, whether it be retail sales tax or personal income tax or other licensing fees and fines and all those wonderful things that come together to give money to this particular government. And they have to, in fact, change some of those fees and structures, and that's included in the budget document.

So, when you've identified the revenues—and the one thing I forgot to mention was the majority of the revenues, Mr. Speaker, come from the federal government in equalization payments. Whether they be equalization or transfer payments, our provincial government still depends for almost 40 percent of its total expenditures from another level of government, which isn't the case for the three western provinces to the west of us who have continually said are have provinces. We're still a have-not province and seem to be very proud of that, as this government goes merrily on its way looking for more federal dollars on a regular basis as opposed to trying to generate more revenue from their own revenue streams, their own government revenues. But that doesn't seem to be an issue with this government. They'd just as soon have their hand out, as the members across would much prefer to go to Ottawa and just beg for more money as opposed to put a lot of initiative forward and try to generate those revenues themselves.

But, anyway, I digress a bit. The fact of the matter is we had a budget tabled on March 23rd. In order to implement that budget of March 23rd, we debated it. We talked about it. We looked at the

shortcomings of the government, the mismanagement of the government, the inability of the government to budget properly, the inability of the government to, in fact, balance the budget, because that's what the legislation had indicated, that there was going to be balanced budget. But they came forward with a budget, Mr. Speaker, that, in fact, showed a deficit of some \$555 million, which was contrary to what the previous balanced budget legislation had said.

\* (14:50)

But they brought forward this budget of a deficit and then they were going to implement, and are going to implement that budget under the BITSA legislation, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act. Pretty simple; bring it in the budget, implement the budget with this piece of legislation.

But what's reflected in the budget—and we all have the document. I know the members from the government have not read this budget document. I think that's obvious because they don't really know what it is that they're doing to Manitobans. But, had they read this document and taken from the budget and put it into this legislation, there would've been some areas of the BITSA bill that wouldn't have been included.

And I find it rather strange that, in the BITSA bill, this government is, in fact, going to amend the balanced budget legislation. And I guess the first question would be is, why wouldn't they just take the information from the budget, put it in the BITSA bill, and have the BITSA bill passed? Why would they want to muddy the waters and throw in an amendment to another piece of legislation? It's like an omnibus bill. Why wouldn't they just bring in the balanced budget legislation that they had amended previously and make the amendments to that piece of legislation as opposed to having it included in the BITSA bill? I find that very strange. I find it very difficult for people to understand why it is that they're afraid to bring in the balanced budget legislation, amend it so that Manitobans can actually debate that part of the policy of this NDP government.

Well, I got thinking about it and we've had some changes—in fact, there was changes in the last BITSA bill that had to do with balanced budget legislation.

Now, as another little piece of history, Mr. Speaker, back in 1995, the government of the day

decided that budgets would have to be balanced—that revenue in, expenses out would come to zero or there would be a positive surplus. And if you look at the explanatory notes on the BITSA bill it refers to The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act amendments. And then it goes on to say that a balanced budget each fiscal year and to achieve a positive balance each year. That's what the balanced budget act says. Then it goes on to say in the explanatory notes that this bill, this BITSA bill that we have in front of us right now, suspends these requirements for the current fiscal year and the next three years or until a positive net result is achieved.

So, effectively, what they're saying is they don't have to balance the budget anymore, but why don't they just come clean? Why don't they stand in their place and say, quite emphatically to Manitobans, rather than put it into this bill and hide it, why don't they stand up and say, we no longer believe in balanced budgets?

They ran on it in 1999. The then-Premier Gary Doer said, oh, no, no, no, no, this is a really good policy of the Conservative government and we're going to carry on with that policy on balanced budgets. That's what Manitobans want. That's what Canadians want so we're going to carry on. They ran on it, actually, in 2007. I was there. I ran in that election and, in 2007, the then-Premier Gary Doer said, we're not going to change anything. We're still going to maintain balanced budgets.

Now that was a philosophy, that was a policy that was put into place by the previous premier. Since then, we found a couple of changes to that philosophical ideology. What we found is, first of all, they wanted to massage it so that they really didn't have to balance the budget but it would look like a balanced budget. So, initially, for the first couple of years, what they did is they kept using fiscal stabilization funds to balance the budget, which is sneaky, but it works.

Then they went out and said, well, we're going to change the balanced budget legislation. It's going to be even sneakier because now what we're going to do rather than go to a core budget, which is the core operations, all of the wonderful departments that these ministers operate and spend money, that core budget, that core revenue was going to be balanced, but now we're going to go away from that. What we're going to do is we're now going to have a summary budget. And what we're going to do on that summary budget is we're going to bring in all the

Crown corporations. We're going to bring them all in and all their revenues in like Manitoba Hydro, MPI, Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, Workers Compensation Board. All of those Crown corporations, we're going to bring in their revenues and we're going to show it on a balance sheet. So, even if we spend more money on the core operations, we can use that to balance off this balanced budget legislation.

So that in itself, Mr. Speaker, was pretty sneaky. But that wasn't enough for the government. They were going to do a four-year rolling average in this summary budget, which means they could actually run a deficit, but on a four-year rolling average it really doesn't look like a deficit. Even though they don't have the money, even though they go and borrow it, even though they're spending more than they bring in, it looks like it's going to be a balanced budget on a four-year rolling average. So they've changed the rules but they still call it the balanced budget legislation.

So then they go fast forward again. Well, surprise, surprise, surprise. They couldn't even balance based on those rules in the balanced budget legislation. Now, that posed a problem because in the balanced budget legislation it said that if the ministers responsible for their departments couldn't balance the budget, even with all of the tools that they were given, which they can't now, if they couldn't balance, then they were going to lose a portion of their ministerial salaries, and they were going to lose 20 percent the first year they couldn't balance.

Now, remember, they've changed the rules. We now have a summary budget. We now have a four-year rolling average. We now have the ability to manipulate the figures as best as they could possibly come up with. They still couldn't balance a budget and they were going to lose their salaries.

But in the original balanced budget legislation they said if the ministers aren't efficient enough and if they aren't managing their departments properly and they should lose money or not balance the budget for a two-year period, the first year, they'd lose 20 percent of their ministerial salaries. If it happened two years in a row, they'd lose 40 percent of their ministerial salaries. Now, we know, we know that rather than worry about Manitobans and their own financial issues, ministers of the Crown were very, very concerned now when it hit their own pocketbooks. They don't mind spending money

foolishly if it's not theirs. If it's taxpayers' money, it's okay. We'll spend it. We can waste it. We can waste it on a west-side line. We can waste it on enhanced ID. We can waste it on advertising. We can waste that—[interjection]

It doesn't matter. It doesn't affect them. But, when it starts to affect the ministers and 40 percent of their salary, well, guess what, Mr. Speaker? We have to change the rules again. If we don't have enough in there right now to manipulate it, then let's change it again. Well, they changed it again and it's right here in this piece of legislation. The wrong place, it should be in the balanced budget legislation. But, no, let's hide it so Manitobans don't know what the real motive is for the BITSA. And the real motive for the BITSA is save our salaries. Don't take 40 percent of the ministerial salaries.

And, by the way, they're not going to balance the budget for another three years, so there is no balanced budget legislation. What it is is just save our—in fact, it should be here. Instead of The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act amended, it should be save our 'ministeriers' salaries amendment. That's what it should've been so that everybody would know what it was all about.

Mr. Speaker, let me say here's what this legislation's included. This act—this bill right here, this bill suspends these requirements for the current fiscal year and the next three years or until a positive net result is achieved. What they say is they can run deficits for the next four years. Four years they can run a deficit and not have to worry about the 40 percent of their salaries that should be yanked away from them because of their own inability and mismanagement of their departments. But it seems none of the members opposite want to stand and talk about that. They'd rather sit in their—sit there and not defend their position on 40 percent salary reductions. They don't want to defend that position. They want to sit there and not even stand up and say, that's not true, the member from Brandon West, that's absolutely not true; this is the real reason.

\* (15:00)

But, no, they can't stand up and defend it because it's indefensible, absolutely indefensible. They sit there and they say, no, let's just change the legislation so we can protect ourselves, and don't worry about Manitobans.

Well, that's the BITSA bill. Bill No. 31, the BITSA bill, is now going to implement a budget that has no business to be implemented. It's a terrible budget. It's a deficit budget. It's a budget that actually acknowledges that there's going to be deficits for the next four years. It's going to be five years of deficits, the one we just went through, which we're going to get the financials probably around December, because they don't like to give us the financials on a timely basis. But they've had a deficit last year. They budgeted for a deficit this year. They budgeted a deficit for the next three years.

Now, under the old balanced budget legislation, they would have lost their salaries. But, no, let's put BITSA through now so that we can change that, so we don't have to worry about balancing on a rolling average; we don't have to balance on a summary budget; we don't have to balance on a core budget. In fact, they don't have to budget—or balance at all.

The reality is they used to believe in balanced budgets. The reality is that probably—even though it didn't fit their own political ideology—probably they did want to show some sort of a fiscal responsibility. But that all changed, because we got a new Premier (Mr. Selinger) now. We got a new Premier who never really believed in balanced budgets. We got a Premier and a Cabinet that really doesn't care if they have to go out to the markets on an annual basis to borrow money, because it's only borrowed money. It doesn't matter. Somebody's going to pay it back. We don't have to. And, by the way, if we can't pay it back, we'll just go to the federal government and ask them for more money.

That's our revenue generation. That's our economic engine right now in this government, is ask for more money. Ask the federal government to keep bailing us out. That's their economic strategy. It's a flawed strategy, but that's their strategy nonetheless.

So, anyway, that's the sad, sad story of the demise of balanced budget legislation. It's a travesty now, what they've done to it. It's no longer a balanced budget. It won't be for a long, long time. As a matter of fact, over the next five years, we're going to have \$2 billion, that's "b" with a billion, \$2 billion in core operating deficits.

A balanced budget means either zero or a positive position, expenses, revenue. We're going to have \$2 billion, with a "b," operating losses over the next five years. As a matter of fact, if we go to page 10 in this budget book—which I would hope that the members opposite looked at, but I can't really believe

that they have—the forecast for this fiscal year is a \$555-million loss. For this coming—upcoming budget, 2010-2011, we're going to have to borrow \$545 million just to operate the way we have in the past. In 2011-12, we're going to have to borrow \$448 million. In 2012-2013, we're going to have to borrow \$345 million. In 2013-2014, we're going to have to borrow 1.4—\$146 million, which adds up to just over \$2 billion—\$2 billion.

Now, I don't think the feds are going to come to the party on this one. I just got a shock. I don't think the feds are really in this situation so that they're going to throw an extra half a billion dollars at the province. I don't know; I could be wrong. I haven't been wrong on the fiscal mismanagement of this government, but perhaps I could be wrong this time. But let's assume I'm not. Let's assume that this government is merrily going on its way, overexpending and achieving another \$2-billion core operating loss over the next four years.

Now there's a couple of things with that \$2-billion core operating loss. One is it becomes so easy, then, just to maintain the type of expenditures they have and not have to look at the efficiencies they need, and then that's called—that's called a systemic deficit. A structural deficit means they continue to spend more than they bring in. Now that's a structural deficit.

Ladies and gentlemen of the government, it would be nice if you would stand up and you would argue the fact that it's not going to be a structural deficit going forward. I don't agree with that. I don't believe the government when they say that they're going to come up with a surplus in the sixth year because, quite frankly, there's not a lot of credibility in this government and, certainly, this Finance Minister.

There's no credibility at all because, you see, last year this government and this Finance Minister said that there was going to be a \$2-million surplus. But, lo and behold, it came in at a \$550-million loss. Like that's a pretty wide margin of error. From a \$2-million surplus to a \$555-million loss, that sort of destroys any kind of credibility that the government may have thought they had.

So, when they tell me that this isn't a structural deficit, this is just a short-term deficit, then I've got some real serious concerns because there's a couple of other issues that we throw in the mix now. And what they are is the debt that the government is incurring on behalf of Manitobans and the interest

rate that's going to affect the debt servicing on that debt. Now, remember I said, over the next four years the government's going to accrue another \$2 billion in operating debt, but that's not all the debt that this government takes on.

This government likes to spend money on, oh, stadiums. Yeah, they do, they like to spend money that hasn't been budgeted on stadiums. Where does that money come from? Oh, it comes from more debt. And that stadium is outside of the operating.

And then they like to spend money on, oh, let's say, west-side transmission lines. Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely astounding. In fact, I can't even get my head around this but I have to try. You see, the west-side transmission line, the Bipole III, is going to cost Manitoba Hydro an additional—not in total, but an additional—\$1.75 billion. Billion. So we now have a \$2-billion operating debt. We now have a 1.75-billion debt that has to be incurred for this wasteful west line. Oh, I forgot to mention, there's a \$260-million throw in there to Pattern Energy on Manitoba Hydro's behalf. So that's only \$260 million, which, by the way, okay, I don't know if you understand this or not, you don't have any money. You're losing \$555 million this next fiscal year. So you have no money so you have to borrow \$260 million for the Pattern Energy deal. And then there's the \$150 million for the stadium. Did I mention that? I did. I think I mentioned that.

So now we've got 1.75 billion, 260 million, 150 million, and it just goes on and on and on and on. But that's money that has to be borrowed. Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously the members opposite really don't care. They really don't care about how this government is mismanaging all of Manitoba's money.

And if we go to page 20 in the budget book, which is the budget document that's going to be in the BITSA bill that's going to be passed, we look at the debt and we look at 2009 total borrowings, total debt, which it says, provincial borrowings, guarantees and obligations, okay? That's a pretty damning statement right there. Provincial borrowings, guarantees and obligations: That means that I as a Manitoban, my colleagues as Manitobans, the members opposite as Manitobans, are responsible for this debt. We are responsible. If the banks came and called the notes, they would call each and every one of us and say, it's time to pony up because we don't trust you anymore.

\* (15:10)

However, last year, our debt in the province of Manitoba—are you listening—\$21.2 billion. This was last year. For this coming budget year, it's anticipated to be \$23.4 billion. That's an increase of \$2.2 billion; \$2.2 billion is what they're going to increase. Now that's going to be the operating debt, and it's going to be some more Manitoba Hydro debt actually. The fact of the matter is is Manitoba Hydro can't afford the debt either. This is going to come as a real shock. They had to go to the Public Utilities Board and they had to ask for an interim rate increase. You know why they had to ask for that? Because they can't afford their operating. Remember, you can't afford your operating. They can't afford their operating so they had to go and get another 2.9 percent interim rate increase, and the fact of the matter is that they're probably going to ask for more because there's going to be a Public Utilities Board hearing this June and they're probably going to ask for substantially more than the 2.9 percent because they can't afford the debt that they're incurring.

But let's throw another \$1.75 billion at them for no reason at all. That just makes no logical sense for anybody in this province. The only one it makes sense to is the Premier (Mr. Selinger), and the only reason he did it is because he sent the letter to them and said, no, we can't save \$1.75 billion. We want to waste it.

So we have a deficit. We have a budget that's never going to be balanced again, as long as those people are sitting on that side of the House. We have a budget that will never be balanced and you're going to say, well, Borotsik—they're going to say, member from Brandon West. They're going to say, that's not true. That can never happen. Well, I just said we have the perfect storm coming. We have too much debt. We have an interest rate that's going to go up.

I asked the Finance Minister, I said, what's your assumptions for the interest rate? She said, well, we think it's going to be staying stable. And I said, when you add another \$2.5-billion worth of debt, you better know. You better know. You better know what the interest rate is because that's what the budget is all about and, if you go more into the ditch, then it's lights out for the province of Manitoba. But then you're going to say, that's fearmongering.

Well, there's things happening in Greece, and you know what happened in Greece? They borrowed way too much money. They didn't generate any revenue. They spent like drunken sailors. They expected their entitlements, and now they got to get

bailed out by Germany. And I look across that House right here and I look at spending like drunken sailors, operating deficits, borrowing more money and going to the federal government constantly to get bailed out. Now, is that not a mirror image as to what's happening in Europe? Because it's happening in the countries doesn't mean it can't happen in this province because it is happening as we live right now.

But that's okay. Let's just change the balanced budget legislation. Let's make sure we protect our salaries because—by the way, that's what they're doing in Greece. What a thought. They're protecting their salaries in Greece but they can't afford anything because they haven't—they've borrowed too much money and they can't afford to pay it back. But they protect their salaries. So let's make sure in this legislation we protect the ministers' salaries because that obviously is the most important thing that's going on as a political ideology in this particular government.

Now, one of the other things in BITSA, remember what I said it was. It is The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act. So that means they have to also amend any of the taxation changes in this legislation. Well, we don't have to worry about that because this government doesn't believe in giving people the opportunity of spending their own money. They would much rather collect as much money as they possibly can and make sure that they spend it and waste it the way they can do it but don't let individual Manitobans keep their money.

Manitoba will remain the highest-taxed personal income of any province west of Québec. Any province west of Québec, it'll be Manitoba that has the highest taxes. As a matter of fact, again, in this budget book, which I wish people across the way would have read, on page C26, their own book, they list the provincial income tax, and I'll just give you one comparison. It's a two-earner family of four, a two-earner family of four, who makes \$60,000. That's pretty reasonable for Manitoba because we have a really, really low weekly wage here in Manitoba. In fact, we have almost the lowest weekly wage of anyone in the country, but that's okay. I mean, people don't get paid in Manitoba, but you'd think they could keep some of their taxes. But let's look at their own figures. A two-earner family of four with \$60,000—and I want you to listen to this. In British Columbia, that family of four earning 60,000 would pay personal income tax—provincial personal

income tax of \$1,156–1,156. In Alberta, that same family would pay 1,332. In Saskatchewan, they would pay \$937. Oh, oh. Oh, oh. In Manitoba, they would pay \$3,100 in provincial income tax. In Ontario, they'd pay \$773.

So let me just go over that again: the highest, \$3,100, in Manitoba; \$1,300 in Alberta; \$1,100 in B.C.; \$937 in Saskatchewan; and \$773 in Ontario. But, you see, in BITSA, they would have to change any of those tax laws—none of that is reflected.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Well, I'm very pleased to be able to rise today and make some comments about Bill 31 and just like to acknowledge the good job that my colleague from Brandon West did. And I think he certainly put a lot of comments on the record and he made a good point. It made me really nervous when he started talking about Greece and the similarities between Manitoba and Greece.

And the parallels that he pointed out actually made the hair on the back of my neck stand up because they are so close in terms of parallels that it is quite scary to know that Manitoba could very well be heading in the same direction. And I'd just like to thank my colleague for the impassioned speech and for being so eloquent about stating his concerns about the issues that are before us today, especially with what the government is doing with Bill 31.

Now, Bill 31 does five things, in essence, and I'm going to point out those five things, and then I'm going to spend some time talking about them.

First of all, No. 1, it puts a final nail in the coffin of balanced budget legislation, and I would point out that the NDP, over many years, promised that they would never get rid of balanced budget legislations. But I was also here in 1998 and 1999 when, actually, a number of members of the NDP, when they were in opposition, absolutely ridiculed balanced budget legislation.

I can remember the current Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) and the comment she was making in those days about balanced budget legislation. I remember a number of NDP MLAs who actually sit in this House and were extremely negative about balanced budgets. And I thought it would not take them quite so long to get rid of balanced budget legislation. I knew, at some point, they were going to revert to their old ways because you can tell when they spoke in 1998-1999, they were so impassioned

about what they were speaking, you could see in their hearts they didn't believe in balanced budget legislation, and that was obvious.

And I think the only thing that kept them on track over the last 10 years is Gary Doer. And the moment Gary Doer left is when we saw the sharp left turn occurring by members on the other side of the House. And I don't think any of us should be surprised because I think they, you know, as an NDP government, have never really believed in balanced budgets, and I think they have finally—are showing their true colours. And I just—I'm surprised it did take them this long.

And I think that Gary Doer was the smart one. He knew what needed to be done to keep Manitoba on track. He knew that you needed balanced budgets in order to, you know, keep Manitoba in the game. But, as soon as he left, I don't think his smart political thinking wore off on anybody, and I think that's now why we see what we're seeing. So we have, now, the final nail in the coffin of balanced budget legislation, even though there were numerous promises in a number of elections where they said they were going to keep the legislation.

\* (15:20)

In fact, I can recall, and it was in 1999, that one of their top five election commitments was to, and I quote: keep balanced budget legislation and lower property taxes. And I guess that, now, has gone the way of hallway medicine, to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million. I guess it's hit the same place as that particular election promise.

In fact, Gary Doer, that year, acknowledged that balanced budget legislation introduced by the Tories was a good idea, one his party would keep. And what he actually said, and I quote: "We've said all along that we're not going to change the things they got right." That also included sticking to the Filmon government's debt retirement plan, which calls for an annual payment of \$75 million. End quote.

Well, we saw where that one went too. But I guess sometimes when you're an NDP government you're going to say whatever it's going to take you to win an election, and then after that we see some sharp changes being made. Gary Doer chose to keep—keep those promises, or some of them. Can't say he kept all of them, that's for sure. But he was the one that actually kept this one in place because he knew that that's what Manitobans wanted, but the moment there was a new Premier we saw the sharp left turn.



So, what else does Bill 31 do? The second thing is it enables massive increases in the province's debt, and I think I've stood every year during the budget and made comments about this debt and what this debt is going to do to Manitobans and to future generations. And it's the young that I really worry about, because I think this debt is going to be the big, you know, monkey on their back. They're going to have to deal with it, and it's such an unfair position to put them in.

But this government did not want to listen, year after year, no matter what we were, you know, warning, no matter what other people were warning them, that you cannot keep spending and spending and borrowing and taking handouts and not run into a brick wall at some point. At some point, those chickens come home to roost.

And I can recall many years standing—particularly last year, too, and the year before—where members opposite were laughing when I was standing here making the comments about the fact that at some point somebody has to pay. You cannot go on like this, you know, over and over and over again and expect that you're going to have that kind of a free ride, and this government has had a free ride up until now.

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

And it's not the recession so much that got them into trouble; it's their own spending and their own inability to manage their own affairs, and that's what's got them into trouble. The recession didn't help and, you know, the recession has hurt other provinces far worse than what it's hurt Manitoba. The recession in the 1990s that Gary Filmon had to deal with was far worse than what this government had to deal with. But this particular government just somehow has cruised along for 10 years and, now, something's hit the fan and we're seeing now a government that is trying to find a way to wiggle out of some of these problems that they've created for themselves.

But, unfortunately, ratcheting up the debt in this province and borrowing the money to create deficits and, then, the accumulated death—debt is something that I think that this government has got some major problems. The debt that they are creating is not something that is going to make Manitoba a very progressive province in any way, because this debt is going to create a huge burden. And, you know, their spending is just unsustainable with the kind of

money that they're taking in, but, somehow, for some reason, that doesn't seem to bother them.

Now, the third thing that Bill 31 does, it imposes new taxes on Manitoba families at a time when they can least afford to pay them.

And, the fourth thing, it allows for cuts to front-line services through the mismanagement of this government, which we've seen becoming much more public over the past number of weeks.

Now, for some reason, they think that they can go on borrowing and it is not going to hurt patients or families when, in fact, that is exactly the effect that it's going to have. It absolutely is going to affect patients and front lines.

We're seeing it already in health care. And today was a perfect example, you know, in question period, where we were talking about addiction treatments in this province. For five years, this government has not done what it should have done with addiction services. They've not set up a strategy, so they had no road map. They were all over the place. They put money into it, but they didn't know whether the money was having the kind of results that it should have.

Today, I think, we learned that you can put money into things, but sometimes the expected outcomes are not there. And, when Dr. Lindy Lee resigned today, and made the comments that she did, we can see how this government has failed in looking after patients who are desperately in need of help and ignoring the pleas of front-line workers. And it's—you know, it's something the government should be embarrassed about. They should be really worried about doctors that are as capable as Dr. Lindy Lee saying that she has got so tired of plugging the holes. And she's got so tired of having to beg for help. And, when that help wasn't going to be there for two more years, she said: That's it; I just can't do any more. Her mind and body wouldn't allow her to continue anymore. It was draining her.

And we're seeing that in front-line health care all the time. So, if this government does not think that their spending is going to not affect health care down the road, they are grossly, grossly mistaken. We're already seeing it with, you know, the problems with underfunding of autistic children. We're seeing the government refuse to fund cochlear implants in this province. Instead, you know, sending patients all over the country when they're deaf and can't hear and

are afraid of airplanes, we're seeing this government put them on planes and send them elsewhere.

And we're going to see more of this happen in health care. We are going to see more patients falling through the cracks. We're going to see more doctors and nurses coming forward and, you know, pointing out to this government that, you know, at some point, you have to be responsible with your spending. But, right now, what we're seeing is a lot of mismanagement by this government, and I don't think anybody should be surprised when we start to hear and see more cuts to front-line services.

And the fifth thing that Bill 35 does, is it protects the 19 members of the NDP Cabinet by getting rid of the measures that were put in place only two years ago, and which the premier at that time committed to maintaining in the event that the government ran two deficits in a row. Well, I think that, you know, for many, this is a very egregious point, in terms of what this government has done. I think it has become very, very obvious that the main focus of what Bill 31 is is to protect their own salaries. And it's a very calculated move made by this government. It's a very calculated measure to protect the salaries of Cabinet ministers, and it's a very calculated measure to break a promise they made to Manitobans three years ago.

This bill, if passed, would allow Cabinet ministers to avoid a legislated pay cut that was mandated in 2008 by Gary Doer's NDP. The former premier had committed to balanced budget legislation and salary reductions for Cabinet ministers if they failed to balance the books. But the new Premier (Mr. Selinger) was looking for some wiggle room. And after the sharp left turn, balanced budget rules are out the window, and an out-of-control spending agenda is on the table.

And, if they don't have the money, they don't hesitate to borrow it, or they don't hesitate to go to Ottawa and beg for money. No wonder the other provinces don't want to have much to do with Manitoba, why the three western provinces have gone up and set up their own three-province effort to move their provinces forward. They didn't want Manitoba at the table; Manitoba wasn't invited. Manitoba didn't have a choice to even say no because they were not invited to the table to be part of a new vision.

\* (15:30)

And, you know, everybody's been recognizing, not only just people in Manitoba, people from other

provinces are recognizing what this NDP government, this socialist government is all about. And it's, you know, about—and I think the member from Minto probably was most eloquent about it when he was running for leader. He says, I'm going to go to Ottawa and I'm just going to try to suck every cent I can out of Ottawa because it's our right to have that money here in Manitoba. Well, what an attitude for a province to have. No wonder Manitoba is still a have-not province, and we're not going to change as long as this NDP government is in place.

So what do we see with this government? They're adding \$2.3 billion to the debt this year and adding four more years of deficits. I almost choke every time I hear the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) talking about introducing a five-year plan that grows the province's economy. I've never heard anybody that talks about deficit budgets and running deficits and debt as a five-year plan to grow the economy. That is just poppycock and only—only—an NDP government—only an NDP government would be so out of touch with the language and so out of touch to actually make comments like that.

And, you know, it's catching up with them and we can hear it on the streets now all the time. We hear it in the other provinces. You know, Ontario and Québec have also set up their own, you know, two-province deal to look at trade and to look at other issues where they can move their provinces forward. We're sitting here in the middle, nobody wants Manitoba. Manitoba doesn't get invited. Manitoba's made fun of by, you know, a lot of these provinces because they do not see that Manitoba is doing anything to stand on their own two feet.

All these provinces are working so hard to become fiscally stable. They're all getting their finances in order and they are not happy to see this government continue to go to the federal government to take all the money that the provinces send to the federal government, and then Manitoba sucks it all back into this province because they don't know how to raise the level of Manitoba up to be a province with the kind of hope and pride and potential that it has. These guys don't know how to do that. Instead we've got all of this debt and four more years of deficits and then the government tries to tell us, well, they've fallen on hard times. But, instead of taking steps to protect jobs or to promote trade, they're protecting their own salaries, and that is pretty disgusting, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So that's what this bill does. It's protecting the 19 winners over there that are Cabinet ministers. And, if they think for a minute that their rhetoric that they are protecting vital front-line services is accurate, they're really fooling themselves. They really do have their heads in the sand.

We're already seeing, you know, that they have no problem asking public sector workers to take a pay freeze for two years. What is that going to do to the morale in the system? You know, they're holier than thou with their comments in here. They think that they have this entitlement to, you know, to say whatever they want, to think they're the saviours of anything, and we see that that's not the case. And we're seeing the problems that they're causing now with their arrogant attitude, their sense of entitlement, and we saw it today in question period.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) of this province had a chance today to stand up and say that he was going to do the right thing for patients with addictions. Instead, what he did was something that I was actually surprised. I thought he was going to take the high road. I thought he was actually going to put the rhetoric and the politics aside instead of getting into the stupid comments they make about, well, you didn't vote for the budget. There's a whole lot of reasons that we didn't vote for their budget, nor would we have with the kind of problems that were in their budget. They made so many—they gave us so many reasons to vote against the budget, and so we're going to stand up for Manitobans and we're going to vote against budgets that hurt Manitobans.

But what we saw the Premier today do when he had a chance to be a leader, when he had a chance to do something right, after we've seen 25 patients with addictions die over the last two years because they can't get treatment in this province, he had a chance to take the high road and he had a chance to do something right, and he had a chance to put politics aside and he didn't do that, and he instead got into this NDP rhetoric, well, they didn't vote for the budget.

I don't know if they know how stupid they sound every time they say that in the House. I don't know if they see the media rolling their eyes every time they talk about that, or when they go back to the '90s and, you know, that's like old news, that's 11 years ago. This government has never been willing to take responsibility. They should be standing in this House and taking responsibility, being transparent, being

accountable. And that's not what we see from this government.

In fact, according to—and there is a line in the—a *Free Press* editorial just from a few days ago, and, you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker, it says about this NDP government? He—the editor said that the NDP is so terrified of negative headlines it will abandon principle on a dime in order to make problems go away. That's one reason why we are deeper in debt than we should be. Well, nobody could have said it better than those two lines from the editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and that's what we've seen happen with this government.

That's what we're seeing happen with Bill 31. They've abandoned their principles. This isn't about people in Manitoba. This isn't about taxpayers. This isn't about the future of our kids. It's about a government that's looking after itself. And, you know, we're seeing that, you know, more and more where this government has really lost its focus, and that's what happens when, you know, any government is around that long, and they've been around too long.

Eleven years shows a government that is arrogant and they've lost touch, and we see that. We see what—where they've lost their focus, and health care is one really great example with where they've really lost their focus and they've forgotten about patients. And Brian Sinclair's death was just the most awful example, I guess, of where this government has really lost touch; and, rather than the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) standing in this House and doing what an accountable Minister of Health should have been doing, instead she covered up the truth about Brian Sinclair's death, and then she went missing in action for a week and didn't want to face anybody. And that is just, you know, one really serious example of how this government does exactly what the *Free Press* has indicated. They're so terrified of negative headlines that it will abandon principle on a dime in order to make problems go away, and we see that every day.

We see them—this government spending probably half a million dollars on their spin doctors. That has become more important to them than, you know, being accountable to the people of the province. You know, the Minister of Health—in 1999 Gary Doer said absolutely he was going to get rid of all this health-care administration. He was going to make sure that bureaucratic cost came down. Now that he's gone, we see the Minister of Health has

doubled her political staff. We see that the Minister of Health has doubled the ADMs. Exactly the same promises that Gary Doer made in 1999 that he said wasn't going to happen, and that's exactly what these guys have done. They've reneged on those promises, you know, along with hallway medicine, along with Bill 31 now that gets rid of balanced budget legislation. They've done what they said they weren't going to do, and it's time for a government like that, you know, to be—[interjection]—yeah, okay, my colleague said disappear. And, actually, that is a pretty good word because, as long as the NDP are in power, we are not going to see changes for the better, because right now they are going down a road where they put themselves in such a position that they are now, I think, in big trouble and they don't know how to get out of it.

\* (15:40)

So, instead of doing the right things now, it becomes about the political spin. And it becomes just like the *Free Press* said, you know, they'll abandon principle on a dime in order to make the problems go away. So pay all these big spin doctors out there who are getting bigger salaries than I am and, you know, hide the real facts about what is happening with this government. And that is what's happening. There's a cloak of secrecy over everything.

There's no transparency; there is no accountability, and these guys across the way have really forgotten who put them there and who they should be serving. And it shouldn't be themselves. It should be the people of this province, but they've forgotten that. And it is time for the NDP government to disappear, I think is a good word, because they're not doing things that are in the best interests of this province.

So, with those few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am strongly opposed to this legislation, which shouldn't be, I would say, combined with two pieces of major financial aspects to it put into one piece of legislation. Because I think what they've done is they didn't want to have the solid debate on the fact that they were getting rid of balanced budget legislation. Instead, they were going to try again. In their sneaky way, in the typical way they're doing everything now, they're just going to put it into an omnibus bill.

You know, the BITSA bill, you know, it has to go through because the, you know, bills have to get paid in this province. But instead of being an accountable, transparent government, instead we see

them do something that is very offensive and really not acceptable for accountability and transparency in the province. But they've done it anyway. They don't seem to care any more.

So, with those few comments, this is not legislation that we can support, because it is going to take Manitoba backwards. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it worries me, Bill 31. It worries me because it appears that this government is going backwards in its role to be accountable and transparent to Manitobans. Bill 31 guts the balanced budget law and is another broken NDP promise. Bill 31 includes changes to the Manitoba's balanced budget legislation, and there's a number of concerns that we have with regard to the government's decision to change the balanced budget legislation.

It's a concern that I have as a parent, because I see that the spending addiction that this Province has, this government has, is going to be something that my children and my grandchildren are going to have to deal with over the next several decades.

This legislation, the balanced budget legislation, was amended in 2008 and again in 2009. The changes in 2008 were substantial. They eliminated the Province's requirement to balance the core budget on an annual basis. And, you know, each piece of the pie that the government keeps taking, and, I guess, serving, has caused some major concerns for Manitobans.

The changes in 2009 reduced the mandatory debt repayment amounts for the 2009 and 2010 budget years. So these changes, you know, dismantle, I think, what was a very significant piece of legislation that kept spending habits in reasonable alignment. And I think this government has taken this legislation and actually has, you know, destroyed it. And it has taken away the province's or the Manitoba's taxpayers' confidence in how this government actually handles its money.

The changes that are proposed in Bill 31 further erode the original balanced budget legislation in that there is no requirement for the Province to balance its books until 2014. Once the province returns to a positive summary budget balance, the deficit years will be excluded in the four-year rolling average that is used to determine the ministerial pay reductions. And, as a result, instead of taking 40 percent pay cuts from multiple deficit years as prescribed in the

current legislation, the salary reductions for Cabinet ministers will be 20 percent each year and will return to normal sooner.

And I guess what my concern is with regard to this point is that there's a direct personal financial interest to vote for Bill 31 by this government, especially by the 19 members who have a direct vote related to their personal financial circumstance. So I have some very serious concerns with the way the government has proposed this and are making, you know, a mockery, I guess, of the balanced budget process.

The fact that the NDP are unable to live within the rules that they have changed twice in the last two years reflects on the NDP's poor management of the province's finances. And we've seen that in a number of instances, where a government has actually made poor judgment in their spending and have caused some great concerns throughout—by individuals who have come forward who have indicated they have some serious concerns with how the government is running the province.

When we see situations that were mentioned in the budget—a constituent of mine recently contacted me with regard to the fertility—infertility tax credit question. And I was interested when there was a member from the opposite side who asked a question with regard to that tax credit, and they were very concerned with what they learned. Initially, they were quite happy. Michelle Renee Budiwski, who is from Rivers, was thrilled to hear of the details announced regarding the infertility tax credit that was promised for 2010. They were quite concerned, however, that on—October 1st implementation date was not going to give them any opportunity to take advantage of that tax credit. Her treatment would not fall within the guidelines of that announcement. So she was very concerned when she approached the Department of Finance and asked them for clarification on that. And they were incredibly disappointed because they—as she explained to me, the credit in the 2010 budget would only cover the last three months of the 2010 tax year. And it seemed very unfair for those who took the government at good faith, as she did, that she would not qualify because her fertility and treatment would be prior to the October time period.

So Michelle and I had a conversation, and she indicated that she's very concerned about the infertility tax credit of 2010 not being available until the last three months of the year. It's unfair and

actually quite misleading, and I guess that leads to the point of what Michelle is getting at. And many constituents of mine are saying that often the government will make announcements that are misleading and raise false hope. And Michelle's situation is one example of that, and I believe that people like Michelle and others in the province deserve to have the true facts shared with them when they learn of programs or supports that are going to be available. So, you know, I guess it's a shame on the government for misleading individuals who are looking for positive announcements and programs that actually will support them when they need them, and that was not the case for Michelle.

This budget fails to put forward a comprehensive focus on wellness and prevention care. This budget did nothing like that. And, I guess, you know, Bill 31 with regard to misleading Manitobans in how budgets in the future will be handled, leads into some serious concerns that I have as the Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors critic.

Preventative care is a long-term, cost-saving measure. And chronic disease like diabetes, cancer, heart disease are rapidly becoming significant cost drivers in the health-care system. And when you say that you have a strategy which will be a one-pager or a Web site with very little background or very little substance to that, it, you know, creates false hope and, actually, is very misleading for Manitobans who are looking to a government to have a very comprehensive strategy that would address the needs that are very forefront in their minds.

\* (15:50)

Addiction services are still a major shortfall within this government. We saw that in the House today. We had some very important and very serious questions put to the government today and, unfortunately, there didn't seem to be any answers being provided by this government. We have, you know, the Behavioural Health Foundation indicating that they've put proposals forward for several years and have been ignored by this government and haven't received a response from the government on how they could work together to provide the extra beds that obviously are needed for individuals who are struggling with addictions and are looking for treatment.

So, you know, again, we have a government that has said that this is a priority, but we've seen very little evidence of this. We see, you know, respected physicians as Dr. Lee, quit, say they're finished.

They can't work with this type of a system where there's no new resources for treatment. Dr. Lee had said on the radio that there's been six months where she had no spaces available for individuals in her program, and by receiving, I believe she said, 10 new calls a week and telling those individuals that she had no space, it's not only heartbreaking for her, as I believe she's a very committed individual, to the addictions—within the addictions community, but what does that do to families? What does that do to families who are looking for supports for their loved ones? What does that do for the addict who is wanting to get better, to get healthy? It does nothing, Madam Deputy Speaker. It does nothing to provide the supports that are required for individuals who are currently looking for supports.

And, with regard to supports that are available, we're finding that the organizations out there in the addictions community that they don't have—they have not received any notice of what their budgets are going to be this year, Madam Deputy Speaker, so that makes it very, very difficult for them to develop their programs or developing their business plans for the upcoming year, when they have absolutely no idea whether they're going to be receiving the same amount of funding or additional funding or less funding. So it's making it very difficult and these organizations, because there doesn't seem to be an interest by this government to collaborate those services and resources. There doesn't seem to be a way—the government doesn't seem to appear to understand that they're—by not having these organizations work in a collaborative way, that they are going to have to continue to compete for the department dollars.

So I think there's a number of things that this government could be doing better. When the minister was indicating that, you know, there's only so many resources, well, I know that there's \$897,000 being annually spent on the River Point Centre for maintenance and upkeep, and we know that that money could easily be spent on addictions programs and supports. I can only imagine what Dr. Lee would do with a million dollars in a year to address the issues and to help families who are looking for treatment supports. So I think that with regard to addictions, there's lots of work to do, and I believe that there are lots of families that are looking for some direction from this government.

The Department of Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors also have a lot of other areas of need, and the recent survey of Manitoba Health found that only

41 percent of female high school students and 55 percent of male students get enough physical activity. So, when the government is looking at Bill 31 and looking at, you know, changing their balanced budget legislation, we're wanting to see where this government is planning to spend their dollars and wanting to know if they're actually going to be looking at some very clear and decisive strategies that are going to address some of these issues.

With regard to statistics, we understand that the addictions programming in schools, I've raised the issue with regard to Rivers and Forrest. The member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) has raised the issue with regard to a school in his constituency with addictions and schools and, you know, we want to see the government take an interest and support those types of programming. We don't want to see a moratorium on addiction programming in schools. We need to have a government that supports those types of programming.

With regard to OxyContin, I was looking at a statement made by Dr. Lee on CBC this morning, and she was indicating that patients go down with health consequences very rapidly and actually have a significant death rate. But what I found even more interesting and more of a segue into the next point is that, if they're injecting, they also take risk of contracting hepatitis C and HIV or other infections. And Manitoba, Madam Deputy Speaker, has the second—or has one of the highest rates of HIV infection within Manitoba's population, and I believe the First Nation population has a significant—significant—population of HIV infection. And I believe that this government has to be dealing with these troubling statistics.

Manitoba also has the highest rate of chlamydia and the second highest rate of gonorrhoea in Canada. And these are, as I said earlier, troubling statistics that cost the health-care system money in the long run. So if we're not addressing these issues and not working at paying attention to how we need to be addressing these issues, then a budget that is being spent without any clear direction is actually going to provide very dismal health-care outcomes.

Seniors, Madam Deputy Speaker—seniors were virtually ignored in this last budget and I've had a number of calls from different seniors organizations wondering if there's been any interest or if the government has made any commitment to a number of issues that they've been raising. I know

service-seniors service organizations are a organization that are very, very important to many communities that I represent. And I know, meeting with several of them in Winnipeg, that they also are very connected and very important to the senior population. And I believe that they, the work that they do, is very grass-roots. The work that they do is definitely meeting the needs of the seniors community. And I guess what I'm very concerned about is this government's lack of interest in trying to ensure that these service-senior service organizations are actually being listened to and actually are being supported in a positive way.

I know of one community in the Parkland area that have a service-senior service co-ordinator who is paid for 20 hours per week and she takes her job very seriously and is very committed to what she is doing, but has been offloaded on by the RHAs and by government in a number of ways, and she does her best. She does whatever she can to make sure that those programs and supports are available for the community. And I know one of the services that her community would desperately appreciate is a congregate meal program, but she just cannot give any more time.

And I believe that, you know, that's something that the government should really be looking at. Congregate meal programs ensure that our seniors are well nourished. It provides a social activity for them. And I think that these types of programs are important. And I think that when we're looking at supporting senior services organizations, we need to do a little more than just funnel the money to the RHA. I think there has to be an accountability by the government to ensure that those types of resources are actually meeting the needs of the seniors in those communities that the RHAs are mandated to support. So I think that, you know, that's an area that this government has actually dropped the ball. And I think there's an obvious need and I think the government can do a lot better in that area.

So, you know, I guess, with Bill 31, with the government deciding that they're going to hide amendments within a bill to spend more—and I'm just looking for them, if they're going to spend more, to be more accountable to ensure that the money is spent in a way that Manitobans see a difference, that they are actually seeing a benefit from the dollars that are being spent.

\* (16:00)

And, at this point, and in the last seven years that I've been here, I've failed to see that by this government, so I'm very concerned with the government's approach on Bill 31, and I will look forward to the continued debate on this bill. And I will continue to represent my communities and provide the very serious and legitimate concerns they have with how poorly this government has spent taxpayers' dollars in so many ways.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** It's my pleasure to put some words on the record in regards to The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, the BITSA act, the BITSA bill, as it's referred to—Bill 31 in this Legislature.

First of all, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the member from Kildonan on his recent wedding and wish him all the well in the future. And I know that that's probably the most cheery thing that I'll say on this bill.

But I just wanted to say that this is not a bill, I think, that Manitobans will be very enamoured with when they find out and many are every day. The longer that this debate is carried on, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it's incumbent upon the government to get rid of the shell that it's trying to cover up this legislation by putting it into The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act to start with.

That's the first thing I have to say, is that you cannot and should not cover up flaws in your own government's management by putting it into a budget implementation bill that has to pass by June 17th or the time the House is supposed to rise, Madam Deputy Speaker. This bill has to pass or the actions of the government come to a standstill—the Province of Manitoba.

This is a bill that, normally, envelops the nuances of the government's budget and puts it in to the bill and implements—purely implements the budget. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill has gone much further than that by confusing the issue, by putting in a part of it—an amendment to it—that protects the members of the Cabinet from losing 20 percent of their salary in subsequent years, and I'll get into the irresponsible actions of this government in a few minutes in regards to that.

But, first of all, I have to put on the record that this is a government that has had record amounts of revenue throughout the last 11 years, even through

the recession that they indicated we had, Madam Deputy Speaker, in '09 here when things took a downturn from the fall of '08. They may have said that Manitoba fared well. Well, in fact, they recognized that because they increased the revenue in their own budget by two and a half percent.

And, yet, they have come in with four straight deficit budgets predicted by their own Finance Minister, Madam Deputy Speaker. And, of course, their Premier (Mr. Selinger) backed that and, of course, he was the Finance Minister for the 10 years prior to that. So he knows, and should know, where all the money has come from—40 percent of it over all of these years has from the federal government in response to what we have received from other provinces in regards to equalization and transfer payments.

So I just want to put that on the record, that there's been no shortage of money in Manitoba, it's just a matter of how it's been managed, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think that it's been irresponsible of this government to provide—even though they budgeted for an increase in their own budget documents that came down this March that they passed in April, that they have predicted four straight years of deficits.

And my colleague from Brandon West said in the—earlier in the House today a total of over \$2 billion—\$2.03 billion, I believe it is—increased debt in those deficits when you add them together. That's money we have to borrow to continue to operate the province, Madam Deputy Speaker, in regards to their own budget analysis.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it also is incumbent upon—this is the same government that also used Hydro as a buffer back in the early 2000s here to take 203 million out of Hydro over a three-year period. It turned out to be two years that they took money out of it. Actually, 150 million one year and 53 another and because there was no profits at Hydro in the third year, they didn't take 75 percent of the budget that they passed a bill to—required them—that allowed them to take that money out of Hydro at that time and it was added into the—but that wasn't good enough.

Madam Deputy Speaker, now in order to cover up their mismanagement, they have not only changed the bill this time to protect their own salaries, but they changed it—this is the third change in three years in the budget—balanced budget legislation.

And I want to back up to—many of my colleagues, I think it was the member from Springfield yesterday, eloquently indicated that this government, first of all, was the ones that were backing and supporting a budget that was brought forward—balanced budget legislation from 1995 by the former Progressive Conservative government under the leadership of Gary Filmon and, Madam Deputy Speaker, was recognized as some of the best legislation for economic responsibility around North America, not just in Canada amongst our provincial neighbours, but around North America through states and otherwise.

And today, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have seen that balanced budget legislation—some of the best legislation in North America—get completely gutted by this government, from the fact that in '08 they felt that they needed to change it to protect their own areas of need in regards to the core budgeting issues. And they changed, of course, to have a summary budget where instead of the books being balanced every year, they ended up being balanced every one in every four, and that would be fine.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's not what balanced budget was brought in to be and it's certainly not what Manitobans wanted at that time. That bill also included an area where they could use all of the surpluses in Crown corporations to pay down debt in this province as well. So they've expanded the definition of revenue, I guess, to take in all of the surpluses of Crown corporations. And there again they've had great difficulty in managing to maintain a balanced budget, as we've seen in a \$603-million shortfall this year in their budgeting as well, having to go out and borrow some \$445 million just to keep this year's budget afloat as well. And I think that that's a tragedy that was not necessary if financial management had been a priority for this government. And there's many ways that that could have been dealt with.

They keep talking about, well, what would you cut and what would you do here. Well, this is a government that's already cut services, as has been pointed out by our leader, the member from Fort Whyte, many times, in areas of education, in needy areas, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Certainly, in the health care we're seeing it. I've got a situation today, again, where I've found out that we've got a hospital in our area that doesn't have a physiotherapist, hasn't had one for some three months—young people with—in this particular case—a



shattered knee and broken bone in his leg—still in Winnipeg. Because he could have come back to the rural part of Manitoba, he could have been back in one of the communities that I represent, if we'd have had the services.

So the services have been greatly cut by this government in much, much of our health care in spite of the fact that they say that it's the area where the biggest increase in spending has been out of this budget, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well, that's another irresponsible statement from this government, because we all know from looking at their own financial statements again—it's all in their own financial statements, their own budget—that the largest area of spending is the increased interest that this government's going to pay on the debt that it has incurred, some \$785 million. It's about a 10 percent increase just in this year alone.

And I think that's a tremendous amount of money that could go towards other responsible areas of action. It could have been put to health care, Madam Deputy Speaker, if we were dealing with reducing that deficit—or that debt, rather—over the years when the government had surpluses or said they did. I mean, I can go back to make the case that this government has never run a surplus since the day they were first elected, as I have in every budget speech that I've had and the opportunity to provide, because it's—because they've taken funds from the rainy day fund or they've taken funds from Hydro or they've shifted monies from one area to another or continued to rely on huge transfer payments from Ottawa.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

And I think that those are circumstances that the taxpayers of Manitoba are watching catch up to them. This is a government that hasn't paid down its credit card in good times. It hasn't even kept up in good times.

So that was the first change in '08 in the balanced budget legislation in this province. And in '09 they reduced the mandatory debt repayment amounts in the—in '09 as well. I mean, last year we had to extend the session somewhat last summer to force the government to actually put some responsible deficit financing back into—or debt reduction financing back into the balanced budget legislation by—you know the original balanced budget legislation said that there would be—and debt reduction said there'd be \$110-million payment against the debt every year. And the government got

away from that where they announced in their budget last year that they were going to have a \$20-million payment for two years, Madam Deputy Speaker, and, then, all of a sudden—Mr. Speaker, pardon me—then all of a sudden, they came in with the BITSA bill as part of it, and, there, again, tried to snow the people of Manitoba by putting something in the bill that shouldn't have been in the bill. It was a change from their budget. It changed from their own budget, which was within days of speaking to it. They took out the payments for deficits, or for debt—payments and were going to pay zero. They weren't going to pay any debt at all for at least three years. Now how irresponsible is that when you've had huge surpluses coming from Ottawa in regards to transfer payments, \$4 billion out of a \$10-billion budget, roughly 40 percent.

\* (16:10)

So I see a great irresponsible action at the hands of the Finance ministers in this government, and it is continuing, of course, in 2010 under the present Finance Minister where this budget, which, by itself, without the part in it to protect the minister's salaries, would've implemented the budget that they brought down on March the 23rd, I believe it was, Mr. Speaker.

But this government had to get greedy and say, well, this is a way to get this bill through because it would, you know, it's introduced so it will have to pass. We'll put the protection of our salaries part amendment into this bill and we'll move forward with it because it will pass. We don't care about anything else. We've got about 35 other bills before the House, but we don't care about anything else. In fact, we've got three others on the agenda that we could be speaking to right now in second reading. If the NDP were so inclined to want to make any of these bills a priority, we would've been dealing with second readings of some of these bills every day in this House and moved them forward. But it appears as if this government is only concerned about protecting their salaries, and, by that I mean, that under the original legislation in 1995, if you carried two—a year of deficit, the Cabinet ministers could lose 20 percent of their budget; if you carried two, they could lose 40 percent of their budget, or of their salaries of the—over and above the base wage of the ministers and backbenchers.

So this government—you know, we know now that they've come in and they know that they broke balanced budget legislation last year with their huge

deficit, one of the biggest in Manitoba's history. And so they've taken a 20 percent reduction in their base—in their additional wage—ministers' salaries this year, Mr. Speaker. And I dare say that—and I do want to address here for a moment because I think that this also shows a lack of organization in their own party, because it's very, very apparent from both Estimates and the shock in the face of—shock and awe of some of the members in the House the day that the budget was brought down that none of them knew about the fact that they were going to—well, there might have been two or three—that they—ministers that were going to lose 20 percent, and none of the backbenchers of the government knew that their wages were going to be frozen for a couple of years either. I mean, what a shock to every one of them, and I'm sure that there's been some heated discussions in their caucus offices, or I would hope so at least, amongst their colleagues with their present Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) and maybe even their Premier, who was the former minister of Finance.

So, Mr. Speaker, so you've got a situation where you've got a government that the most important thing they want to do now is make sure they don't lose 20 percent again next year. So what are they doing? Well, they've put this amendment in the bill that guts the balanced budget law and it's just another broken NDP promise that we've seen. And, of course, I guess we shouldn't be surprised that even though the former premier placed balanced budgets, Gary Doer, at the top of their priority list in '99 when he was elected said we'll—we won't break that. He also made it a priority in '07, and I think he was referring to spending promises made by other parties. He stated they're all going to be running deficits if they keep their election promises, God forbid. Well, I think that was a quote from the *Brandon Sun* in May 11th of 2007.

So lo and behold, the ministers are going to have to live with—the present government is going to have to—as my colleague from Springfield said yesterday, he was hardly out of town when they threw him under the bus. They ditched the former premier's responsible attitude towards balanced budget legislation, even though he'd already allowed some changes in this area. But I don't think he ever did it to protect his own salary in this regard, and that's certainly what's happening under this rule, and Manitobans are going to not forget how indignant this government has been in regards to feeling that the only responsible thing that they've got to deal

with in this government is protecting their salaries. And I think that that's a very, you know, it's a tough sell for any minister to have to do this. But they had an alternative, and that was to manage the affairs of the government better. They know that they got a break from the federal government this year. They know that Prime Minister Harper gave Manitoba a break by announcing that he wouldn't cut the transfer payments and equalizations this year.

So I think that they've been the beneficiary of that. And what have they done? Protected their own salaries with the money that they've got from Ottawa. I don't think Alberta, Saskatchewan, B.C. and Ontario, all the other have provinces are going to continue to want to support the Manitoba, or the Greece of Canada, in being the province of Manitoba. I'm referring to the financial distraught situation in Greece at this time in regards to our world affairs. We all know that Greece was caught with tremendous overspending limits on its own budgets. And I think that that is a—has been an atrocity in regards to the levelling out of the European Common Market, with countries like Germany having to pick up the slack and pay for countries like Greece that have never stopped spending and just spent themselves into oblivion, had all the most huge socialist policies in place that they could possibly put in place, and now they're paying—the rest of the world is paying for it.

Well, the same thing's happening here in Canada. Manitoba is the beneficiary, like Greece is of Europe. Manitoba is the beneficiary of all the surpluses from the other provinces. And I think that, you know, this wasn't as public when the ministers brought this bill—brought this budget down in the form that's it in. But it is now and it's timely, Mr. Speaker, that we take a look at this. And Manitobans are starting to say: What's with the government? Why can't they manage these affairs any better than they are? Why, when they've got a 2.5 percent increase in the budget, are they predicting four years of deficits? Two years ago, they couldn't predict six months, and now they're predicting four years of deficits.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's to protect their salaries. It's to protect their salaries. And it's certainly not to enhance health care, because I've just pointed out 17 rural emergency rooms closed in Manitoba, people that can't get physiotherapy services in communities, educational areas that have been cut back, support for disabled people have been cut back, supports in other areas have been cut back. So

this government, this NDP government, has given lip-service to wanting to help people, but, in fact, they're doing the exact opposite.

In fact, in the agricultural area, they've put many people out of business—continuing to say that they support the small farms, but they put so much regulation and red tape in place that that's exactly who they're forcing off the farm, Mr. Speaker. And I could get into that in a separate speech by itself, but I think it's incumbent upon the Manitoba people to understand that the only reason that this government thinks that this is the most—that this was the best way to handle this bill, instead of separating the amendment to protect their salaries from the budget implementation bill, was to protect their own salaries. And I find that to be an atrocity that this government will have to live with down the road forever and forever.

I also—I haven't even got off page 1 of my notes, Mr. Speaker, in regards to the concern for this. I want to just—there's many, many other examples of irresponsible accounting and management of this government that I could put forward, and I'll just mention a few: you know, cutting schools, as I've said earlier; cutting services in Portage la Prairie; you know, and there wasn't any funds for the drought in the southwest that they took a look at that I might—citizens out there in the cattle industry were very concerned a year and a half ago in regards to the droughting in that area of—from '88 and into '09.

I'd just like to say, as well, that, you know, we've got a hydro line that's coming down the west side of Manitoba that, even in today's paper, indicates that, oh, well, there's all this support, you know, to have the hydro line come down the east side. And we find out that out of 10,000 signatures, it's only a handful of them that are Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. I mean, what is this? Who are we being held ransom by in regards to the people that we're trying to sell product to? All they really want is power. They'd like to have our hydro-electric power to keep their lights on in their states below us. And, yet, this government has given lip-service to being able to say that, well, we're going to go 400 extra kilometres out of our way; we're going to spend \$1.75 billion now that we have to put a \$1-billion converter station into the west-side line that we have to put in when it's built now, instead of perhaps being able to even add it later, if it's needed at all in the east side. And, certainly, no indication from Hydro that they'd have to do that, but they have indicated that they would have to have one coming down the west side.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this hydro line debacle is going to be a horse collar around this government's neck forever. But they are entrenched, because we just had a bill in this House, or a resolution in this House from my colleague, the member from Brandon West, last week that indicated that this government is not going to change its mind in regards to forcing the people of Manitoba to pay a billion and three-quarter dollars. How irresponsible is that?

\* (16:20)

It makes all of these deficits look small. It's almost as much as those deficits put together for the next four years, in one year. Now, I could easily get over that 2 point billion of shortfall in revenues by saying that this government is also now borrowing, which wasn't in the budget at all, for two major projects in Manitoba. One of them is, of course, \$115 million for the football stadium in Winnipeg. There's another one for \$260 million that they're giving the Pattern Energy to build a wind farm to the south of us for 138 megawatts of power, Mr. Speaker. And that's not what they started out at. It was to be 300.

And, I mean, we've got a situation where that now puts us, let's see, to another 420. There—we're easy up over the \$2.1 billion. That's without the 350 million that they're forcing on the nitrates removal from the city of Winnipeg taxpayers and ratepayers just for the North Winnipeg to remove nitrates out of the water, when 63 scientists told them they don't have to do that, Mr. Speaker, because it might even throw the imbalance of algae formation in Lake Winnipeg out the other way. It might even enhance the formation if they take all the nitrates out. And I can't understand the government for taking the action that they have in that whole area.

We haven't had a chance to talk about the irresponsible action of working with no scientific basis. In fact, I just mentioned one in the regards to the waste-water treatment and the nitrate removal in the waste-water treatment plants. They've actually flying in the face of the science that they've got, Mr. Speaker.

There was Bill 17 for their hogs moratorium with no science behind that. We've got the waste-water management regulation changes that they are forcing tens of thousands of dollars of taxes on rural Manitobans to do something that they have no science for. Oh, but they're placating to the masses that foot the biggest lobby against this bill

I've ever seen, or against the regulation I've ever seen in this House in the 11 years I've been here.

And, yet, well, they came out and said, well, okay, we'll allow them in some of those areas for some of the soil types that are out there, but anything new, by golly, still can't have a sewage ejector. Well, there's no science behind it. There's still no science behind it, Mr. Speaker. And there's just—it's just another—and I do commend the member from Elmwood on this one, because at least he was smart enough to make the changes that his predecessor, the member from Dauphin, wouldn't make. So we hope that he implements those at some point here and doesn't wait all year to do that. But, anyway, we'll see just where that goes.

I just want to talk about the fact that, I think, that Mr. Doer, the former premier, saw the demise of this government coming. He saw that he couldn't control the spending of his colleagues any longer in this House, that he could see that the Finance Minister was going to be out of control in relation to—going to be out of control in regards to the spending of this government. And, you know, he's put the former Agriculture minister in charge of it. He had other people he could have put in charge of financing. *[interjection]* I'm not sure that the member from La Verendrye would have had any better opportunities to run the Finance Department if he'd have been the Finance Minister because, you know, he didn't even get the roads built in Manitoba that he wanted to with all the money he was supposed to have. He was supposed to have \$400 million every year, and where did it go?

I don't think he spent it all. Certainly, in the years that I was his critic, he never got it all spent. I mean, and so, you know, it's another smoke and mirrors. It's a matter of where the government's priorities are. And, while they give lip-service to Health and Education, we know that those areas have been cut as well, that spending—interest on spending is the biggest priority of this government, apart from protecting their own salaries under Bill 31, Mr. Speaker.

So I just want to close. I had the opportunity—and I missed saying this in my budget this summer. I just had the opportunity to attend a couple of wonderful events in the city of Brandon, in Westman, Mr. Speaker. One of them, of course, was the recent Memorial Cup. I was there last Friday night when the Brandon Wheat Kings beat the Calgary Hitmen in that particular game. I didn't have

the opportunity, because it was sold out, to get back on Sunday to see that fantastic game as well. And the credit goes to that community for the work that they've done and the volunteers and sponsors and everyone else involved to make it such a great weekend.

The other one was the Royal winter fair that we always go to, and I appreciate the kind invitation we get from the Minister of Agriculture every year to attend the banquet and, through her, his office—I guess it's the extension from the fair board, actually, that invites us to come to that dinner that they put on for us. And it's a great opportunity for us to—and for some of the members that haven't had any experience with agriculture to see first-hand the exhibits that are there, Mr. Speaker, as well as take in the show that's becoming a much more prestigious show every year. It does have the designation of "Royal" and that's for a reason.

But I just wanted to say that there's a—that they have a kick-off pancake breakfast every morning at 6 o'clock on Monday morning and, Mr. Speaker, I know full well that they have somebody that's come back to that fair on demand every year, every year, every year and that is Doodles the Clown. And the clown, his name's Doodles, he entertains children and people throughout the week, adults alike—*[interjection]* but you know, his favourite word is "unbelievable." You ask Doodles something and he'll say, it's unbelievable.

Well, I was talking to him about this budget, Mr. Speaker, and—because it was in at that time, and he said, my goodness, how could anybody be so irresponsible? He said, that's unbelievable. Well, this BITSA bill, if he thought the budget was unbelievable, this BITSA bill is even more unbelievable than anything I've ever seen come before this House before and there's been some good ones. Oh, there's been the vote tax that the government decided they wouldn't take after pressure from our leader, indicated that they wouldn't take it and you know. So—Doodles didn't call the government clowns. I want to be clear on that. He didn't call the government clowns. He just referred to them as the most funny thing he'd ever seen in his life and said it was completely unbelievable.

So I want to finish this—my short time in speaking to this bill, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I totally believe that the government has made a great error in bringing this amendment that they've got to protect their salaries into the BITSA bill to be passed

as one bill. We need to explain to the public that that's the only way that they could get this passage through without—you know, and assure themselves passage of it by the middle of summer or by the end of the session.

And, in spite of the fact that there are other bills, as I pointed out earlier, on the agenda, this government doesn't put any of them as a priority. It's just a matter of protecting their own salaries. It could have been split. They could have had a budget implementation bill, a true budget implementation bill and a separate amendment that they could have worked on, Mr. Speaker, as a separate bill, but this government, you know, I think Doodles had it right. It's just unbelievable.

And, with those few words, I'd like to pass my time, the rest of the time, on to my colleague, the member from Tuxedo, to have a few words as well to be put on the record in regards to why this is such a bad bill. Thank you very much.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Indeed, I want to thank my colleague the member for Arthur-Virden for his words. I want to thank all of my colleagues on this side of the House and even the members of the Liberal Party for the words that they have put on the record with respect to Bill 31. The fact that all the members on this side of the House seem to be engaging in debate in this Manitoba Legislature with respect to Bill 31.

I would have hoped, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite would also get in on this and debate Bill 31 because that's what democracy is all about. That's what we're here to do. We're here to listen to both sides of the story. Sometimes we agree in this Legislature. Sometimes we disagree, but what we need to do is listen to members opposite. We need to hear from members opposite. They need to stand before Manitobans and tell them where they stand.

But what's unfortunate so far is that not one member opposite has gotten up and spoken on this bill, whether or not they're in favour of it or not. Maybe there's parts of it that they're not in favour of. Maybe that's why they're not getting up, Mr. Speaker. Maybe that's why they have refused to debate this bill in the Manitoba Legislature. But I can say that by not debating it, what they are doing is accepting the fact that the priority of this government is simply this, and that is to protect the salaries of the Cabinet ministers of this NDP government.

\* (16:30)

And what's unfortunate about that is, I bet, Mr. Speaker, I bet there's many members opposite in the back benches who are not part of Cabinet, who probably would have liked to have placed other bills in a priority area over this Bill 31. I bet that they would have liked to have done that. And I bet that they would have liked to have stood up in this Manitoba Legislature and stood up for their constituents who I guarantee—I guarantee their constituents would not agree with them that a priority for Manitobans is to increase the salaries or protect the salaries of the 19 NDP Cabinet ministers in this province. I guarantee that that is not a priority of constituents of members opposite, like the member for, perhaps, Southdale (Ms. Selby), or Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), or some of the other constituencies. I guarantee that if they go out and they listen and they hear from their constituents, that their constituents would agree that that is not and should not be a priority of government simply to protect their own salaries.

So I would encourage the member for Kirkfield Park, I would encourage other members opposite, to stand before Manitobans and let them know what their priorities are because they owe it to their constituents in this province of Manitoba.

So I am deeply disappointed, Mr. Speaker, that here we are engaging in what should be a debate—this is part of democracy, this is what we do here in this Legislature. This is why we're here—is to debate bills in the Manitoba Legislature, yet members opposite, unfortunately, have chosen not to engage in that debate and to let their constituents know where they stand. So, by default, by not standing up for what's in the best interest of their constituents, what they are saying is that it is the priority of every single NDP MLA in this Manitoba Legislature to protect the salaries of the 19 members of the NDP Cabinet. And we believe that's wrong, and that's why we're standing here before you today and engaging in this debate that should be had.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that they have done, of course, is also—not only that, are they protecting their own salaries, they've also increased the size of Cabinet, which is something that they've done in this budget. And, again, members opposite should stand up and defend that. Why is it that they have increased the number of Cabinet ministers opposite? What is there to justify that? Please, tell me. I'd like to know. My constituents would like to know. I think your constituents would like to know. Is that the priority? Is it to protect your own salaries?

Is it to increase the salary of yet another member of the NDP Cabinet who's now—or the NDP caucus—who is now become a member of Cabinet? Increasing the size of Cabinet—why is it that they've done that? What about that are they defending?

If they are, in fact, defending that, I would like to hear from members opposite to see whether or not that is, in fact, what they are in favour of. But, no, once again members opposite have been muzzled by their Cabinet ministers, by their Cabinet ministers whose main priority is to protect their own salaries. And they've said, no, no, no. Just listen to us. It's all okay. We'll take care of you. Just keep your mouth shut. Don't engage in the debate. You know, the members of the Conservative Party will want to tell you, you know, what to say or what to do, and they'll try and get you on the record, you know, saying things that you may not want to say. So you better just keep quiet, you know, because you may say something that you don't want to say and that you may regret. And it may look, us, as Cabinet ministers, look foolish. So we wouldn't want that to happen. So just keep your mouth shut and everything will be okay. Just relax. Everything will be fine. We, in Cabinet, know what we're doing, and we know that putting this, our salaries, as a priority in this government is what's in the best interest of Manitobans. Well, that's how members opposite speak.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will say that that is not what the priority of members on our side, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), the Conservative members of this Manitoba Legislature—it is not our priority. It's why we're standing here before you today and saying to this government and pleading with this government to do the right thing and start putting—start getting their priorities straight.

And that is one thing about this government, is that they love to say, oh, well, you know, members opposite—they're going to vote against this in the budget, they're going to vote against that in the budget. They're going to—you know—all this sort of nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is that we voted against the budget. The reasons why we voted against the budget were because the NDP cut the funding for the most vulnerable citizens in our province, Mr. Speaker, including children with autism, children with hearing impairments and children with special needs. Well, I say shame on them because, again, their priority is protecting their own salary rather

than the most vulnerable citizens in our communities, and I say shame on them.

We voted against the budget because the NDP—the reason why, another reason, Mr. Speaker, that we voted against the budget was because the NDP five-year plan was to run more than \$2 billion in deficits, increasing the debt of our province by more than at least \$2 billion, because that's all we know of right now. I mean, that's what their projections are. But I guarantee that the increase in the debt over the five years will be a lot more than that if this NDP government is still in power. And that's the dangerous part about what Manitobans are facing, because last year alone, last year alone the NDP government of this province increased the debt by more than \$2 billion in one year. And in the 10 years that they've been in power, they've increased the debt of this province by \$10 billion—\$10 billion—and yet they still claim to be paying down the debt somehow.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't make sense. What they're doing is they are jeopardizing our children's future, our grandchildren's future, and what they are doing to this province will bankrupt our province. We need only look to what the situation over in Europe and Greece and what has transpired over there in the debt-ridden society and the debt-laden society over there and what has happened in Greece. Well, if this NDP government and this Premier (Mr. Selinger) and this Cabinet of 19—I won't say gang of 19 because that would be wrong—the members, the 19 members opposite, the 19 members, it's up to them to decide the stewardship of this province and where we go.

And I would suggest if it continues the way it has continued for the last 11 years, that we are on the road to being very similar in a debt-crisis situation like we see in Greece. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? Yeah, members opposite better listen because this is a very serious situation. They think they can continue to spend the way that they are spending and that it's okay. Oh, that will never happen to us, say members opposite. It's okay, we'll take care of you all. It's just fine, don't worry about it.

Mr. Speaker, I say that we should worry about it. Manitobans should be concerned about it, and that they should ensure that members opposite do not get a chance to take us further in that direction because it will be very serious to our children, our grandchildren and the future generations in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about Bill 31, which, by the way, the name, of course, on this Bill 31 is The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, also known as the BITSA bill. Well, I would suggest that the more appropriate name for this piece of legislation, Bill 31, should be the balanced budget implosion tax and spend act because that is, in fact, if you go through, if you go through the details of this bill, that's exactly what you will find. And what you will find, you don't even have to go past page 1, right under the explanatory note is right where they're putting the final nail in the coffin of balanced budget legislation in our province.

And we know that members opposite—well, of course, when Gary Doer was here, he supported balanced budget legislation. But I'll tell you that his plane hadn't even landed, hadn't even touched down in Washington before members opposite were already conspiring and trying to put that final nail in the coffin of the balanced budget legislation. How are we going to do it? How are we going to sneak this through to make sure that it gets past this—during this legislative session?

\* (16:40)

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no rhyme or reason why changes to the balanced budget act have to be included in Bill 31, the BITSA bill. If members opposite wanted to have a real debate on this issue, they should have brought forward a separate bill dealing with balanced budget legislation on their own. But the reason that they didn't is because they know that the BITSA bill has to pass by the end of this session. And so they did it in a sneaky and conniving way. They slipped it in there, and they made sure that this would pass by the end of this legislative sitting.

And I think it's unfortunate because what members opposite are doing is very anti-democratic. Not only did they slip it in there in a dark of night into a bill that has to be passed in this Manitoba Legislature, but now they are refusing to get up and debate on this very issue. And I think it's unfortunate for Manitobans that this anti-democratic NDP party is in power in our province, because this is the way that they pass legislation in our province—is they slide it through in the dark of night.

And I would suggest that, if they really wanted to debate balanced budget legislation, we could have done it by way of another bill. We could have debated back and forth on the merits of balanced budget—what we feel are the merits of balanced

budget legislation. Of course, members opposite don't believe in balanced budget legislation. We've known that for years. The only person that agreed to it was the right-wing part of their party, Mr. Gary Doer, who has flown away, and with him he took the last bit of balanced budget legislation and the hope of keeping that in this province with him.

Again, before his plane even touched down, Mr. Speaker, the Premier now, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), other members of Cabinet and the members of his caucus got together. The union members got together. The special interest groups got together and said, we got to get rid of this, guys. This is not good for—this balanced budget stuff. No—no—no. We don't believe in this stuff.

So, finally, we see the true NDP show their colours, Mr. Speaker. They are coming forward and showing right now, by refusing to debate this legislation, that they have no problem with the facts that what they are essentially doing is getting rid of balanced budget legislation in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I would hope that members opposite would get up and debate this so that we—and I hope that this doesn't pass through second reading today. I mean, we've heard from all the members on our side of the House. We've heard from the Liberal members. We know, Manitobans know where we stand on this bill. But what they don't know necessarily, because I'll give them the benefit of the doubt, they don't necessarily know where members of the NDP stand on this legislation.

And, again, I think it's unfortunate, because I believe that each and every one of the constituents of members opposite have a right to know where these MLAs stand with respect to Bill 31, with respect to balanced budget legislation and whether or not their constituents honestly believe it should be a priority of this government to protect the salaries of the NDP Cabinet ministers, because, again, I don't believe that constituents of the members opposite would actually believe that, that that should be a priority. And the fact that this is the only bill that this government has called before this Legislature for debate and then, on top of it, refused to debate it is absolutely deplorable. And I believe that the constituents of members opposite should be made aware of that.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many reasons why we voted against the budget, and I believe that members opposite need to understand this, that we voted against an increase in the debt in one year, last year alone, of \$2.3 billion. That's what we voted

against. We voted against a budget designed to protect NDP ministerial salaries rather than the most vulnerable citizens in our community. And I mentioned some of them earlier. But I know in question period we got into some more, some more people in Manitoba who are vulnerable and who need help from this Premier (Mr. Selinger) and who need help from the 19 members of Cabinet and need help from the backbenchers and the other government members opposite.

They need your help and yet in their time of need what do you do? What does this NDP government do? They turn their backs on them. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because it's not a priority of this government to protect those most vulnerable in our society. They like to put up a guise that that's what they're all about. We're the NDP. We're here to protect those most vulnerable in society, but when it comes down to it, actions speak louder than words and what we saw today in question period that those people who are suffering with addictions in Manitoba are not able to get the kind of treatment that they need in this province.

The Premier turned his back. All members opposite turn their back on those people who need their help, and what do they say? Oh, they use some excuse that oh yeah, well, members opposite, they'll vote against this, they'll vote against that. No, what we're saying is that you don't have your priorities straight, especially when your main priority and the main priority, excuse me, Mr. Speaker, the main priority of this government is, in fact, to protect their own salaries rather than protecting those with addictions, children with autism, children with hearing impairment, children with special needs. No, those are not priorities of this government. The priority is to protect their own salaries.

And I would also argue that another priority of theirs seems to be to want to put a hydro line down the west side of this province, Mr. Speaker, something that will cost the taxpayers and the ratepayers of Manitoba Hydro some \$1.75 billion more to put it on the west side than on the east side. You know, there's no question that we all believe that there should be a third bipole line in this province, but the problem is that members opposite don't have their priorities straight. All they want to do is spend, spend, spend. At any cost, they will do whatever it takes to spend more taxpayer dollars than is necessary in this province. And the very fact that they are looking at a bipole line, a third bipole line in this province down the west side of this province, at

a cost of more than \$1.75 billion more to the taxpayers and ratepayers of Manitoba is absolutely ludicrous. They know it yet they're sticking to it.

And another waste—when we're talking—when we're on the topic of NDP waste and mismanagement, Mr. Speaker, let's just talk about the NDP's—the \$350-million boondoggle when it comes to the waste-water treatment in the city of Winnipeg, that this provincial government has mandated the City of Winnipeg to remove nitrogen from the waste-water treatments in the facilities in Winnipeg at a cost of \$350 million, where scientists—and you know what, sometimes, you know what? Maybe you shouldn't listen to members opposite because we're not all scientists. Some are. Some are not. But members opposite, members in this government, should be listening to the scientists when it comes to the removal of nitrogen in the waste-water treatment in the city of Winnipeg. Yet they have refused to do so.

Sixty-four scientists, Mr. Speaker, world-renowned scientists, have come out and pleaded with this government not to waste this money for Manitoba taxpayers and yet members opposite have refused to listen. They've refused to take action on it. They've refused to just remove that as a requirement for the city—as a mandate for the City of Winnipeg. And the fact that they have done that is shameful. The fact that they have turned their backs on science is shameful, and the fact that they are continuing to waste hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

\*(16:50)

And I know members opposite, certainly the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has stood up and he has said, you know, we'll just hand that back once again to the Clean Environment Commission. Well, how many times do they have to send the same issue back to the Clean Environment Commission? The Clean Environment Commission has stated what their opinion is. Okay, they've refused maybe to listen to the science. Okay, but the fact of the matter is the Premier has the ability to mandate or not mandate the removal of nitrogen from the waste-water treatment in the city of Winnipeg.

So, rather than doing the shuffling, the paper-shuffling game, the back and forth, oh, it's back on the desk of the Clean Environment Commission. The Premier should do the right thing. He should listen to science and ensure that hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are not wasted on the



removal of nitrogen in the waste-water of treatment facilities in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, there is another agreement that came across my desk, and I was quite excited when I first saw it. I saw, it read on the front, the New West Partnership. And, of course, I was reading through the details of it, and it says: This partnership is an unprecedented and an historic economic partnership. Through the New West Partnership, it says, the provinces commit to collaborate on innovative ways to bolster the economy of the West, to strengthen and promote the region in an increasingly competitive and global economy. How exciting is that. Wow, we should all be excited about that.

They're committed to improved competitiveness and productivity in the West. That's great. They're working together.

They're committed to attract business, investment and talent, Mr. Speaker. They're committed to support and build capacity for innovation. They are committed to strengthen and diversify the economy of the region, and they're committed to achieve efficiencies. Imagine that, efficiencies and cost savings by capitalizing on the combined buying strength of—oh, and then I read the fine print. And it says, of the three provinces. Well, there should be four provinces in western Canada. What's wrong with this picture? Here is a huge opportunity that we have in our province. I'm reading through this, and I read down and I say, you know, the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. The West is a cohesive, diverse and vibrant economic region. It will be stronger through the removal of barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility.

The competitiveness of our businesses will be enhanced, and new opportunities will be created for our businesses and workers. The economic strength of the West will be strong and stable, Mr. Speaker. With one voice, the West will be leaders for the liberalization of trade within Canada and internationally.

I go on to read all of the incredible opportunities in this agreement. The New West Partnership International Cooperation Agreement, that states that the West's economic strength and boundless opportunities will be known around the world. The West will have a strong presence and strategic international markets through the establishment of joint initiatives and international offices.

Global partners, Mr. Speaker, will be eagle-eager about the advantages and benefits created by doing business with the West. Our businesses' competitive edge will be stronger with greater access to international markets, and the agreement goes on. It says the New West Partnership innovation agreements. It says the West will be a hub of innovation; innovative and entrepreneurial and ingenuity will be cultivated and strengthened through greater co-ordination of research and development activities in the West. Brilliant researchers, students and investors will be drawn towards the creativity that is the foundation of the West.

And it goes on further to talk about partnership procurement agreements, Mr. Speaker. Purchases by the governments of the West will be efficient. Imagine that. Cost savings will be achieved through streamlined and joint purchasing agreements. Costs for taxpayers in the West will be reduced by capitalizing on the government's combined purchasing power.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I go down and I read further and I see signed at, and it talks about where the premiers of the western provinces have gotten together and signed this agreement and I see the Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia, and I see the Honourable Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta, and I see the Honourable Brad Wall, the Premier of Saskatchewan. But who do we not see on this agreement? We do not see the Premier (Mr. Selinger) of Manitoba, and what I say is shame on this government for not being at the table for negotiating with the other western provinces on something that could have been so incredibly beneficial for our province.

So I say, shame on them, Mr. Speaker. I think it's unfortunate that members opposite have refused to get up and debate this bill, but they still have an opportunity. They have an opportunity now to continue, to get up and speak further if they want to, if they have the courage to. It's not too late. It's not too late so I would encourage members opposite to get up and let your constituents—let their constituents know where they stand. Members on this side, we know where we stand, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest that members opposite should do the right thing and let their constituents know where they stand. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 31, The Budget

Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion, say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

#### Formal Vote

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** A recorded vote.

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

Okay. The question before the House is second reading, Bill 31.

#### Division

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

#### Yeas

*Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Blaikie, Braun, Brick, Chomiak, Dewar, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe.*

#### Nays

*Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.*

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 31, Nays 21.

**Mr. Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

#### House Business

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

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader):** I think, Mr. Speaker, there's been discussions, and if you canvass the House, I think you'd see there might be unanimous consent to not see the clock so that an announcement could be made respecting committee business for next week.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there a will of the House for the Speaker to not see the clock so we can continue with House business? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Blaikie:** Therefore, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 2nd and Thursday, June 3rd, at 6 p.m., if necessary, to consider Bill 31, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 2nd, and Thursday, June 3rd, if necessary, to consider Bill 31, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010.

\*\*\*

**Mr. Speaker:** And the hour now being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>		<b>Oral Questions</b>	
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Addictions Treatment	
Bill 231–The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Denial of Licences–Outstanding Warrants) Goertzen	2453	McFadyen; Selinger	2457, 2462
		Rowat; Rondeau	2459, 2461
		Driedger; Rondeau	2460
Bill 232–The Employment and Income Assistance Amendment Act (Restricting Assistance–Outstanding Warrants) Goertzen	2453	Gang Violence Goertzen; Swan	2463
		Employment and Income Assistance Program Lamoureux; Mackintosh	2465
<b>Petitions</b>		<b>Members' Statements</b>	
Mount Agassiz Ski Area Briese	2453	St. Norbert Founders Brick	2466
Waste-Water Ejector Systems Derkach	2454	Maple Leaf School Mitchelson	2466
	2455		
Multiple Myeloma Treatments Driedger	2454	J.H. Bruns Collegiate Coffee House Selby	2467
Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area Lamoureux	2455	Carol Peters Graydon	2467
Bipole III Rowat	2455	Employment and Income Assistance Program Ombudsman's Report Gerrard	2467
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
Manitoba Ombudsman–Report on Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance Program, May 2010 Hickes	2456	<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>	
		<b>Debate on Second Readings</b>	
Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, Annual Report, 2008-2009 Allan	2456	Bill 31–The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2010 Briese	2468
		Borotsik	2468
<b>Ministerial Statements</b>		Driedger	2474
Provincial Mining Week Chomiak	2456	Rowat	2478
	2456	Maguire	2481
Borotsik	2456	Stefanson	2487
Gerrard	2457		

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>**