

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
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CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
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WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 30, 2014

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 is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 61—The Peatlands Stewardship
and Related Amendments Act**

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing and Community Development (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 61, The Peatlands Stewardship and Related Amendments Act; Loi sur la protection des tourbières et modifications connexes, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill and a related proposed Peatlands Stewardship Strategy recognizes that peatlands are a resource in Manitoba to be managed wisely. This is Canada's first comprehensive and stand-alone peatlands stewardship legislation. It introduces the concept of no-go zones for peat harvesting. It sets out a new approval process for harvesting and it requires recovery efforts for harvested sites.

I just want to recognize the staff that are here and put extraordinary efforts into it. Thank you very much.

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

**Bill 66—The Statutes Correction
and Minor Amendments Act, 2014**

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the

Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), that Bill 66, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2014; Loi corrective de 2014, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: This bill continues a proud annual tradition where one bill each spring is primarily concerned with correcting typographical, numbering and minor drafting errors. This bill includes some minor amendments to a variety of acts and repeals three private acts. The bill also changes the names of ministers and departments to reflect the new names of certain government departments.

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

**Bill 211—The Child and Family Services
Amendment Act (No Fee for Registry
Checks Respecting Volunteers)**

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 211, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (No Fee for Registry Checks Respecting Volunteers), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 211, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (No Fee for Registry Checks Respecting Volunteers). This is an important piece of legislation that all members of this Assembly should support.

Effective October 1st, 2012, persons applying for a Child Abuse Registry check were required to pay a \$15 fee where applicable. Currently, there are divergent legal interpretations on which volunteers are exempted through the legislation and related regulations. Bill 211 clarifies and ensures no fee is charged for applications to access the Child Abuse Registry that are for persons whose work is unpaid, such as done by volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, we in the PC caucus believe that government should be encouraging volunteerism, not making it financially difficult for regular Manitobans

to do so. The extra fees imposed by this government will cost volunteers and businesses an extra \$203,000 per year and affect approximately—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the honourable member for St. Paul, but the comments with respect to first reading, they could be kept very brief, and we're to save any debate for second reading of the bill itself.

So I'm going to ask the honourable member for St. Paul, please conclude your comments very quickly.

Mr. Schuler: In conclusion, this bill endeavours to promote and strengthen a sense of volunteerism and community involvement throughout Manitoba, and I look forward to unanimous support for this bill from all members of the Legislature.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

Bill 213—The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I move, seconded by the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 213, The Regulatory Accountability and Transparency Act; Loi sur la responsabilité et la transparence en matière réglementaire, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: This bill requires the government to develop formal procedures to make the process for enacting regulations more transparent. It also requires that government departments to develop regulatory reforms—reform plans to eliminate red tape and encourage restraint in making new regulations. Both the government procedures and department plans must be made public as well.

Thank you.

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

Any further introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to petitions.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Effects on Manitoba Economy

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

Economists calculate that the PST hike has cost the average family \$437 more in taxes after only six months.

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

The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association estimates that a 1 per cent increase in the PST will result in a loss to the economy of \$42 million and threaten hundreds of jobs in that sector.

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

* (13:40)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition is signed by S. Berry, Q. Bailey, W. Jefferies and many other fine Manitobans.

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

Beausejour District Hospital— Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by B. Loeb, K. Van Nieuw Amerongen, E. Van Nieuw Amerongen and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Employment and Income Assistance— Rental Allowance Increase

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The rental allowance for people on employment and income assistance, EIA, in Manitoba has remained effectively flat for over 20 years, even while the cost of renting a home has steadily increased.

Despite the many calls from the official opposition caucus, individuals and community groups, and despite the fact that the very same recommendation was made in a final report of the inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the death

of Phoenix Sinclair, the provincial government has failed to protect the most vulnerable Manitobans by refusing to raise the rental allowance portion of employment and income assistance to 75 per cent of median market rates.

Fewer dollars to use for rent forces Manitobans receiving EIA to live in substandard, overcrowded and unsafe conditions.

Fewer dollars available for EIA recipients to rent safe and hygienic housing means increased pressure on food banks, the health-care system and other services as Manitoba families have to divert money for food and other critical necessities to pay for rent.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Jobs and the Economy to increase the rental allowance for EIA recipients to 75 per cent of median market rent so that EIA recipients can secure clean, safe and affordable housing without sacrificing other necessities such as food and medical expenses.

And this petition is signed by C. Demare, B. Andrew, L. Catellier and many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Reversal and Referendum Rights

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Act is a law that guarantees Manitobans the right to vote in a referendum to either approve or reject increases to the PST and other taxes.

Despite the fact that the right to vote is enshrined in this legislation, the provincial government hiked the PST to 8 per cent as of July 1st, 2013.

The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has asked the courts to rule on whether or not the provincial government broke the law by failing to address the referendum requirement before imposing the PST increase on Manitoba families.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

To urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to vote in a referendum on increases to the PST.

This petition is signed by S. Jamieson, A. Stanchuk, M. Fraser and many more concerned Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions?

Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): I'm pleased to table the following report: the Revenue Estimates Supplementary Information for Legislative Review 2014-2015.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, ministerial statements.

Flooding Update

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I rise in the House again today to give an update on the evolving flood situation.

Overnight, ice that blocked the culvert at the base of a former railway embankment near Birtle released. The embankment was—has remained in place, and water flowed through the culvert freely. Levels have returned to normal behind the embankment.

And while the embankment was not a provincial or a flood protection infrastructure, nonetheless, provincial staff, along with local officials and leaders, dealt with this situation quickly and co-operatively. Mr. Speaker, the rapid flood protection deployment in downstream communities was possible through exceptional dedication and co-ordination of the on-ground staff and the volunteers from six different jurisdictions.

The release from the culvert has resulted in a crest of water which has passed through Waywayseecappo this morning, which is expected in the town of Birtle sometime this afternoon. We have indications from the Town of Birtle that the expected three-foot rise in water expected there will have minimal impact on critical infrastructure there.

Mr. Speaker, the communities downstream were protected or evacuated to the worst case scenario. Waywayseecappo is reporting that three homes were impacted by the rise in water levels, and impacts are still being assessed.

Due to the release of water through the culvert, PTH 45 was closed from PR 476 to PR 264. Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation is reporting that some shoulder damage has occurred on PTH 45. We have gravel staged to repair the shoulder and expect the highway will reopen this afternoon once shoulder repairs are finished.

Seventy-three people in Waywayseecappo have been evacuated. Evacuations are co-ordinated by the First Nations and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, AANDC. Mr. Speaker, 46 people remain evacuated from Birtle and the surrounding area, and three people have been evacuated from the RM of Rosburn. Municipalities will begin to lift evacuation orders as the crest moves through the Birdtail river.

Water levels are within bank and receding at the Fisher River. Mr. Speaker, 136 people remain evacuated from the Peguis First Nation.

The federal government, through AANDC, is responsible for flood preparedness and response on First Nations. The Province of Manitoba provides AANDC and First Nations with flood forecast projections regularly. AANDC is working with the community and emergency management partners to ensure local emergency response efforts are supported. Evacuations are being co-ordinated by the community. AANDC has not yet completed an impact assessment of damages.

Eight people have been evacuated from the Ebb and Flow First Nation. The First Nation is pumping water from the basements of approximately seven homes due to overland flooding and a high water table.

The first crest of water has passed on the Red River, but the United States has issued flood warnings for Fargo and Grand Forks due to the precipitation they received recently. We expect that water levels on the Red will be within bank when it reaches Manitoba.

Many rivers and creeks in western Manitoba are experiencing increased flows. Flood warnings are in place for all points along the Birdtail Creek from PTH 45 downstream, the Assiniboine River from the Shellmouth Dam to Brandon due to high flows.

A flood watch is in place for Brereton Lake and the Whiteshell park, and, again, this is a high-water warning.

* (13:50)

States of local emergency continue in the RMs of Westbourne, Hillsburg, Birtle and Rosburn and the towns of Roblin and Birtle.

As always, we will continue to update the Assembly and all Manitobans on these developments as they unfold. We will continue to incorporate the changing weather information into our flood forecast and communicate that information to Manitoba families and communities.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Thank you to the minister for his update.

I understand that the threat of flooding in Waywayseecappo is now over, and I am sure the minister is watching developments elsewhere. I expect we will start to see forecasts for downstream municipalities as the Assiniboine continues to rise. And communities such as Brandon and Portage are interested in crest heights and dates, and I'm sure the minister will keep us apprised.

I am, however, disappointed that the minister saw fit to criticize the federal government through the media regarding flood preparations on Peguis First Nation. This is a time when all governments and communities need to work together rather than pointing fingers. I know the minister would be the first one to scold me if I were to question the Manitoba government's flood preparations during the flood. I do not believe his comments were helpful to the communities dealing with the floods.

Thank you to all the volunteers and staff who worked hard to keep communities safe. Thank you.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for River Heights have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the minister for his update on the situation.

I think members in the Chamber owe a debt of gratitude to those who worked so hard in the area of the embankment, and we certainly should be thankful to all those who were there and have paid very close attention to this. And, hopefully, as this

wave of water moves downstream there won't be too much of an effect, but that we wait and see.

With regard to the situation on Peguis, I appreciate the minister's update. I note that there's still nothing in terms of, you know, long-run flood planning for Peguis. And, you know, in spite of the fact that the minister has been, you know, suggesting that this is mostly a federal responsibility, it's my understanding that most of the water causing the problem actually comes from off reserve and is land that is fully a provincial responsibility. So I think there is—there should, in 14 years, have been the ability to get the Province and the federal government together to solve this.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, those are my comments for now. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further ministerial statements?

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, I have no guests to introduce at the present time, so we'll proceed directly to oral questions.

Tax Increases Wage Growth

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): The effects of this government's unnecessary and immoral tax hikes continue to be felt profoundly by Manitoba working families.

Over the last two years that we have data, we know that wage growth has been very slow, ninth in Canada, just ahead of New Brunswick. Comparing the two most recent complete years for which we have data, the average working Manitoban only makes \$4.90 more per week, and that hardly covers the additional taxes this government has thrown at Manitoba families. Meanwhile, the average Saskatchewan worker, Mr. Speaker, in that same time period, makes over five times as much more money, \$28.23 more.

I'd ask the Premier to admit that his broken-promise tax hikes are hurting Manitoba working families.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that our jobs program means 58,900 jobs will be created in the province of Manitoba, and we're very pleased that more Manitobans will be working.

But to correct the record, according to Statistics Canada, average weekly earnings in Manitoba increased in February 4.4 per cent over a year ago,

the largest increase of any province and double the national average.

Mr. Pallister: Well, that's selective citing of one year's snapshot. I just quoted the average over two, but let's take a look at over four years, then.

And perhaps the Premier and his colleagues need to understand that working families don't just work for 12 months. They've been working hard and harder under this government for a long time and falling further behind other provinces as a result.

The Premier sings the same song all the time, but there's always banjo music in the background, Mr. Speaker, because Saskatchewan continues to make progress while we fall further behind. For example, since the member for St. Boniface became Premier, over a four-year period our growth in average weekly wages is less than half that of workers in Saskatchewan, and citing one year's statistics doesn't change the fact that Manitoba working families are working harder for less.

Now, the Premier promised not to raise taxes and did. Will he at least promise working families that he won't do it again?

Mr. Selinger: What we say is our program, a five-year investment in infrastructure, 5 and a half billion dollars, \$6.3-billion lift in the economy, every dollar invested will generate \$1.16 of economic activity in the province, 58,900 jobs.

The difference between our plan and their plan: our plan, Manitobans will be working; their plan, layoffs, people being fired and people leaving the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: Well, speaking of people leaving the province, we've had a net loss to Saskatchewan of 1,277 Manitobans; 1,277 Manitobans have left this province and moved to Saskatchewan while this Premier's been in charge.

We also start taxing Manitoba families the earliest of any province west of New Brunswick, Mr. Speaker. Seniors, working families pay taxes at a level that's about half that of Saskatchewan, so that when a Manitoba family makes \$9,000 they begin to be taxed, but a Saskatchewan family can make \$6,000 more per year without being taxed.

Now, the thing with the Premier's plan is it's incumbent on people working harder for less money.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier realize that \$6,000 a year does buy a really good banjo, and the reality is that his plan is putting more Bomber fans in Regina stands every year?

Mr. Selinger: We have one of the best stadiums in the country. Mr. Speaker, Bomber fans and Saskatchewan fans—Saskatchewan and Bomber fans are coming here in droves.

And the reality is this: When we look at the cost of living, the affordability advantage in Manitoba, a family of four, two-earning two incomes at \$70,000, lowest cost of living in Canada.

And I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for importing more people back to Manitoba from Alberta to work here in Manitoba.

Basic Personal Tax Exemption Provincial Comparison

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): It's the end of April. That's the traditional deadline for filing tax returns.

And when Manitobans file their tax returns this year, they're seeing that the basic personal exemption in Manitoba is just over \$9,000. But, Mr. Speaker, what Manitobans may not see is that it's the lowest basic personal exemption west of Nova Scotia. It means that Manitobans begin to pay income tax way before other Canadians do.

This NDP government is sitting on massive revenue increases, including an illegal and immoral PST, and in 14 years they have only moved up that basic personal exemption by the most exceedingly stingy amount.

Mr. Speaker, why has this NDP government refused to increase the basic personal exemption and decrease the income tax burden on Manitobans?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance): Well, at least he has acknowledged that we have increased the basic personal exemption. That means that families pay taxes later under this government than when the Leader of the Opposition was in government. That's what it means.

We have reduced taxes on families. We've reduced taxes on businesses, to some of the lowest in the country on a small business.

And we have some of the most generous property tax credits anywhere in the country. That means for people in this province who have seen their largest asset grow in value, their home, they are

able to enjoy the value in that home while seeing property tax increases be kept in check because of our property tax rebates that have come into effect. We've raised that. It was \$250 when we came into office, and it's \$700 now, up to \$1,100, and we're about to do even better on that.

* (14:00)

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, this minister is stuck in the past and she loves to talk about the past.

But since 2004 Manitoba's basic personal exemption has only increased by \$1,500, and in the same period Saskatchewan's basic personal exemption has increased by over \$7,000, more than double. To put it another way, Saskatchewan's basic personal exemption is up 86 per cent and ours up less than 20 per cent.

This is the most cynical kind of tax from a government that claims to be on the side of low-income earners and deliberately holds down the threshold at which those same people begin to be able—to have to pay their tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, why does this NDP government, year after year, do nothing to decrease the income tax burden on hard-working Canadians?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that since we've been in government we've seen over \$1 billion in reductions to taxes for families and businesses in Manitoba. And as we have done that, we have done that in a way that doesn't take away from the core services that they depend on.

We haven't, as some provinces have done, increased health premiums. We haven't, as been—as has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, brought in a two-tier health-care system where families would have to pay some of their hard-earned money to get the kind of care that they deserve. We have made progress on reducing taxes for families, but we've done that while protecting core services for those families.

We have some of the most affordable costs of living in the country. We have lower electricity rates, lower Autopac insurance rates, generous property tax credits and also property tax credits that we are giving to graduates of universities even while they're still attending school so they can stay in Manitoba, make a life here and enjoy the good life that we've all enjoyed.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, this from a minister who yesterday cited a Saskatchewan document. That

same document, she was careful not to reveal, showed that a family of four in Saskatchewan keeps more than \$1,500 in their pockets over a family in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this government has received income tax revenue of \$2.1 billion in 2001, but now they receive \$3.6 billion. That is up \$1.5 billion in revenue from income taxes. This government has enjoyed record high transfer payments, revenues, enormous revenue from income taxes, and nothing, no relief, for hard-working Manitoba families.

Why does this self-serving NDP government do nothing to reduce the income tax burden on Manitobans?

Ms. Howard: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is just wrong. This government, over and over again, has kept life affordable for those families.

Some of the ways that we've done that, we continue to have some of the lowest daycare costs of any province in the country at the same time that we have invested in creating more and more daycare spaces for those families.

We have also seen—in this government we have made sure that people have universal access to home-care services. We're one of the few provinces that have that; in many, many provinces, you have to pay for some of those services.

We know that when the members opposite had their chance to lay the course for Manitoba, one of the things they tried to do was privatize part of those home-care services. And we know that they've recommitted themselves to a two-tier health-care system, which would increase the everyday costs for Manitoba families and increase the costs when they're most at need and most in crisis.

And we will always protect—

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

Cardiac Surgery Cancellations

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, it looks like the NDP fixed the cardiac surgery program just like they fixed hallway medicine; they didn't.

One of the really troubling issues happening right now in the number of heart surgeries that are done is the number of heart surgeries that are being

cancelled. In the Koshal report of 2003, he was adamant that this problem had to be fixed.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain why cancellations of heart surgeries has instead skyrocketed since 2006.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question, and I do want to let the member know that the investments that we've made in health care, investments that they have voted against, have meant that 100 per cent of our patients are receiving their cardiac surgery within the medically recommended time.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has received the top grade, an A, from the Wait Time Alliance every single year since they started monitoring wait times in 2006. In 1998, when they were in office, the average wait for cardiac surgery was up to three weeks. Now the average wait is up to two and a half weeks, but, of course, for people with urgent need there is no wait.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the minister should be listening to the question instead of reading the notes that her communications staff has written for her and pay attention to what is being asked.

Mr. Speaker, cancelling heart surgeries is not safe patient care. In freedom of information documents in 2006, 116 surgeries were cancelled. In 2012, 303 heart surgeries were cancelled. It has tripled, and for last year it has gone even higher.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell us why so many patients' lives are being put at risk by the number of increased cancelled heart surgeries in this province.

Ms. Selby: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that when we opened the cardiac heart centre of excellence, it meant that there's more patients and more patient beds and there's more than double the number of cardiac surgeons to perform those.

But I would like to remind the member that not long ago there was a flood in the operating room at the St. Boniface hospital where our cardiac patients do have their surgery. It did mean a little bit of delay for a very short period of time, but I have got to commend the people at the Winnipeg regional health authority for being able to make sure that those people all got back on schedule. The urgent people were attended to. It was a difficult time for staff and probably a bit scary for patients as well, but everybody got back on track in what was an

incredibly quick time, and I think they did incredible work under very difficult circumstances.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this minister has no credibility. She does not seem to even understand the questions that are being asked of her.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Jones had three heart attacks—three heart attacks. He got his surgery on Monday, but not before his surgery was cancelled four times. He was psychologically and mentally ready, and his surgery was cancelled four times, cancelled because there was no ICU bed, no nurses, no doctor, and one emergency case bumped him.

The Jones family was in tears. They're in the gallery today, and they want to ask this Minister of Health: Why was his surgery cancelled four times? Why are they playing Russian roulette with the lives of heart surgery patients?

Ms. Selby: I can imagine that was a very difficult time for the family. It is always stressful to be facing surgery and to have to reschedule it.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the member bring the information to me or to my office as quickly as possible so that we could look into it. This family deserves to have answers of what to happen and I'd like to know what happened as well.

Immigration Agreement Resolution Minister's Email—FIPPA Request

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman is currently conducting an investigation as to why, in 2012, an email was excluded from a FIPPA request that directly implicated the former NDP Immigration minister in the civil service political rally mess, and it saw her kicked out of the NDP caucus for admitting that the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) office was involved.

Mr. Speaker, that email was sent or was in the inbox of six people within the department, including the deputy minister.

Why was this email covered up, and why should anybody have any more faith in the freedom of information system under this NDP government?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, indeed, the Ombudsman is investigating, as the Ombudsman is required to do when a request comes in. We think that is complete and appropriate, and we'll be looking forward to what the Ombudsman has to say.

The deputy minister of the department has been very clear that the email should have been provided back in the 2012 request. The deputy minister has been clear that should have been picked up, that should have been provided. It was inadvertently missed. When it was uncovered, at the request of the Ombudsman it was provided to the Ombudsman, which was able to allow the Ombudsman to make a complete report, which we are taking very seriously.

I respect the work of the civil service. I respect the word of the civil servant who has said that there was an inadvertent miss, and, again, we are co-operating completely with the Ombudsman.

Mr. Goertzen: If he respected the civil service, he wouldn't have left the deputy minister out to dry for more than a year.

We have now advised the Ombudsman that there was not just one missing email; there are actually two emails that were excluded. The second email, though, was covered up when the 2012 FIPPA request was filed, also directly implicated the former minister of Immigration in directing the civil servants to be part of the political rally. The second email was in the sent or the inbox of four officials, including the deputy minister. We now have two emails, both implicating the minister, in the email accounts of 10 people that were covered up to try to protect the NDP government.

* (14:10)

Would the minister now like to change his position on the clerical error, now that he knows there was two emails in the inbox or the sent box of 10 individuals?

Mr. Swan: You know, Mr. Speaker, with this opposition, the more effort they put into something, the more you know they're trying to run away from something.

And it was back in—and, Mr. Speaker, they had the opportunity in April of 2012 when the federal government, without notice to the Province of Manitoba, unilaterally announced that they were going to change settlement services in Manitoba and put at risk our very successful immigration program—we thought it was important. We believe that immigration is important to this province. I'm sorry if the members of the opposition caucus don't. That's why we wanted Manitobans to be aware of the concerns. That's why they were invited to come down to the Legislature.

The member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) has acknowledged that it was improper to use—

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

Mr. Goertzen: Not only were there two emails covered up, but one of the recipients of one of the emails that directly implicates the former NDP minister of Immigration was the access and privacy co-ordinator for the department. The very same access and privacy co-ordinator who was on the freedom of information request that covered up the two emails was the recipient of one of the emails that was withheld. That's quite the clerical error.

Now, we know that there must have been political direction involved. We don't believe for a second that a civil service—a civil servant would have withheld this email or either of the emails. Mr. Speaker, why would they do it? They would have no motivation. The only one who would have motivation is this NDP government.

Why doesn't the Premier (Mr. Selinger) tell us who directed the civil service to withhold these two emails to protect his government?

Mr. Swan: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, I know the member for Steinbach doesn't want to acknowledge the word of the deputy minister who has explained that there was an email that was inadvertently missed. That has been provided to the Ombudsman.

The opposition has made a further request to the Ombudsman, which they are entitled to do. The Ombudsman is going to investigate, which the Ombudsman, as an independent officer, is entitled to do. We will certainly co-operate with the Ombudsman and we will take any response very seriously. But, again, I would point out that the members opposite had a chance to stand up, could stand up for Manitobans, could stand up for our immigration program, and instead they were bowed by members of their federal Conservative caucus who sat in the loge and made sure that nobody got up and stood up for Manitoba on their side. And that is the real shame in this matter, that they would not stand up for Manitoba, would not stand up for new Canadians. They ought to be ashamed.

Municipal Amalgamation RM Four-Year Extension

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Well, Mr. Speaker, we know how the NDP government stands up for Manitobans.

The municipality of Eriksdale asked for an extension before they had to amalgamate and were denied. They were promised by their MLA that there were circumstances would—that would allow them a four-year window. The NDP government lied to them. The MLA for the Interlake said, quote, the RM of Eriksdale, and it does have a significant shoreline on Lake Manitoba, and the neighbours it could amalgamate with were profoundly impacted by the flood.

Mr. Speaker, why did the government reject a four-year extension when one of the MLAs promised it? Why did their MLA abandon them?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): Doesn't sound like they're very interested in an answer, Mr. Speaker, but I know that people living in Siglunes and Eriksdale are very interested in an answer. They're very interested in building a community in that area that's—that contributes to the provincial economy, that provides jobs for the local area. I know that they're interested in working with this government and the federal government in order to do that.

We have an opportunity ahead of us around this province to organize ourselves in rural Manitoba in such a way that we can make the most of the opportunities that this government has put in front of people locally. We can organize ourselves in such a way that we can make good infrastructure decisions with our municipal partners, Mr. Speaker, and we can put ourselves in a position where we could actually save tax dollars for the local ratepayers.

What do members—

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

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, we know that the MLA that suggested that companies employing over 500 people in the RM of Bifrost built in the wrong place.

When the RM of Eriksdale and the RM of Siglunes were prepared to come up with a plan provided work resulting out of the 2011 flood was resolved and they were given a four-year extension, rather than standing with the municipalities of his constituency, the member for the Interlake is standing in the way. He promised them that they would get an extension and he broke his promise.

Mr. Speaker, why did the member of the Interlake break his promise to the RM of Eriksdale and the RM of Siglunes?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Interlake promised to have RTAC conditions on PR 68, and he came through for his people in the Interlake. What did members opposite say about that? Well, the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) made fun of that the other day right in this House. The member for Midland belittled that project.

Mr. Speaker, we take no lessons from members opposite when it comes to supporting good local projects that build the local economy and connect people in the Interlake to the rest of the world.

Mr. Graydon: Well, Mr. Speaker, suggesting that 500 employees should be moved to Tennessee is not building the economy.

The member for the Interlake promised the municipalities of Eriksdale, Siglunes, Bifrost and Riverton that this government would grant them an extension because of the 2011 flood. He made that promise, just like the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the minister made, that this NDP government wouldn't desert them.

The NDP government lied to these municipalities. They promised a four-year extension in Bill 33 and now they're going back on their word.

Mr. Speaker, why are these municipalities and their ratepayers being punished for the government lying to them?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, both the RM of Siglunes and Eriksdale have put forward to me as the minister plans that they would think are—that they are very proud of. There was real leadership shown by the councils at both Eriksdale and Siglunes. They understand that we need to work hard to build our economies, and they're willing to do that with us.

Mr. Speaker, the only people who have a lack of leadership on this question are the members opposite who didn't have enough courage to take this on and reorganize rural Manitoba to put them in a place where we have modern, up-to-date, efficient RMs that contribute to our overall provincial economy and provide good jobs for Manitobans.

Investors Group Field Outstanding Compensation Claims

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): During yesterday's Estimates process, I asked the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Sport if all subcontractors have been fully paid for their work on the initial construction of the Investors Group Field.

After tabling a list of 13 companies yesterday, I would like to ask the minister responsible: Have these companies been fully paid for their work on Investors Group Field?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): It's a stadium that is among the finest in the country, the best stadium. Indeed, Mark Cohon from the CFL, when he announced in that stadium that we're going to be hosting the Grey Cup, Mr. Speaker, it was certainly a day of pride.

Members opposite have been against investors stadium right from day one. Indeed, they've been against the MTS Centre. Without the MTS Centre, we would not have the Jets. We wouldn't have the Junos. They're the party of no: no to hydro development, no to hospitals, no to stadiums.

They're living in the past; we have a vision for the future in Manitoba.

Mr. Schuler: All of that, Mr. Speaker, and no answer.

So I'd like to ask: During yesterday's Estimates process with the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Sport, I tabled the list of 13 companies who, as of June 13, 2013, had not been fully paid for their work on the Investors Group Field. Can the minister inform the House if there are more companies who have yet to be fully paid for their work on the stadium in addition to those on the list?

* (14:20)

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate again that this stadium is one of the finest stadiums in the country.

And, indeed, you know, you don't have to go very far west, and the province to the west of us will be in—will be taking on a stadium of their own, and it'll be seating less people, indeed, will probably cost more. With construction costs nowadays, with steel, concrete, they'll be paying more for a stadium with less seats.

So we have a great deal to be proud of. Members opposite seem to be against that. Any time we put forward any kind of project, Mr. Speaker, indeed, through our budgets that we put forward, the opposition has been totally against it.

You know, we have many, many people that have stood up, Mr. Speaker, commenting on the stadium. Indeed, Chuck Davidson of the Manitoba

Chambers of Commerce, who many members opposite will know quite well, said we have probably the nicest stadium in the CFL right now.

And we can show off to a certain extent, be—

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

Mr. Schuler: Well, Mr. Speaker, just like committee yesterday, no answers. So I'll try again.

During yesterday's Estimates process with the minister, I tabled the list of 13 companies who have not yet been fully paid for their work on Investors Group Field. Can the minister inform the House how much money is currently outstanding to sub-contractors who have not yet been fully paid for their work on the stadium? I would like to remind the minister that many of these companies are local and their employees real Manitoba families with their livelihood at risk.

Mr. Speaker, why the cover-up? Why do these companies have to bear the brunt of carrying costs in the range of \$2 million and not be paid? Why will the minister not take it serious and stand up and tell us who is owed money and for how much?

Mr. Lemieux: As yesterday, I refer the member to triple B. It's an organization that has been put together to be responsible for the stadium—the City of Winnipeg, the Blue Bombers, the Bisons, the Province of Manitoba—and I would certainly direct the member opposite to them.

But, again, if you take a look at, Mr. Speaker, the investments we've made in the province of Manitoba with regard to recreational facilities, amateur sports, the Bisons—indeed, I was shocked—shocked—to hear the Leader of the Opposition actually say and imply that he was opposed to an agreement our government made with the Winnipeg Jets that allowed the NHL franchise to Manitoba. I was shocked. I mean, the Jets are here. They're the pride of Manitoba. To hear those kind of comments coming from members opposite—indeed, they were opposed to the old Eaton's building being knocked down and the True North centre going up. It was a rodent hotel.

On this side, we were proud to—

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

Peguis First Nation Flood Preparation Plans

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans, who are no strangers to floods, are continually being surprised by the lack of proactive planning by the NDP government for communities which are very susceptible to flooding.

The Peguis First Nation today, as in many previous years, is on the front lines of the flood fight in our province. Flood forecasts from the Province in February and in March reported the risk of flooding at Peguis along the Fisher River to be from minor to moderate, and this directly affects the level of funding and their preparedness for the flood.

I ask the Premier: Does he consider the evacuation of more than 130 people from Peguis only a minor or a moderate problem?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the evacuation of anybody from their homes in a spring flood is a tragic situation for that family and, in our view, unnecessary, particularly when we have an opportunity to do the right thing in communities like Peguis, move the homes that are at risk.

There was a commitment by the federal government to move 75 homes. Only about 12 of them have been moved so far. We think it's essential that you have a mitigation program, which we are prepared to participate in on a province-wide basis, Mr. Speaker, that you have a mitigation program that allows people to relocate their homes into safe locations. And we very much want to be a part of that solution anywhere in Manitoba, and that's exactly what we're doing.

One of the first announcements we made last year in the spring budget was \$250 million to make the emergency channel permanent in Lake St. Martin, to build an additional channel out of Lake Manitoba and to put in place resources to help those communities where people are still out of their homes to rebuild on higher land with better infrastructure and better housing so they will never have to experience that again.

We wish the same thing for the people of Peguis as well.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, mislabelling the flood potential for flooding as minor to moderate when there's a major flood makes it very difficult for the community to prepare for and get adequate resources to deal well with the major flood which has

happened this year. This is vitally important for Peguis because flooding can come very quickly, which means excellent advance preparation is crucial. For more than 14 years this NDP government has not prioritized flood protection for Peguis.

I ask the Premier: Will he investigate to see if the flood forecasting at Peguis can be much better in the future, and when—when—will there be an effective long-run flood protection plan in place for this community?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, there have been plans put in place to help homes that were in the way of floods to be moved. They need to be implemented and they need to be resourced by the federal government.

Our flood forecasting, we've improved investments in technology. We've got over 100 years of experience in our flood forecasting office. As we know, we've hired a new flood forecaster with a excellent reputation and qualifications at the Ph.D. level in Manitoba, highly endorsed by his adviser. And we give the best information that is available to us to all communities.

And we always know that every spring it's going to be a challenge, particularly in areas that are on low-lying land. They're at risk, and we want to work with those communities to make sure as—they're as well prepared as possible for the threat of immediate floods and have a plan for the long-term prevention of flooding in their communities.

That's exactly what we're doing all around Manitoba. That's why we've put extraordinary resources in place to rebuild flood protection in communities all throughout Manitoba.

And all the members opposite, including the member from River Heights, have voted against those additional resources to protect communities.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier repeatedly blames the federal government. Manitobans know nature doesn't say—doesn't play this same political territory game, and people are suffering because of it. If an all-party task force was needed to go to Ottawa to fight for these Manitobans, they could have asked for it, but he hasn't.

In more than 14 years of this NDP government, there still is not even a date for when the effective flood protection plan for communities like Peguis will be in place so people don't have to be evacuated year after year.

Besides disappointment, what can Manitobans expect from this NDP government when it comes to flood protection for Peguis? When will it be there?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to advocate on behalf of that community for better flood protection, that's fundamental. Those people were dislocated, relocated from very good land further south in Manitoba, and it took them decades to get compensated for the loss of that land. And the land they were put on was land that's at high risk of flooding.

We know that there needs to be investments there. We've provided them with resources for additional super sandbags, Tiger Dams. But we know the long-term solution is the proper investment in infrastructure, to move homes and to protect that community with better flood protection. We support that. We have supported that year over year. We will continue to advocate for that.

But the member opposite was a member of the federal government. He had a chance to put protection in place for those communities, and he failed to do that.

Water and Waste Water Facilities Infrastructure Improvements

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, water and waste water facilities in urban and rural communities outside of Winnipeg are a basic necessity that is crucial to the health of all Manitobans.

The 2014-15 budget announced more than \$1.5 billion will be invested in municipal roads, clean water and other municipal infrastructure to meet the needs of families and businesses in our growing communities.

The Conservative solution? Cut a half a billion dollars. That would risk the lives with no plan for clean water. This is reckless.

Can the Minister of Municipal Government please update House on the investment made to improve and upgrade water and waste water facilities in the next five years?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): We on this side of the House have—we attended a number and organized a number of infrastructure round table meetings all across Manitoba. Manitobans told us that water and waste water projects were very important.

* (14:30)

So I was very pleased today to join with our Premier and the president of AMM, Doug Dobrowolski, to announce \$84 million over the next five years dedicated to water projects in Manitoba. This is part of our 5-and-a-half-billion-dollar, five-year commitment to core infrastructure in this province.

We on this side of the House understand how important it is for—have clean water for Manitobans. It's good for Manitoba families. It's good to build our economy.

I only wonder why, Mr. Speaker, members opposite would oppose such investments in the RM of Macdonald, at Oak Bluff and Sanford, why they would oppose this—

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

Flooding (2011) Farm Case Concern

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, Fred Neil is my constituent who has been struggling to keep his farm afloat since the flood of 2011. Mr. Neil has lost over 143 cows and suffered losses over a million dollars as a result of the 2011 flood, yet the government has done little to help him.

People like Mr. Neil are the backbone of our province and our economy. Why is this NDP government leaving him to fend for himself?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): Obviously, the 2011 flood is one that will go down in history and probably never, ever—we're talking about 1.5–\$1.3-billion flood scenario, and we continue to work with the—but one thing, I think, is very key to make notice of today, that the opposition party chooses not to support the budget when we talk about putting flood prevention and control mechanisms.

Mr. Speaker, what they choose to do is put their head in the sand and hide and don't look proactive towards the moving forward of the progression in the province of Manitoba towards water quality, watershed management, and continue working with partnerships with municipal governments, much like the person in the gallery today, the president of the AMM organization that we need to work with, and we will continue to work with the AMM organization. Thank you.

Mr. Piwniuk: Mr. Speaker, now that we're—the flood is happening again this year, government has done little to help the Manitobans for the 2011 flood.

Mr. Neil needs help now or jobs will be lost in my community. Mr. Neil has lost over a million dollars, yet the government has not—only reimbursed him for 10 per cent of it.

Will this government do the right thing and help Mr. Neil and those whose similar situations and will keep them from leaving—keeping him—leaving him and his employees to fend for themselves?

Mr. Kostyshyn: I know that we've had communication. The Premier's (Mr. Selinger) had conversation with the person that was affected by the flood of 2011 when we talk about the dairy industry. And we've been talking to the insurance agencies and we continue to talk to the dairy organization where they need to move forward in the positive.

But let's be remember of one important fact. We've done provisions to prevent or try to prevent reoccurrence of this. We have the DFA organizations, we have MIT involved in this, and we will continue to work with agriculture industries.

It's not just Mr. Neil who has been affected by it, and we've continued to work in a positive manner. Thank you.

Mr. Piwniuk: Mr. Speaker, the situation's clear: Mr. Neil can't afford to wait any longer. The banks are knocking at his door.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is close to home. My dad's name was Fred. He was a dairy farmer. In the 1980s, with experience with high interest rates and drought conditions, many farm—my family had almost lost the dairy farm. We had to sell the cattle and the dairy quota to stay afloat. It was tough days when the cattle had to be transported off our farm.

Shame on this NDP government for allowing Mr. Fred Neil to put his—put the situation that he lose his farm.

Why is—the speak—Mr. Speaker, why won't the NDP government do the right thing and help Mr. Neil so he doesn't lose his farm?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, Mother Nature treats us all with challenges in agriculture, not only agriculture but other businesses.

But I want to assure the member opposite I was a rancher. We put up with the 2011 flood, where my cattle were exposed to three feet of snow for three

days. I lost calves, I lost cows, and I want to assure the member opposite that he's not the only one that's been—and we will continue to work on behalf of agriculture because it truly is an important component—a \$10.1-billion industry for the province of Manitoba, and this side of the House is working for agriculture and we're finding alternative mechanisms and we will continue to work for agriculture in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has elapsed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Time for private members' statements.

National Honesty Day

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, today is National Honesty Day, also known as April Fools Day's unpopular cousin. Created in 1991 by former press secretary to the governor of Maryland, Hirsh Goldberg, National Honesty Day counterbalances the first day of the month which encourages tricks and falsehoods, and expects individuals to answer truthfully to all questions that they are asked.

Honesty Day reminds us of the importance of having honourable principles, intentions and actions. Mr. Speaker, I maybe should have read this before question period.

This NDP government lacks the fundamental virtue of honesty in its deceitful and underhanded actions. An honest government would not raise the PST after promising otherwise. An honest government would be transparent regarding the amount of vote-tax funds that they have received. An honest government would not fire teachers and cover up \$15 million that were supposedly delegated toward an ineffective student financial aid program.

An honest government would not close 19-plus-and-counting emergency rooms and in-convenience families for 560 days, Mr. Speaker. This government has failed the families of victimized children in our child-welfare system. This government has failed to be transparent regarding the actions of the former minister of Immigration. This government has failed to be honest with all Manitobans.

Honest government ministers and backbenchers went door to door during the 2011 election, looking in the eyes of their constituents and promising them a balanced budget by 2014. They promised not to raise the PST and then went and did the opposite. They

promised seniors 36-to-50-million-dollar education tax break and only met a fraction of their goal. An honest Minister of Education would not look into the eyes of students and promise that they would be well served by his student financial aid system when, in fact, the outdated website inconveniences students more than it helps them, Mr. Speaker.

Albert Einstein once said, "Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters." Maybe it's time that this government read Goldberg's novel titled *The Book of Lies*. National Honesty Day raises awareness for the need to be transparent and forthright, a practice that should be kept in mind daily.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dakota Collegiate 50th Anniversary

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Mr. Speaker, schools are very much the heart of our communities. The bonds of friendship that we form in school are lasting, staying with us even after—even as life after graduation takes us in exciting new directions. This year, Dakota Collegiate is celebrating their 50th anniversary. As an alumna, I'm very proud of Dakota's history of excellence.

In 1963, Dakota Collegiate opened its doors to 200 students and 20 teachers as an experimental team-teaching school that offered university entrance-level courses. Today the school accommodates more than 1,050 students, 125 staff and offers more than 120 courses. What a difference 50 years makes.

What hasn't changed is Dakota's continued leadership in academics, technology, the arts and sport. Whether it's on the court, in the classroom or on stage, Lancers rise to the top of their field.

Among the many graduates who pursued further study in universities and colleges across the country, several alumni have gone on to receive gold medals in their faculties at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg, and many hold positions of leadership right here in our great province. Few schools in Manitoba can match the athletic might of the Dakota Lancers. The Lancers have claimed 58 provincial championship titles in various high school sports.

Mr. Speaker, Dakota Collegiate's 50th anniversary has given me a chance to reflect on the

important role the school and its teachers played in my life. Mr. Cowie inspired me to continue on to teach high school English. Mr. Nord instilled in me a fierce sense of competition. Mr. Ilchyna, the master of bad jokes, developed in me the importance of being a lifelong learner. How fortunate I am to be able to count them all as my friends today.

I want to wish Principal Mathez and all the staff and students at Dakota Collegiate a wonderful reunion weekend and thank them for the time they have invested to make things special for all of us, we Lancers for life.

Warren United Church 100th Anniversary

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I was pleased to attend and speak at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Warren United Church this past October. A centennial service was held on October the 6th, 2013, followed by a reception at the Warren hall. It was a century of fellowship and friendship marking a lively celebration.

Familiar faces filled every corner of the church, which began with a ministry of music from the centennial choir. Eight former ministers each took a brief moment to reflect on the past which helped build the present-day place of worship. Every seat was full for this milestone service as more than 200 current and past church members came together.

The church has always been a pioneer and has continually paved the way for change in society. The church tries to reach out and be inclusive as possible to all persons, a practice that the Warren church has been participating in for years now.

* (14:40)

Although many faces in the congregation have changed over the years, many of the families in the area are the same, and this is one thing the anniversary celebration has been able to signify. It is great to have a celebration and recognize that this church community has been here for 100 years.

Several individuals and groups were recognized for their dedication to making this day memorable. Volunteers embarked on a project to create a book about the century-old church back in April, creating a new history book to mark the milestone. In addition to publishing a book, the volunteers are creating a DVD of photos as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Warren United Church on a century of memories. I offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude for all the efforts to create such a church community that exists today.

New Selkirk Hospital

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, in 1979 the Progressive Conservative government of Sterling Lyon built a new hospital in Selkirk. You know, it was very well received at the time, but, unfortunately, it was poorly designed and poorly built.

Here we are, only 30 years later, and it needs to be replaced, and it fell to this government to clean up their mess. It's an incredibly expensive and complicated project, but we are going to get the job done in spite of the fact that the Liberals and the Conservatives voted against this project every step of the way. Mr. Speaker, we are builders; they are bunglers.

The new Selkirk regional health centre will double the size of the current hospital and will see an increase in the number of beds, Mr. Speaker. Eighty per cent of the rooms will be private rooms. Another exciting feature of the hospital will be the addition of an MRI machine which was promised by this party in the last election, a promise we're now fulfilling. It will also have a brand new CT scanner which will ensure local residents have state-of-the-art diagnostic service.

Mr. Speaker, this centre will serve our region for years to come. I want to thank the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby), the former minister of Health and all my colleagues for their support of this project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

School-Zone Safety

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak specifically about a recent accident in River Heights where a Kelvin High School student was hit by a car and injured. I want to express my sympathy to the student and his family. I hope that the student will recover fully and quickly from his injuries.

I also want to highlight the need to pay attention to school-zone safety. When we had discussions about the provincial legislation to provide reduced speeds in school zones, we learned what should be good news, that accidents in school zones in

Winnipeg are, in fact, rare. What was emphasized was the effectiveness of what has been done in Edmonton, where the emphasis was placed on community safety zones on streets where there were problems.

In this case, the corner in question is a busy corner and it needs attention. When speeds are posted in a community safety zone, which should be set up around Grosvenor School, there needs to be distinctive signage, perhaps with flashing lights, to draw attention to the change rather than just standard speed-zone signs. Making such signage very visible is important to ensure awareness of the change and also as a vivid reminder of the need to slow down and pay attention in this area.

While addressing issues around schools, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to also mention that a very recent report from Statistics Canada has found that 27 per cent of Canadians with at least a bachelor's degree don't have the basic literary skills to function in our society. This is a very disturbing finding. We need to understand more precisely the nature of the deficiency in our province and we need to address it, starting in our primary and secondary education systems.

This also requires an assessment and remedial approach to any students accepted into post-secondary education who don't have the basic literary skills to function in our society today. Quick decisive action is very important in Manitoba where our PISA scores have been plummeting. We can't let our young people get behind before they even have a chance to start.

In health and safety and in education, we can't afford to let the youth of Manitoba down.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, could you please call Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

**TOURISM, CULTURE, HERITAGE, SPORT
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION**

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection.

As previously agreed, questions for the department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Unfortunately, yesterday we ran out of time but, I guess, fortunate because the minister then had the opportunity to get further briefing from his department. I'm sure that department officials had the opportunity to listen in, in question period, and perhaps give the minister a briefing.

So I'd like to ask the minister the same question again that I asked him in my first set, and that is the 13 companies that were tabled yesterday, have they been fully paid for the work that they did on the Investors Group Field?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I encountered to take that on yesterday. I appreciated the information of the subtrades. And, indeed, I have no idea what the total subtrades are that are involved in the stadium. I just know that Manitoba companies are extremely good companies and they do great work. And we would hope that whoever was hired by the builder and the contractor, that they would ensure that the bills are paid, the ones that are legitimate would be taken care of.

Mr. Schuler: So the question is, have they been?

Mr. Lemieux: To this date, I can't confirm or deny whether some have been paid or completely paid or partially paid or not paid whatsoever. Maybe the member opposite knows more or has more information than I. But at this particular stage that's what I've been advised, that, you know, to this date, I'm not—I don't have any more information than yesterday.

Mr. Schuler: And that is troubling, because this government, like governments have a tendency to do,

love to take credit for things. And the Premier (Mr. Selinger) today in question period—for those who followed question period—and the minister took a lot of credit for the Investors Group Field, and yet for some reason don't know if they've paid all their bills yet. And there was a list of 13 companies presented yesterday, and interesting how even today the Premier and the minister had no difficulty in taking credit without knowing if they've actually paid their bills. And that is—I know the minister finds that troubling as well.

I'll go on to the second question. The 13 companies that were tabled, is that the exclusive list or are there other companies on top of those 13 who may or may not have been paid out in full?

Mr. Lemieux: You know, we have great, reputable companies that have built a fantastic stadium. And, indeed, I'm not sure if credit's the right word, but sense of pride is maybe a better word, that we have a sense of pride in the MTS Centre, sense of pride in the Red River community college, sense of pride in downtown Winnipeg and what's happening in the city of Winnipeg. There's a real renaissance that's happening. We've had the Junos. We're going to have FIFA. We're going to have so many activities. Hopefully, in the future, we'll have Heritage Classic at this new stadium. And I wouldn't say that it's bragging or taking credit; I would say it's a sense of pride in what's happened in Manitoba, where we're going in Manitoba. And a new facility like this was, you know, long overdue.

And again I'll just reiterate that it's regrettable if someone has not been paid, but often there are reasons for that. There are many contractors that are involved, and I'm certainly not privy to their contracts or what they've entered into, and certainly if someone has completed a job and did a particular job as a subtrade and they've completed it, I would hope that, you know, they're—that that bill is paid, that contract is lived up to. I think we all would want to do—to ensure that. People do have families. They have children going to school, university. They all have bills to pay, like we all do. And, indeed, each and every one of us have contributed through investments, through tax dollars, to the stadium. And we want to make sure that everything goes right, and I don't think there's a person in this building that wouldn't say otherwise.

Mr. Schuler: The minister tries to say now that he wasn't taking credit, that it was actually a sense of pride. I would tell him either he wasn't really paying

attention in question period today or his mind was drifting somewhere else, but I would say that in question period today both the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and he used an unbelievable amount of hubris in taking credit and, in fact, went so far as to say the opposition opposed it, even though it never—[interjection]

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr. Schuler:—even though the stadium never—it, nor any part thereof, ever came up for a vote in the Legislature. In fact, neither did the arena. And, yes, the minister and the Premier today took credit for the Investors Group Field, the stadium, even though the bills may not even have been paid yet.

And the question was: On top of those 13 companies who may not have been paid, are there others who've also not been paid?

Mr. Lemieux: Let me just say a couple of things. First of all, and this is directly to my critic, let me just apologize to the MLA for St. Paul. I was interrupting his comments and his questions—and that we've always been respectful to each other, so let me just say, I apologize for that. And I hope he accepts it, you know, so sorry about that.

Well, let me just say that I use the term sense of pride. Taking credit—I mean, when people do things and they come forward, they make use of an opportunity to make sure something happens—and the member knows; he was here—it's—it wasn't an easy thing to say, you know, the old Eaton's building which was standing—that that particular building would have to come down in order to make room for a new facility. We looked at every option under the sun, I think, for the use of that old Eaton's building. We looked at possible Red River community college to go there, and yet it took some political guts to do it. And the previous premier and the current Premier, who was the head of Treasury Board, the minister of Finance of the day, balancing the books of the Province—it was an investment that—between the federal government, provincial government and the City, a true partnership, along with the Chipman family and Mr. Thomson, decided to move in that direction.

And today we had—we see the Moose were there. We see—now we have the Winnipeg Jets. We see great concerts going through there. It's one of the busiest facilities in all North America. So, if the member opposite wants to say that we're taking credit for it, somebody had to do it. Somebody had to

have the political gumption to step up and say we need it, the city needs it, the province needs it for amateur sport, as well as for professional sport and professional concerts that are going to be there. So, whatever the language is, whatever the terminology is, I use sense of pride in these facilities, but someone had to step up to do it.

As in investors stadium, then, products—or projects like this will always have some naysayers. The previous premier, now our ambassador to the United States, used to call them nitpickers—used to be the nitpickers' ball. It wasn't quite done enough—nicely this way, or, oh, a little more could be done that way. Oh, we could use a couple more thousand seats in MTS, but, oh, it, you know—a little bit more legroom. Yes, the point is we have a fantastic new MTS Centre as we have in Investors.

Now, we talked about some of the issues that have taken place at the stadium, the investors stadium. There was some leaking taking place. We believe that's been totally rectified. At least, I've been advised that it's—if it hasn't been, it's going to be shortly. And we take a sense of pride in a facility like that.

I just want the member opposite to take equal pride in it, because if you're not taking pride in it and you're not standing up for it and saying how good it is, I think it doesn't serve the public well. And someday my critic will be in my chair. Now, I seem to think that that's going to be eight years-plus from now, but it may be sooner, but Manitobans will make that decision. But he will see, when he's in my shoes or in my chair, that to have a sense of pride about what you've done is really important. I believe it sends the message to the public, whether it's talk-show hosts, whether it's newspaper, media, print or other media sources, that it's important to show Manitobans that it—that these investments are good investments on their tax dollars. So, thank you.

Mr. Schuler: To the minister's initial comments, of course, apology accepted.

I know the minister and I both got elected in 1999 and we've certainly had our disagreements over the years and—have respect for the minister. Today's issues are not personal; they're political and nice to leave them at that.

* (15:00)

I'd like to focus the minister. This isn't a question about whether or not the government takes credit. That's what governments do. They get elected and

then everything since the beginning of creation was because they are currently in office. We understand that way of thinking.

The question is, as you take credit, should you also not be a little bit concerned that the bills haven't been paid? And there was a list of 13 companies that were tabled yesterday that as of June 2013 had not been paid. And it was a very simple question, have they been paid?

And the minister has sitting in front of him five very, very able and competent public servants who, anyone of them, could have lifted up a phone and made a simple phone call from yesterday to today. Currently, it being 3 o'clock, I could have made the same phone call. I just don't think I'd of gotten the same answer.

And I understand in the gallery are other staff that the minister could have tasked with if those at the—in front of him at the table today couldn't have done it. There were other staff that could have picked up the phone and said the list of 13, have they been paid? And the other question is, are there more? Are there more than just the 13 who hadn't been paid?

And this is about a stadium that the minister and his government today in question period took great hubris in taking credit for, and have those 13 companies been paid? Are there other companies who may not have been paid? And the other question was, and I'd like to ask the minister, what is the cumulative that is still outstanding that hasn't been paid?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I thank the member for the question. And I'll try to repeat my answer by saying that, to date, I don't have the answer on how many contractors or subtrades have not been paid.

I'm presuming—I mean, these are good trades as the member—I have no reason to doubt that. There are good—great and good tradespeople in the province, and they do not only a good service, but they do a good job, whatever that may be. And I would hope that if they've lived up to their end of the contract that they would be compensated for that on whatever the agreement is.

And just to maybe go a little bit further, I know the member used the word credit again. But let me just say that—and he knows this well. We were both elected in 1999, and there's a report card after every four years and that report card's called a provincial election. And that provincial election means that Manitobans will take a look at their government that

is coming before them and MLAs that are coming before them, and in that report card people will look to see, did these people just keep a chair warm or did they actually do something, because those tax dollars continue to come into the province. The money is there. There's responsibility in the incumbent on any government to manage to the best of their ability and to dictate and determine where priorities are.

Now, I think we've got a good indication where the Leader of the Opposition is and where he is on his priorities, because the first time something came out with regard to where a budget was he stated that he would cut a half a billion dollars, and that's not even disputed anymore. Everyone knows this for a fact: that he would cut a half a billion dollars from the provincial budget to address shortfalls, if that were the case.

And then on CJOB he talks about how two-tiered medicine may be something we should really seriously look at. Whether that means extra billing, we're not exactly clear. Because after that someone told him, someone leaned on him and said you better not continue that line because it might be contentious. But, if he has a vision of two-tiered medicine, that's fine.

All governments have their own visions and all governments have to make decisions and priorities. Ours has been to put a \$5.5-billion budget in place on infrastructure renewal, critical infrastructure renewal over the next five years. That's—we put that before the public; we've said roads, bridges, sewer, water, flood protection, and, indeed, we've seen what's happened this spring. And I feel terrible for those families that are going through that, or the least may be having to be evacuated and those that are—currently are.

I know what it was like in 1997. In 1997 I helped my neighbours in Grande Pointe carry furniture out of their house, trying to evacuate while flood waters—one, you know, is coming in the back door and going out the front. And I know a lot has been made of that.

And, indeed, just before a massive flood happened, an MLA at that time who was minister responsible for Government Services, emergency measures, decided to leave and go to Ottawa. That person is the current Leader of the Opposition right now. And, at that time, a lot was made of that. And, indeed, a lot was made of Premier Filmon of the day, saying—blaming on those residents that you chose where to live and you're living in a flood plain,

somehow as if they weren't living there, that all of this impact on their homes and their livelihood wouldn't be taking place. He blamed it on those individuals.

And so, indeed, governments are judged by what they do. The member opposite calls it credit, taking credit. In—with regard to the stadium and MTS Centre, I—and Red River community college and renaissance that's going on in Winnipeg, I say it's a sense of pride, a pride that Manitobans have and I'm not the only one who have said this. I mean, Chuck Davidson commented about we probably have the nicest stadium in the CFL right now. We have Mark Cohon, you know, who is with the CFL and made the announcement on the Grey Cup saying that, you know, this gives us a great opportunity to showcase the most modern CFL and our premier event in a beautiful, modern investors stadium.

And then you have Paul Haagenson, who is CEO of Live Nation Canada, said, well, Winnipeg was perfect, a perfect town to bring Jay-Z and Beyoncé to. Winnipeg's a great town for us; we present a lot of concerts in Winnipeg and it's a beautiful stadium, you know. It's one of the greatest stadiums, I would argue, in Canada.

And you have many others and many who've made those comments, so it's not just me. I mean, are those people taking credit? Are those people—no. They have a sense of pride on what—and where Manitoba is going, and I would just like to see the opposition acknowledge this instead of fighting it. And when the member says, well, there was never voting—any votes taken, oh, yes, there was. It's called voting on a budget. And, when you vote on a budget where a stadium or investments like this in infrastructure are put forward to the opposition, and in—I think it's a reasonable budget, in a way that says we're going to improve infrastructure, the opposition has a choice to make. You can either vote for that budget that's going to good things or you can vote against it. But we haven't seen where the opposition is vision is except to see where they're going to cut. So maybe I'll leave my comments at that, Mr. Chair, and just—and allow my critic to ask a couple more questions.

Mr. Schuler: The title of this committee is Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, and this committee is asking questions about that department. Eighty per cent, at least, of what the minister spoke about was anything but tourism, culture, heritage, sport and consumer

protection and then the rest of it had nothing to do with the question that was asked.

And I know this is very uncomfortable for the minister. I know that, but I'd like to point out to him that I've spoken to some of these companies who went through a very brutal winter. Often work couldn't be done. In a lot of cases, it just—it was too cold. They just couldn't get out into the field.

So, for them, they were having cash-flow issues. It was a tough, tough winter, and to the minister, through you, Mr. Chair, and on top of it all, they are bearing the brunt of money still owing to them for work that was done on a stadium here in the city that the minister and his Premier (Mr. Selinger) today took a large amount of hubris taking credit for, and it's on the backs of these family businesses.

And the one family business, they have been liquidating investments to stay afloat because if they start laying off their people, they're going to go to Saskatchewan and Alberta. Their trade is so coveted. So they are paying them for days that they can't work because it's so cold, even though they're on the hook for money. They paid for the product they used at the stadium. They paid for the labour. They paid for everything and it's owed to them. These are—there's a list of family businesses that, as of June 13th, 2013, that hadn't been paid, who had to liquidize a lot of their investments so they could just stay afloat and keep individuals employed.

* (15:10)

And I know, around here where paycheques are guaranteed, where at least for us sitting at this table, we've got job security for four years, we don't worry about it. And it doesn't matter if it's -50° or plus 40°. It doesn't matter. Our paycheques are guaranteed, but not for these people. And that affects directly Manitoba families—livelihoods at risk.

And yet we have a Premier and a minister who took great hubris today, and if the minister wants, I'll get a copy of QP meeting. I'll send it over to him electronically and he can have another look at it, even though the bills probably haven't been paid yet. And how did those individuals feel? How do the owners of those family businesses feel when it's nothing but a sport here in this building, on their dime?

You know what? I would suggest to this committee that every one of those businesses paid the 8 per cent PST on all the stuff they bought so

they could work on the stadium. All their taxes were paid. They had to pay and they're just waiting for their bills to be paid, and we sit here at this committee and play ring-around-the-rose. You know what? I understand if the minister doesn't know, then maybe say so. But, you know, I can't imagine somebody sitting in the accounting department in a family business and listening to the answers here today thinking, that's how trivial you guys treat what we do here.

And, by the way, to this committee, yes, I have spoken to some of these businesses and, yes, I've heard the bitterness in their voice. They would like to get paid, and the least we could get besides the hubris in question period—and I understand question period. I've been here as long as the minister. I understand governments take credit for things. That's the way the system works. But you know what? If you're going to take credit, could you please make sure that at least some of the bills—actually, sorry, all the bills—have been paid.

You know what? These are family-owned businesses that employ a lot of hard-working individuals whose families depend on this paycheque. And I would ask the minister—I tabled three questions today—the list of 13, have they been paid? Are there more than the 13 that may not be on this list that also haven't been paid? And what is the cumulative amount that may not have been paid to date? They're simple. If the minister between yesterday, today's question period and now doesn't have the answer for it, fine, can he tell us, I don't know, and could he tell us when he might know when he can inform—it doesn't matter if it's to this committee or the House. Frankly, I think it's Manitobans who care. That's all we're saying.

This isn't about who built what and when was built, who, and any of those things, because, frankly, the individuals who haven't been paid, they don't care. They would just like an answer: When are they going to be paid, because, actually, until then they're the ones that are carrying the Investors Group Field? That's my question.

Mr. Lemieux: I thank the member for the question and I'll repeat my answer. Everyone in this building, including our government and all of our MLAs and every MLA in the building, wants to ensure that someone is paid. So I would hope that the member from St. Paul is not feeling like he is kind of the only person in this building somehow that may be concerned about that.

What I stated before is that if those people did the contracts that they were asked to deliver and if they delivered it in a way that's satisfactory to the builder and they'd been hired by someone to do a job, I would hope that they would be in—since the MLA, my critic, has been in touch with them all the time, I'm sure he would know whether or not they've got back to the builder to determine what kind of compensation they're going to be getting, and I would hope they would, because, quite frankly, I think all of us would. If you do a job you expect to be paid for it. So, you know, so I don't think, you know, the MLA from St. Paul, my critic, should feel like he's alone in this and nor should those companies. We all feel that when you do a service, whatever that contract may be, you should be compensated for it whatever was a predetermined or a pre-agreed contract or agreement. So we would hope that those contractors, whoever they may be in totality, that they are compensated and rightfully so.

I have no reason to doubt that they didn't do their job. If there's a dispute, that's certainly a dispute between the builder and those contractors if they didn't live up to the—to their end of the deal. And I would hope that that dispute, whatever it may be, between the—that subtrade and the builder, that that would be rectified.

And so today—as I mentioned in my opening comment that today I don't have any different information than I had yesterday for the MLA, but I know that we are equally as concerned as he is that people receive fair compensation for what they've been hired to do. I mean, so, you know, if the MLA, my critic, would, I guess, restrain the rhetoric about how, you know, you feel somehow that this is extremely terrible or more terrible—you feel more terrible than—that anyone around this building would feel if somebody's not being compensated, that's not the case. I mean, we all want to ensure that people are paid. I mean, people have bills to pay, they have groceries to buy, they have education to pay for for their children, they have all kinds of bills like—you know, like, each and every one of us have mortgages to pay. We'd want to make sure that they are compensated, rightfully so.

So I don't—you know, I don't know if there's a dispute on the delivery of what they were supposed to do between a subtrade and the builder. I certainly am not privy to all those details. I mean, the MLA says he speaks to them on an ongoing basis and knows them and has talked to them. Maybe he could share more information, whether they've been paid or

some of them have been paid. But it's something, as I said, as of today, I certainly have no information that's different than yesterday, but I appreciate the issue being raised. It's something that I'll endeavour to pass on and find out why—what the situation is, quite frankly, and try to determine what is going on, because, as I know it, all bills have been paid, so if all bills have been paid to this fantastic new stadium that we've invested in, you would hope that the subtrades have been paid and compensated as well, so.

But again I have to say and reiterate that this stadium is one of the finest stadiums in the whole country, and I know I will be looking with interest to Saskatchewan when they build their new stadium someday to determine how many people are going to be sitting in that stadium, how much it's going to cost them to build this stadium and, in the end, to see how that particular stadium compares to ours.

So—and I know we received great value—excellent value for what we have, and we're going to have the Bombers that someday will win the Grey Cup and, with any luck, it may be actually in this stadium, but we look forward to a great season from the Bombers. And Wade Miller and the Bombers are enthusiastic, and also the Bisons themselves. And it's a fantastic facility and I don't think anyone would argue that.

Mr. Schuler: The minister speaks about feelings, and his feelings and my feelings. Actually, it's not about us, and it's quite irrelevant what our feelings are in as far as the businesses are concerned. Through the Chair to the minister, the businesses do feel alone in this because they're the ones who have to go to their creditors and explain why it is that they're struggling financially, and that can be a very lonely feeling. I've been there. I've had to explain to my banker, for whatever reasons—weather, whatever—why things were struggling, and actually that's a very lonely feeling. And it's about them, not about us, and I think they would appreciate if the minister could direct one of his department—he's got more than half a dozen sitting here in the room. I'm sure one of them could pick up the phone and inquire have they been paid, and if not, why not.

I'd like to move on and ask the minister, he mentioned yesterday that insurance was going to cover a lot of the damage from the unexpected snowfall and snow melt, which nobody seemed to have factored into the construction of the Investors

Group Field. What is the deductible on that insurance policy?

* (15:20)

Mr. Lemieux: I've been advised that not only part—your question stated that part of the damage would be covered. My understanding is that all of it would be covered by insurance. And, indeed, there's a deductible, and I've been advised that triple B is the one that would be paying the deductible, and I understand the deductible, I believe—I may stand corrected, but I think it's \$100,000 deductible for the damage that's been caused.

And, again, I'm still awaiting to find out the exact number of what that damage is. I still don't have that number as to what the total damage is. But I understand the deductible is \$100,000 and triple B will be paying it. But it covers all of it, I understand. Like, I understand all the damage is covered. And that I'm certainly looking forward to being advised of—my understanding, it has been rectified and whatever damage took place, that has been taken care of, and that, again, triple B is the one that is responsible for the deductible and that's going to be taken care of. And I understand that all—at least I've been advised that all the damage that was there has been taken care of or will be shortly and that all of it is covered by insurance.

Mr. Schuler: Right, and yesterday the minister said that it could be \$100,000 or more. And if it's \$100,000 minus the deductible, in which case then the Investors Group Field would pay for all the repairs of the damage. So, whatever it is, it's that minus \$100,000. So it's all not actually covered.

The minister said yesterday that the damage was because of design oversight. So does the insurance policy cover damage due to design oversight?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, first of all, I don't believe I said design oversight. I said—what I stated was that I wasn't privy to what exactly the damage was and that I would be getting an update as to what the damage was and when it was completely fixed. And people would be notifying me of that, and the moment someone notifies me and lets me know of exactly what the damage is, what the cost is, I would be more than happy to let not only this committee know, but anyone else who wishes to listen. I'd be pleased to let anyone know what it was, what exactly caused the damage, and, hopefully, it'll be rectified to the point where it'll never happen again.

So, to be clear, you know, I said I'm not an engineer and I'm not a designer and I certainly don't know exactly what has taken place. But we do have professionals that are—that have looked at it and have made those repairs. So to be clear, once I get all that information I'll be happy and pleased to notify my critic and let him know, and I'll be pleased to let anyone else know.

Mr. Schuler: In an article yesterday in the local media, the Winnipeg Sun, the minister's quoted as saying, and I'm not—I don't know if I'm, at committee, allowed to use the minister's name. So the minister says, and this is the quote: He's still getting details on the extent of the damage and exactly what led to the oversight. So the question is, does insurance cover design oversight damage?

Mr. Lemieux: I've been advised that the insurance will cover—and all the damage that has been—and has been looked after and has been determined that that's what caused the damage. When I find out all the details, again, what exactly that is, I'd be more than happy to share it. I just know that there is a deductible that will cover all the damage. I mean, that's what I've been advised. And so whatever that policy is going to cover, apparently it's covering everything, all the damage that's there. So the \$100,000 deductible will cover whatever damage was in place. So—and it's been rectified as I—as far as I know it. Either it's been taken care of already or soon will be, and so I'm certainly looking forward to that and getting an update and then I'll pass that on as soon as I find out.

Mr. Schuler: Does the up-to-\$500,000 damage claim cover the repairing of the design oversight deficiency? Is that included in the \$500,000 damage claim?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, as I said in question period, I'd certainly refer my critic to triple B who is responsible as a board for the stadium. And that is made up of the City, the Bombers, the university, the Province. And there is an organization and there are people there that I would refer the MLA to, to ask them the specifics of that. But I can only tell you what I know. I know that there's \$100,000 deductible and I know that the damage could be upwards of \$500,000. And I know that that deductible is covering all the damage that was there. That's what I've been advised, so all I can pass onto you is what I've been told.

Mr. Schuler: I appreciate the minister's comment that he just made. Would he support triple B coming

before committee so we could ask them what's happening? I would suggest to the minister that if I were to call them, chances are I would not get a call back. They are not compelled to answer my questions, nor would they answer my questions. So would the minister support us asking triple B to come in front of committee so we could ask them questions?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, you know, the MLA knows full well that, you know, to bring organizations from throughout the province before this particular committee in a minister's Estimates, it's—I certainly have never known of anything that has taken place like that. But I would refer to—the member to triple B, and the reason I do that—to the chair of that particular committee or to the committee itself—is because they have the specifics. And I'm not sure what I'm missing with regard to the member's question, but I thought I was pretty clear to say that \$100,000 deductible, upwards of \$500,000 damage. That deductible and that insurance covers it all. And, indeed, if it's not completely fixed today by now, it soon will be, and that we look forward to this never happening again, hopefully.

But again let me just say—since I have the microphone I will say that it is the finest stadium in the country, hosting Beyoncé, hosting the Grey Cup, hosting FIFA. In fact, in a week's time, we're going to have the US playing Canada, women's—two of the best women's soccer teams in the world. And, hopefully, it'll be a full stadium, and I understand there's about 25,000 seats sold already. Hopefully it'll be sold out. It's fantastic that the world soccer championship—World Cup in Brazil, I think, this summer, there's a lot of energy and enthusiasm behind it. Hopefully, we'll host a Heritage Classic someday in it. These are things to be really proud of, and I would hope that the member opposite would acknowledge that and would be very supportive of it. And we have far more concerts coming, and I know that this will be a source of pride for us for many, many years to come, hopefully at least 50. The old stadium was around for almost 50 years to—almost to the day. It served us well. Many a Blue Bomber championships and Grey Cups were held there. And this stadium will serve as a source of pride for us.

And I know that, as a government, we're very, very happy to have invested money into this particular facility. It's a fantastic facility, and it's one—and I mentioned the others, Mark Cohon, Chuck Davidson and many others who have spoken so highly of it, that I think—and I think there's some sour

grapes, quite frankly, with the opposition with regard to the stadium. I think because the public acceptance in the stadium has received accolades from all over the country, from many, many different sectors about this stadium, and that—and to me there is no reason to be angry about it as an opposition. I think they should embrace it and say it's fantastic and embrace the Blue Bombers, and, hopefully, they'll do very well and bring home a Grey Cup.

Mr. Schuler: The question was bringing triple B in front of a committee so perhaps we would have some answers, because the minister, even though he's almost had 24 hours, still has no answers, even though he's got a very able and competent group of men and women sitting here at committee and in the gallery, any one of them who could call up triple B and ask these questions. And maybe they did; maybe they didn't.

* (15:30)

So I'd ask the minister, is there any committee of this Legislature where triple B could be called in front of, or is there no accountability for the taxpayer to this Legislature other than through the minister?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, quite frankly, this is dealing with accountability today. Ministers go before committees all the time. We have Estimates, debate the Estimates and the budget of a department. We have an ability to ask all kinds of questions.

And when the MLA—I actually take exception to your comments, quite frankly, about no answers. I think you've received a lot of answers: \$100,000 deductible, upwards of \$500,000 damage. I'm going to be—and when I get the answers with regard to what damage there is and when it's done, I'll provide the member with that information. I mean, I only can provide you what I have, and so I've been very upfront and straight and I believe those are answers.

And, you know, I'm not sure if the MLA is looking for who the other gunman on the grassy knoll is, but there's no conspiracy theory here. There's nothing untoward. I'm being straight up with the member and I'm saying he should accept it as that, as fact, and if I have any more I'll be more than happy to provide you with that information.

Mr. Schuler: The minister makes it clear. There's no committee this Legislature where triple B can be called in front of to be held to account, to ask them questions of for accountability. He says it's through

him, and then he says if you want the answers go talk to triple B. So now we're in this circle.

So there's no accountability here. All questions have to be directed to him. He doesn't have the answers other than countering—actually, yesterday he said it wasn't \$500,000 damage. I'm surprised to hear him now talk about \$500,000 damage. The questions all must be referred to him, which is what we're doing, and when I ask him the questions he says, well, actually, you should go and ask triple B. So in other words, I'm in a round room looking for a corner.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, member for St. Vital, have a point of order.

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Well, just on a point of order, Mr. Chair. I believe that the minister has been very clear with the MLA who's asking the questions that he will provide answers to him when he has them in regards to the questions that he's asking. It's my understanding that that is common practice in the Estimates procedure when ministers are being asked. We don't always have the information available to us.

I know I was the critic for the member at one time, and I know that if we didn't have the immediate information available to us there was always an agreement with opposition members that we would provide that information to them when we had it. And it's my understanding that that's what the minister has said to the MLA in just his most recent response.

So I just wanted to ensure the member who's asking the questions that I think our member—our minister is responding to his questions with integrity, and I would hope that he would understand that.

Mr. Chairperson: Member for St. Paul, on the same point of order.

Mr. Schuler: It's not a point of order.

Mr. Chairperson: So—order, please.

It's not a point of order because the Chair does not—because the Chair is not responsible for the quality or content of replies of the—to questions.

Mr. Schuler: If the design oversight deficiency is not included in the \$500,000 paid for by the

insurance claim, how much is the design deficiency and who's going to pay for that?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, first of all, I'm not going to deal in hypotheticals, and this clearly lies within that purview as far as I'm concerned. But I will say and I'll repeat myself to the member, is that I've already stated that I would undertake to try to find out information with regard to (1) the contractors that were not paid to try to determine and get some answers as to what is happening. I mean it's a—you know, and I'm not sure of the particulars behind it, whether or not they lived up to their contracts or did not and that's why pay is being withheld. I don't know. I'm not certainly privy to all those details. But you would hope that, if somebody did the job as they were supposed to, they're going to be compensated for it.

And, with regard to the damage, I mentioned that—the \$100,000 deductible that's in place. I've been advised that the \$100,000 deductible for that insurance policy covers the damage that has taken place at the investors stadium. I can't say any more than that because that's all the information I have at this point. And so I just want to repeat that to the member, that you are getting answers, but you're getting answers that—from me that—it's what I know and that's all I can pass on.

Mr. Schuler: Right, and we appreciate that. So the minister said, on the three different questions that we raised, he's going to look into it. Perhaps then he could also look into—I mean, the minister now was very clear, and we appreciate that, that the insurance policy, which has a \$100,000 deductible, covers the damage.

So then the next question, if he could perhaps look into, is, then, who is going to cover the design oversight deficiency?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I'm, first of all, really pleased to know that the MLA is a designer or architect or an engineer to be able to make those determinations, because I certainly don't. I mean, I don't know how he could somehow stretch this to be—and I can't remember his exact words—what he stated—but, to me, this is quite hypothetical. I would say, wait until we have the facts, and I'll certainly pass that on to you, and then we can go from there. But right now, what the damage is—I understand that it's been taken care of or certain—soon will be. The deductible covers it, the insurance is handling that and hopefully it'll never happen again.

Mr. Schuler: Interesting answer, because yesterday the minister was a designer or engineer or architect, because he is quoted as saying, in the paper—and unless he now wants to renounce what's in the paper and maybe the reporter got it wrong. I mean, that might've happened. But he has a quote here from the minister—says the minister says—and I'm not allowed to say the name—but the minister said he's still getting details on the extent of the damage and exactly what led to the oversight. And earlier on, it talks about that it was due to design oversight.

So yesterday the minister was a designer, engineer, or architect, and today he says, ah, but today, he's not a designer, engineer or architect, because now he is renouncing what he said yesterday, that the damage was because of oversight due to a design flaw.

So, you know, I'm not too sure which minister we have. Yesterday, was the minister who said it wasn't \$500,000. In fact, it was a little bit more, you know, between 100 and maybe 500. Today it's 500,000. That was the minister yesterday who was the designer-engineer-architect. Today, we have the minister who's not a designer-engineer-architect, telling us it's \$500,000 in damage.

So—that we keep asking questions with unbelievable desire for clarity, I think, is understandable. I think the minister appreciates the fact that the, you know—things do move, and having both of us been in this place for some time, we understand that things do shift periodically. It's just the way things work around here.

So could the not-designer-engineer-architect-minister of today tell us, if the design oversight deficiency is not covered by the insurance policy, who's going to cover the cost of repairing that design oversight deficiency?

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Before I recognize, I think you—I caution the member to identify minister by his portfolio.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you. Yes, Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection.

* (15:40)

Let me just say that I believe—well, first of all, you know Tom Brodbeck's a great reporter and he never misquotes anyone, so I believe—I believe I'm correct by saying I said I am not a designer, I am not an architect and I am not an engineer. I think that's what I said—which I am not—and I don't believe that

the MLA from St. Paul is—who is my critic—is not a designer, architect or engineer himself. So a lot of hypotheticals that he's asking—which they are—I mean, will be determined.

So, \$100,000 deductible, insurance covers all the damage that I've been advised that's taken place, and it's upwards of \$500,000, that the damage has been either repaired or soon will be taken care of, and, hopefully, it'll never happen again. I think it's quite clear. I mean, it's very clear, and that I said that anything new or anything updated—when I'm updated I'll be more than pleased to tell him personally or tell him, you know, in Estimates or in question period, wherever the—wherever my first occasion is, I'd be more than pleased to inform him of that.

Mr. Schuler: Okay, and we appreciate that he, the Minister for Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, or MTCHS and CP—if the minister would also tell us who's going to pay to rectify the problem. We understand that insurance is going to pay for the damage, but if we don't repair or fix the deficiency, it's just going to happen again next year and the year after that and the year after that and the year after that. So who is going to pay for the design oversight deficiency and how much is that going to cost? Could the minister for MTCHS and CP tell us? *[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Order, please. Don't argue.

Mr. Lemieux: I know people feel very passionate in Estimates and they're—you know, and especially on the side of government with regard to the MTS Centre and investors stadium. And there's so many things to be proud of in this province and to be, quite frankly, bragging about, and I know members on the side of the government that are here today feel this passion and feel that there're great things happening in Manitoba. And I know, you know, I just want to say that certainly as minister I'm really pleased to be able to answer forthrightly to the—to my critic and certainly mention to him that—and appraise him of everything that I have, and I'm more than pleased to pass that on.

So I'll just repeat by saying that when I'm advised and told about this particular facility about (1) what type of damage it was—and the insurance has covered it all, I understand. There's a great deal of insurance, quite frankly, for a lot—any kind of damage that would take place there. There is a deductible that has taken care of that.

So it bears repeating that (1) regrettably that there was any kind of damage there, but we know on large projects like this particular project that there are issues that arise and they have to be taken care of, so what you do is you move forward, you take care of them and you ensure that they're rectified, which, hopefully, they won't happen again.

And so we have very good companies, as the member pointed out himself about all the great trades we have in Manitoba, and all these great trades that he listed off that were involved in building this beautiful stadium. And so we know that a lot of good work has gone into the stadium, and this stadium will be around, hopefully, for the next 48 years going on 50 years and we'll have many events to celebrate there with our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Mr. Schuler: Correct, the stadium should be for at least 40 to 50 years; however, every one of those years it can't have a snowmelt flood happen and then expect insurance to pay for it. The minister will not let those words cross his lips that the design oversight deficiency (a) has to be corrected, and will he then tell us how much that is and who will pay for it? That's the question.

Mr. Lemieux: Now, let me get this straight. The MLA for St. Paul is not an engineer; he's not an architect; he's not a designer. So can I ask him a question? How do you know this?

Mr. Schuler: Because it's been universally reported in every media in the city that there was a design oversight, that there was a deficiency that somehow there was a snow melt that flooded the stadium that was so dangerous that not even the media was allowed to come in and cover it.

I would suggest to committee, it's been out there. This is not like I walked in today and somehow revealed something that nobody knew before. This has been covered over and over and over again. It was covered by the TV stations. It was covered by radio. It's been covered by newsprint that somehow there was the design deficiency that when the snow melt happened it flooded the stadium. The question is, when that is corrected, who pays for the correction and how much will that cost?

Mr. Lemieux: I mentioned before that—well, No. 1—well, first of all, the insurance pays. But secondly, let me just mention that there has been no update with regard to what has caused this damage. I don't have any information. That's why I threw this back to my

critic. I know he's not an engineer. He's not an architect. He's not a designer. So what makes him determine that he knows exactly—I don't know. I haven't received an update as to exactly what caused this. So I just want to make sure that that's clear, that that's what I am certainly waiting to get an update as to what exactly did happen at the stadium. I know that the damage is covered by insurance, by deductible, and, as soon as I find out, I said I would update my critic as to what the damage was and that—when it's rectified I'd be pleased to let you know.

Mr. Schuler: To the minister for MTCHS and CP, something happened. Something flooded the stadium, something so terrible and so 'henious' happened that not even the media was allowed to see it. It was that terrible. And yesterday in committee the minister pretzelized himself trying to explain why it was that the media wasn't allowed, and they were the four points that he raised. The—that it was Wade Miller's fault because he wouldn't let them in. Then it was unhappy people and the answers kept coming, and then it was it's an unsafe place and it went on and on and on. This is not something that just happened yesterday.

The minister has been in this portfolio from the time when this happened forward. Something happened, did nobody in the department, nobody ask the question, what happened, or did the water just appear? Something flooded the stadium, and, yes, in the media they said it was a design deficiency. I read it. It was a design flaw.

Now, the minister says no. No, it's not a design flaw. But he's not too sure what it is because he's not, in his own words, a designer, engineer or architect. So he not being one of those, knows enough to know that it isn't a design deficiency oversight, but that the water appeared. Something flooded the stadium and it was so terrible that not even the media was allowed in. And nobody, nobody in this place asked what might have been the problem. And I understand insurance is going to pay for the damage, but if there's a deficiency somebody has to pay for the deficiency. Who pays for it and how much is that going to cost? That's the question.

And I'm not appointing myself either as a designer, engineer or architect. But I'm also not an accountant, but I still go through Estimates and I ask questions and I ask on behalf of the public. Now there are outsiders who have said that there was a design deficiency. If that is the case, how much is that going to cost and who pays for it?

* (15:50)

Mr. Lemieux: Well, let me reiterate that, again, that—déjà vu all over again, to quote Yogi Berra. The damage at the stadium, upwards of \$500,000 covered by insurance, covered by \$100,000 deductible, that damage is covered by insurance. We are waiting—I am awaiting, and I will certainly let my critic know the moment I am updated as to exactly what's happened, what the damage was, I'll be more than pleased to let my critic and his colleagues know, whether it's here, whether—in Estimates—whether it's question period or privately when I'm briefing him on other bills that are coming forward, I'll be pleased to notify him and let him know that. I know, yes, his job is to ask questions, which he has. My job is to give him forthright answers, which I have. And all I can let him know is what I am currently appraised of. So I've done that. I've tried to do that with the media; I've tried to do that with everyone.

But let me just conclude by saying this, is that this is the best stadium in the country. And we are going to host numerous events in that particular stadium. And the member opposite and his colleagues should have a great deal of pride in investors stadium. And that company of Investors Group would not put their name on a stadium if it wasn't the most fantastic, most beautiful stadium in the country. And so, all I'm saying, without repeating myself, and maybe I will repeat myself, is that we have so many events coming, and we have a great deal to be proud of and to take pride in, in a stadium like that, and the old stadium that we had served its purpose. And it was from another era. And what we're saying is that the opposition, as well as all Manitobans, should embrace this stadium, because we believe it's a good investment. It is a good investment in this particular facility that will serve Manitobans, serve us, serve our children, our grandchildren, great-grandchildren, for many years to come. And as a government, we're proud to do that. We're proud to be able to say that we made this investment, as we were in MTS, as we were in Red River community college and many other renaissance projects that are taking place in Manitoba.

And I would just state again to the member, when I get any new information, I'll be pleased to inform him and update him, as I get updated.

Mr. Schuler: Unfortunately, those updates occur about as rarely as Halley's Comet. And we'll have to wait for those answers.

I've been advised that our Estimates time is, like a time clock, ebbing sand, and I have a few other questions I'd like to ask, as much as I think this is an important public policy issue and important to Manitobans. They've invested a lot of money in this and are deserving of answers, and rightfully so.

I would like to ask the minister of MTCHS and CP—in September of 2011, his political party made a commitment through the—his leader, the now-Premier (Mr. Selinger), that there would be a 'construcon' of a new four-field indoor complex in north Winnipeg. Could the minister tell us how far along the government is on fulfilling that commitment?

Mr. Lemieux: I'd be pleased to look into that and asked members of my department and ask them to get more detail, and I'll be pleased to provide you with that. But I just want to say that recreation and sport are truly important to this government. And we know, and the member knows, that sport is important to Manitobans as citizens, as a province. And the more involved people are in sport, the more and the better citizens we have. And it's important to have a good citizenry, not only for the democratic process, but ensure that we have active, healthy individuals. So sport has always been important for us. And we've made a number of different announcements, different sports projects throughout the province. And we want to ensure that those contribute to amateur sport. And that is something that we take as a priority. And so I would just say that, you know, this department is not solely responsible for infrastructure projects.

We have the building Manitoba plan which is Municipal Government now, used to be Local Government. We also have Building Canada Fund projects that have contributed to recreation projects. We have—indeed, if you take a look at the Portage la Prairie facility, one of the nicest facilities in the country with regard to recreation. They have pool, arenas, sporting events taking place there, as well as in—and in the Credit Union Place in Dauphin which the junior hockey championships are taking place right now. All of those recreation projects have—projects that this government since 1999 have invested in that have truly improved sport, amateur sport and the ability for young people to have the facilities to improve fitness, wellness and improve their amateur sport skills. So we take a great deal of pride in that and we'll, as far as I'm concerned, we'll continue to invest.

But this question, particular question may lie with a different minister and that's where the funding may have come from.

Mr. Schuler: The minister may have heard me from time to time speak about youth sport. It's a passion of mine. I have spent a lot of my life sitting at a lot of different sports watching my children play and it has served them very well. In fact, I submitted a paper to the parliamentary association. I wrote a paper on the government involvement in youth sport. In fact, I think there is a role for government to play there and I've advocated for a northwest Winnipeg Garden City soccer complex at Leila and McPhillips, and perhaps the department should spend a bit of time briefing the minister. This is a very important project and I'm sure he would appreciate knowing a little bit more about it.

Part of the commitment made on September 26th by the NDP—and these are commitments that I had suggested we as a party make, and, wouldn't you know it? The NDP got to the punch line first on us on that one. So—and that is—the commitment was also for nine synthetic outdoor fields lit with floodlights across the city. Could the minister tell us how those nine synthetic outdoor fields are doing with the floodlights across the city?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I'll certainly endeavour to look into that.

But I want to just mention that I was really pleased to attend—I was at the YMCA facility on Fermor and St. Anne's Road, a facility that's going to be a practice facility for the FIFA women's soccer. There's going to be seven matches, I believe, and possibly eight matches here. But they need a practice facility, so we were certainly very pleased to invest monies into that particular facility and—but I'll certainly endeavour to find out.

As I mentioned, it may be through another minister's portfolio because it's part and parcel of the Building Manitoba Fund and often these projects are in co-ordination with municipalities, but also the city and federal government. So it's important to note that all feel the importance of sport and sports facilities. So as a government we have made many, many investments throughout the province of Manitoba.

But I will certainly endeavour to ask about where these are and I certainly—and I do believe that they may be with municipal affairs—or Municipal Government I believe it's called now—through the Building Manitoba Fund or the Building Canada

Fund projects. But I will find out and I'll certainly let him know at my earliest or his earliest convenience as well.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, and I'll make sure that I send a copy of my paper to the minister, and in there we talk about a wave of childhood diabetes coming at us. I think we've got in western society for sure the—a wave of the highest youth obesity rates ever in the history of human kind coming at us. Youth crime is affected and the list goes on and on and on.

And one of the things that I have argued for for many years—and he can check with predecessors, in fact, even his Premier (Mr. Selinger)—that I believe the Garden City, which for those of you who may know or may not know, Leila and McPhillips is always viewed as the downtown of the northwest part of the city, a great place. It's got our hospital, shopping, sports. It's got just about everything there and it's where the—all the buses basically come together. It's a very strong bus hub, which is important because a lot of the youth, the disadvantaged youth need good bus service to get to a facility.

*(16:00)

And I've sent this and I'll send the same document over to the minister and advocate for—in and around Garden City that—there's the Garden City sportsplex. The Seven Oaks Soccer Complex is there. They're building an arena right now, and it's a very smart hub because, again, right at Garden City Shopping Centre is the bus hub, and it—in fact, I even sent a sheet with all the bus routes that come there and how much area you can service. It's an area that's growing and also has needs. It definitely has needs in it, and one of these facilities are very important.

So, you know, perhaps the minister could ask for a briefing and at a later time in concurrence—I understand the House is going to be sitting still for a few more months, so perhaps in concurrence we can have this discussion, because I believe the NDP made a promise. I mean, they made other promises that they didn't exactly live up to, and here's hoping maybe they'll actually live up to a promise. This is not asking the government to spend money. In fact, this is asking the government to live up to its commitments, and that commitment was for the new four-field indoor complex in north Winnipeg—northwest Winnipeg, and perhaps the minister could get a briefing so next time we ask the question we could find out where that particular project is. His department, after all, is called Manitoba Tourism,

Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, and probably a good place to be asking about sports at this particular Estimates process.

So in there somewhere is a question, and I look forward to the minister's answer.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, what I can answer is this, is that the MLA for Maples, the MLA for Burrows, MLA for Rossmere, MLA from Concordia, MLAs on our side of the floor and our government have been very, very supportive consulting, working with organizations—sports organizations in the community to determine the need.

So it comes from the grassroots, it comes to the government, comes to different ministers as to what the community needs and what type of aspirations they have with regard to projects that they need. There's only so much money to go around. It's a large city. Two thirds of the population of the province live here, but also it's a large province. Whether you're in Flin Flon, Thompson, Ste. Anne, Manitoba, Brandon, Dauphin, Beausejour, we all have needs, and recreation and sport is just another one of those needs.

So our MLAs have been really active and strong in the sense of advocating and talking to many of the community organizations, asking them what do they need and what—not just what they want, and, in a perfect world, you may want a lot of things, but what do you need and what do you feel is your priority. And that's why I feel very, very confident when we get recommendations coming from our MLAs recommending to us—indeed, even from—members from the opposition have raised a number of different projects that they feel are truly important to their communities and the people they represent. We certainly take that into consideration, any advice and any suggestions we get.

So recreation, I think it goes without saying, that all of us are truly supportive of recreation and sport and the role it plays in our society, and I know when I take a look at my three-year-old grandson playing soccer already in Beausejour, at that age, I look forward to this season to watch him out there, and it won't be long before he'll be in high school and the needs just continue, and the population of Manitoba is growing. Young people will continue to be active, and with our, I think, our vision of where we want Manitoba to be, we want Manitobans to be healthy.

And the member talked about diabetes and the importance of type 2, but also many other illnesses

or diseases that are caused by inactivity. Sport is truly important for us in schools. I mean, that's why, as a government, the MLA for St. Vital was one of—a leader when she was the minister of Education, to keep schools open after 4 o'clock so people—the facilities have been paid for and they need to be used, and she should be congratulated to this day for that and, as a government, we have a great deal of pride and a sense of pride on making a difference on recreation and sport in this province, and soccer pitches are just one, but our MLAs are continuing to talk to the community in determining what their needs are and prioritizing that. And we need to invest in those facilities.

Mr. Schuler: What we're basically doing is focusing on a September 26th, 2011, commitment that was made. I'm sure there were other commitments made over and above this. I believe one of the jobs of opposition is to hold government accountable. I mean, they got elected on making these commitments. People are going to hold them to it. I know they made other commitments that they haven't lived up to—we will not raise taxes or the PST, read my lips—and that's now part of history.

And part of the commitment was, and I quote, today's commitment will help realize the Winnipeg Soccer Federation's vision to build a new four-field indoor soccer complex in north Winnipeg to add to their successful full field facility in south Winnipeg. As well, the WSF will build nine new fully lit synthetic grass fields across the city.

So my question is, the two in east Winnipeg, have they been built? The two in west Winnipeg, have they been built? The two in central Winnipeg, have they been built? The two alongside the new north Winnipeg complex, have they been—have been—they've been built? And one more added to the two already in use at the WSF facility on Waverley, have they been built? This was a commitment made in 2011 and we are sitting now spring of 2014, and how far along are these commitments?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I mentioned to my critic that I'll endeavour to get that information. And sometimes there's other ministers involved in these particular commitments. But I—when I'm listening to my critic, I love the theme that I'm hearing: building, building, building, building, building, building, building, building, building. And whether it's hydro dams, whether it's hospitals, whether it's schools, whether it's recreation facilities, this government is a

building government and we'll continue to build Manitoba into—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I'm interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allowed for Estimates consideration has now expired.

Our rule 76(3) provides, in part, that not more than 100 hours shall be allowed for the consideration of the business of Supply.

Further, our rule 76(5) provides that when time has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions without debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call in sequence the resolutions on the following matters: Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection; Mineral Resources; Multiculturalism and Literacy; Enabling and Other Appropriations; Legislative Assembly; Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

Now, resolution 14.1—at this point, I think staff can go.

Resolution 14.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,733,000 for Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$58,503,000 for Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Sport Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,636,000 for Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,760,000 for Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, Consumer Protection, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:10)

Resolution 14.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$280,000 for Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$110,000 for Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Resolution 18.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$705,000 for Mineral Resources, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,435,000 for Mineral Resources, Mineral Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$640,000 for Mineral Resources, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$196,000 for Mineral Resources, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

MULTICULTURALISM AND LITERACY

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Resolution 44.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$272,000 for Multiculturalism and Literacy, Executive, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 44.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$422,000 for Multiculturalism and Literacy, Multiculturalism Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 44.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,476,000 for Multiculturalism and Literacy, Adult Learning and Literacy, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

ENABLING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,474,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,400,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,250,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Justice Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,443,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Capital Assets, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

OTHER APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Resolution 27.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$40,000,000 for Other Appropriations, Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 27.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,087,000 for Other Appropriations, the Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,392,000 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,883,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,245,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,511,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,695,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Children's Advocate, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:20)

EMPLOYEE PENSIONS AND OTHER COSTS

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,899,000 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs, Employee Pensions and Other Costs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: This also concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254. I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the ever-exciting Estimates for the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities.

As had been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner and the floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): We're just going to continue on with regard to the line of questioning yesterday. We were talking about youth suicide and the statistics that are increasing within this province, and just wanting to get the minister's comment on whether the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has been discussing this and at what level or what—at what place they are in reworking their current strategy which is obviously not working?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): I want to thank the member for the question. Yes, the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has put a priority on mental health in a

number of ways. One of the things, of course, we have is our youth suicide prevention strategy. Part of that we have a cross-sectorial committee that is set up; that committee would be—that would include our education partners. It would include health professionals. It would include members from our community. We would take into account and work of course with our First Nations and our Aboriginal leadership in the province of Manitoba finding ways to share services and resources, looking at best practices.

I also want to say that we've worked very closely on a national level. I know that in the premiers' meetings it has come up as a priority for premiers throughout the country. We are playing a role in mental health summit network, making sure that we continue to bring experts together throughout the country, leading researchers, practitioners, finding ways to share and disseminate this information with the idea and the focus on mental health promotion and mental illness prevention. As you can tell, a big part of our approach on mental health is a priority. We do commit and recognize how important it is to work closely with our federal government, of course, our Aboriginal leadership, our First Nations leadership, many of our health professionals, our educational partners, community-based organizations.

I do also want to say that it would—is incredibly important is that we work directly with youth for many other things that we do. And so a big part of the priority is to make sure that we can find ways to share information with one another, to find best practices and to continue to make mental health promotion and mental illness prevention a top priority.

* (15:00)

Mrs. Rowat: I'd like to then explore that one step further. Can I ask the minister if the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has been looking at funding for counselling sessions for all children and youth?

This was an idea that was presented by Michael Kirby, who's chair of the—co-founding chairman of partners of mental health. He indicated that if you get governments to commit to pay for psychological counselling for children and youth up to eight sessions, you know, that's roughly \$1,000 per child that would benefit greatly. So I'm just wanting to know if his principal argument has been looked at and whether this is something that the Cabinet committee has looked at?

Mr. Chief: I thank the member for the question. And when it comes to—as I'll put it in the words of the member, psychological counselling, that takes on to—takes into account the clinical side of support. Those questions would be directed to the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) or the minister of Health and Healthy Living.

Mrs. Rowat: What I'm asking, though, is if the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has looked at and has discussed counselling sessions for children and youth?

Mr. Chief: I do want to let the member know that the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has discussed and work is now under way on a broad plan for child and youth mental health. That includes the whole continuum of prevention and treatment, including counselling.

Mrs. Rowat: Can the minister indicate to me what the status is of that? Is it going to be a five-point strategy? Is it going to provide, as the minister has indicated, evidence-based points? Like, how are we going—you know, what I've found in the past is we've implemented a strategy, we found that some of the programs and—that were being provided did not work and in some ways caused more damage in some communities. So I'm wanting to know if the minister is going to ensure that there's an—some evidence base—or evidence-based parallels on this, so that we can ensure that our numbers don't increase. Going from 13 to 17 within one year—17 children losing their lives is significant, and I'm very concerned that we're going to put forward a piecemeal strategy, as was put in the past, just to address some media pressure. So I'm just—if he can assure me that it's more than that and if he can provide me with some information with regard to where they're going, I'd appreciate that.

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question. So right now I do want to say that we do have a lot of work on the ground, of course, in collaboration with many communities. One of the things that's going on with the broad plan of the work that we're doing on child and youth mental health, we want to make sure that we're collaborating with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, building on Senator Kirby's works.

So we're trying to take into account what's happening at the national level when we're building this plan. We also want to make sure that whatever plan we come with—and the member and I were able to have a very lengthy conversation yesterday on

evidence-based programs, and a lot of that was our commitment to evidence-based programs. So part of this broader plan will take into account the investments and the work that we're doing in early childhood development, the work that we're doing into poverty reduction, the work that we're doing in investments in young people when it comes to recreation, the work that we're doing with—in many of our First Nations communities that come around cultural sensitivity.

So the broader plan around mental health takes into account a lot of different partners, and we want to make sure that as we move forward that we can build—continue to build momentum with all the services and resources out there and make sure that those programs, as the member said, that they are evidence-based programs and are going to make the biggest difference.

Mrs. Rowat: I will look forward to further discussions with the minister with regard to that. I'm very interested in this topic and realize that time is a-ticking and, you know, we've failed before, so let's bring it forward and do a better job of it.

With regard to rural and northern communities, I hear from a significant amount of people that the helplines, which are great, often have people volunteering who live thousands of miles away from the individuals who they are trying to connect with. And I know that, you know, my children, you know, if we're having a crisis situation, would then just turn off if they find that the person that they are talking to has no clue what they're dealing with. So I know that that is a major issue, and I know that's a major issue in a lot of the Aboriginal communities, as the minister would be aware that, you know, if you don't understand the situation then, you know, they're not going to give you their time.

Another situation would be in the rural areas. We've got, you know, the Kids Help Phone, the crisis line, et cetera—very few of these people are from the communities or the areas that the callers are calling in from. Some would indicate, you know, just, you know, give a call to the so-and-so office and then they set up an appointment, not realizing that this child lives seven miles from town, only way to get to town is by bus. If they go to Brandon or to Killarney or somewhere else, someone has to take them there. So that raises red flags to the family. So there has to be a better system in place in connecting with these children.

* (15:10)

As you had indicated earlier, you want to connect with these individuals. It's not going to be an easy task, but I think it's an important task because a lot of rural families with, you know, issues with—whether it be alcoholism, whether it be drug addiction, whether it be, you know, something in their family that's not healthy—often are isolated and have very few ways of getting support, including school programs that are now being off-loaded onto the school divisions from the government from Health, et cetera. Like, schools are now having to pick up the costs for having social workers or guidance counsellors or AFM to come into the schools and provide counselling. That used to be provided through AFM. It is now having to be paid for by the school divisions. The minister, former minister, is shaking his head. Yes, he and I debated this. I live in those communities. They are not getting those supports any more, and that is critical to those communities and those individuals. I'm not wrong, you know; we'll talk about it another time. But, you know, it's just not right when young people are looking for supports and just can't get them.

So I'm encouraged to hear that the minister is looking at that, and I would love to sit down with you and talk to you more about this because I feel that I could provide you with a bit of rural perspective and also connect you with some excellent, excellent people who are suffering from mental health issues in rural Manitoba who I think would be great resources for you, who have shared a number of stories, and, actually, a lot of the information that I have before me in how the system could be doing better. So I look forward to what you're—to hearing more about what you're doing and offer my support on that.

One area that's connected to Child and Youth and eating disorders—is eating disorders. This is an issue that has, you know, hit close to home. I have a niece that has worked her way through this and actually lives in rural Manitoba and had no way of getting in to have treatment, was accepted on a day program. But, if she didn't have the opportunity to come and stay with her aunt here in the city, there was no way that she was going to be able to get counselling and support. So I know that there's been a little bit of work done, but there still are significant wait times for eating disorder treatments, and I just want to know if the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has been discussing this. Are you committed to providing additional resources to this, because this is a death sentence if it's not dealt with right away?

So if the minister can give me some background on what the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has been discussing with regard to this issue.

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question. I just want to back up a little bit, and then I'll get to the current question. I do want to thank the member for the time that she took to ask questions, of course, and her concern and, of course, offering to sit down on—particularly work around youth suicide. I know that she's committed to that. I know all members of the House are very committed to that. I would be glad to sit down with the member, very, very interested, of course, to spend time with people that she knows on the ground. I think a big part of the work we have to do when it comes to mental health is, of course, engage more people, get more people involved. It's a big part of the work we do.

I do, at the same time, want to say for the record that I do want to give and acknowledge the incredible work of people who do work on the front lines of, at times, very difficult circumstances. Many of our—whether that be our education partners or our health professionals or our young people directly in communities throughout the province, I think that I do want to let the member know that I look forward to sitting down with her and discussing this further. And, of course, any time that I have the opportunity to talk to people with not only an interest but a level of expertise, I would gladly do it.

For her last question, I do want to say, as part of the broader plan, the collaboration that we're taking around mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, things like self-harm, eating disorders, of course, are part of that. There is a lot of information that we want to co-ordinate and bring together. When we do get into the details in terms of what has recently happened in terms of support, I know that the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) would certainly have more information—her officials would have more information at this point on things like eating disorders.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Chair, can I get a commitment from the minister then to push the government, the Minister of Health or the department to release provincial data on the prevalence of eating disorders among children and youth in Manitoba? I'm not only asking this for myself, but I'm asking this for others who are involved in that area. You know, holding data back that could provide insight into what is exactly happening within our own jurisdiction would be most useful, so I don't know if the minister can

comment on that or provide some insight into having those numbers made available.

Mr. Chief: Yes, I want to thank the member for the question.

That would certainly be the information—the data—and the officials that would have that would be through the Minister of Health, and that would be a question directed towards her.

Mrs. Rowat: I know that she is part of your Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, so I'm just raising this as an opportunity for you to lobby to ensure that Manitoba families have this information available to them.

We have a number of parents who are strong advocates for eating disorders. You know, often they are—their children have been the victims, and so whatever we can do to provide information and background to help them become stronger advocates, I think it would be most useful.

I understand that we need to be looking at reducing those wait times for the children and youth. Again, as I said earlier, it's a—if it's not treated, if it's not dealt with, it is a death sentence, you know, and I can only speak personally with regard to my niece; it's devastating. You know, you don't know what to do, and having somebody to speak to—somebody over the phone—is just not on. You know, that does not provide any assurances to the family at all. You know, it's—it is a little bit of a help, but not—doesn't do anything to help you sleep at night.

So I would encourage the minister to look at ways, again, to provide supports for either children to come in or, you know, help network. I know there are a number of organizations out there that help families who have different types of illnesses—have them stay in Winnipeg and receive these supports. There has to be something that can be looked at.

Another suggestion has been made where the government might look at providing funding for children and youth with these eating disorders to receive provincial funding to go to other provinces who don't have the wait-lists that we do in Manitoba. Or even there's, you know—and I'm not as familiar but I am familiar, at a distance, of the private treatment facilities in Manitoba but, again, that would be something that I would like the minister to look at as possibilities in treating. It's not any different than cancer or any other illness. The outcomes aren't positive, so I would encourage the government to look at what other options are there.

I'm going to continue to do that and, as I gather information, I'll be sharing it or asking questions with regard to that.

So if the minister could indicate to me: Has the Cabinet committee of Healthy Child looked at looking at other jurisdictions to see if they can provide supports?

* (15:20)

Mr. Chief: Once again, I want to thank the member for the question. I do, of course, very much appreciate her sharing. I think we all know someone who has been affected by mental health. I also have a niece who struggled with an eating disorder, and do understand how difficult that can be for them and the families. And I do want to let the member know that we are working once again on a broad plan to look at services, resources, finding ways to co-ordinate supports for young people and families on a wide range of issues when it comes to mental health. That would include eating disorders.

But we are also looking at our government in terms of how we can look at strategies and the things that we're doing to do that. I do want to let the member know that I would welcome her advice if she does uncover things at that level, and I would—it'd be great to sit down and get that information from her as well to include in this.

Mrs. Rowat: I'm just looking at the Estimates book, and it talks about research and evaluate innovative, effective solutions to issues affecting children, youth and families. And that just sort of brings me back to questions yesterday I asked—or of questions I asked yesterday with regard to assault reduction strategy, obesity, the issues with regard to the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

Obviously, these are issues that are researched at the Cabinet committee. Am I wrong or am I—these are topics and issues that are discussed at your committee?

Mr. Chief: Yes, so at the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet we do spend time, of course, talking about some of the things that the member said. We certainly have to try to find a focus on making sure that we're using that time to look at some of the issues and see if we can make the biggest difference. We often can talk from a other broad level.

One of the main focuses that often comes up that has been consistent is the idea of evidence-based. We do make sure that we're not only investing in data

and research and evaluation, but making sure that our partners, people like the good folks from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, come back and share their findings, share their information so there is a consistency around research and our investment into that and our programs.

Some of those programs, even when we have done research on a particular program that we know is making a big difference, we will still continue to look at how we can improve it. A great example of that would be something like the Prenatal Benefit and how that turns into the Healthy Baby program for community support. Certainly, the Families First home visiting program would be another program that we collect information on and continue to share that.

We talked yesterday, the member had a very good question on transition, on families that are living in a—in often—and I'll give a personal experience in terms of the MLA for Point Douglas—a family who lives in a northern community moves to Winnipeg. Are those supports making sure that we consistently look at how these trends are taken into account?

So I do want to be able to say that research and making sure that that information continues to be brought forward to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet is a big one. We do put focuses on things like early childhood development and looking at what we can do there. I was able to say earlier that we're spending our time now on prioritizing mental health promotion, mental illness prevention, looking at—nationally looking at the recent research that's coming out, trying to collaborate locally as well as broadly.

I do want to let the member know a great example of that is the work that got started under the leadership of Mark Chipman as part of the Project 11, which, of course, was through Rick Rypien. As we were doing work, the Winnipeg Jets foundation was also doing work and there was also a real big interest from the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents. So what we did is we tried to help co-ordinate some of these pieces to be able to do that, and as we continue to look to collaborate we are consistently looking at bringing in new partners.

The member would probably know the best way in which to bring in new partners, like I talked about yesterday with the McConnell foundation, is they want to make sure that their investments are going to make a difference. The best way for us to do that is

to continue to show people that the programs are making a difference and, just as importantly, to share gaps and—because there are people who want to use their resources, and many of them come from the private sector. They want to use their resources to not only put resources into programs that work, but also be and provide leadership to fill in those gaps. The best way for us to do that is to be able to show them information and data and be able to bring them in.

I'm quite proud of the work that the Children and Youth Opportunities has done with collaboration of current partners like our health professionals and our—people in our education system, but also the incredible leadership we're starting to see from people like Dave Angus and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, people like Mark Chipman who—you know, who is deeply committed to this issue around mental illness prevention. People like Gregg Hanson, who is not only committed to children and young people but very committed to reaching our most vulnerable families. People like Art Mauro, who is the founder of the Business Council. Very interested, he talks in very high regard of a gentleman by the name of Fraser Mustard who became sort of the champion for early childhood development. Art Mauro is someone who is very interested to make a financial contribution, but, just as importantly, a time contribution to making sure that the investments he makes don't necessarily need to be innovative, but he would like—if they are innovative, that's great, but he wants to make investments of his time and his energy and his resources that are going to make the biggest difference.

* (15:30)

We as a government are proud of the work that we're doing through Healthy Child Manitoba, but we're also incredibly proud and understand how important it is to bring in folks that are experts in the field around evidence-based programs. They make our on-the-ground programs better. We do think it's important to share those findings.

I do want to say for the member, one of the first things I was able to do was to travel the province with Dr. Rob Santos, who provided findings. Those findings were—he shared through the parent-child coalitions, where people got to come together.

I was always able to sit with, often, members opposite, the Conservative Party, and although we may not agree on everything, I can tell you that we certainly do agree a lot when it comes to the

well-being of children, and it's important to make sure to provide as much information as we possibly can to each other when it comes to these things. I know the member, as she said, also has a very strong network, a very deep commitment to these things, and I want to—I will always want to be somebody who not only wants to get that information but also wants to share that information, and that's what we'll continue to commit to doing.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you for those comments, Mr. Minister.

I just want to go back on the salt reduction strategy. And when you were speaking to my previous question, there was a discussion with regard to all provinces signing off on a national strategy but the federal government did not support that or did not move forward on that. You know, it's coming from the ministers opposite here, so I'm assuming that this was obviously a discussion at Cabinet.

So can the minister indicate to me that there was a salt reduction strategy process in place and that it was halted or destroyed—or stopped because of some decision from another body?

Mr. Chief: Once again, when it comes to sodium, salt reduction, the lead minister on that would be from Health and Healthy Living.

Mrs. Rowat: Well, this—comments were coming from the former minister of Health, who had indicated that the strategy had been signed off on by all provinces and then was halted or stopped because of the federal government inability to agree to the strategy.

So I'm just wanting to know if this current minister would indicate to me whether the Cabinet committee on healthy living had a discussion about how that commitment to sodium reduction strategy, being approved by all provinces, had died at the tables of the provinces.

Mr. Chief: Yes, once again, I want to make sure that I'm providing as much information as I possibly can from the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities. I do know that the lead minister on that would be from Healthy Living, and I'm sure if the member directed her question to that minister she would get the appropriate response.

Mrs. Rowat: Just wanting to go back to education and early school dropout rates, and with that comes a number of other issues. If a child does not complete

high school, it adds a number of challenges to a young person's life.

I'm wanting to know if the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet have discussed the rates. I know that, at different times, the rates are quoted either including Aboriginal or First Nation children and at other times not including those numbers. I would like to have a discussion that would include those numbers, because those are Manitoba children and I think it's important that we as a province look at every Manitoba child and the challenges they face.

Can you just give me an overview of what the Cabinet committee has been speaking to and how you're addressing those needs?

Mr. Chief: I thank the member for the questions. I do want to let the member know that at the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet often, of course, academic achievement does come up in a variety of ways in departments. I think in terms of data and numbers, in terms the question she asked, I do think that that would be something that the Minister of Education would—that question would be directed to the Minister of Education.

With that said, though, one of things that—some of the things that we have done in the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities is we have—we deeply believe in making sure that young people not only get a sense of belonging and their skills and talents are being utilized through curriculum and—as they're sitting in classrooms and learning in classrooms, but we're also supporting young people outside of classrooms. And so we want to make sure that young people do have opportunities before school, after school, weekends, summers. Part of our commitment has always been making sure that young people's learning continues to happen throughout an entire day and throughout an entire year.

We have been putting a lot of emphasis on making sure the programs that we do deliver, of course, are in partnership—many times often in partnership with education, with schools. We believe in—that a big part of that is that it's going to help us build the skills and talents of all young people. We put a lot of emphasis on mentorship and on role modelling, on supervision, and we certainly put a lot of time into creating a structure to be able to do that.

I do want to let the member know that when you create a program like that, that isn't actually an evidence based program. That's when it's actually

going to work best. It's not just simply opening up a gymnasium, but you've got to make sure that it's building skills and that you're actually creating a structure and there is good mentorship.

A lot of what we try to do, and we're seeing this now with the partnership with True North Sports and Entertainment is—and many other partners like Red River College and others—is the After School Leaders program. We want to make sure that young people are involved in programs after school that connects to their learning, their academic learning, but also exposes them to the kind of jobs that they might want to have in the future. That has been a very innovative program making a big difference to young people.

We also know that when it comes to mentorship, they're—young people start to get a really sense of what they want to be when they get older in terms of their first job when they actually have their very first job, and that's why we see programs like our Green Team programs. That's why it's important that we work with non-profit and community organizations to make sure that young people all throughout the province are getting that opportunity to get the—that very first job because that's when they start to really recognize that—they start to recognize that their skills are being built and they start to realize—I know for myself, one of the things that helped me in my very first job was I got a job as a landscaper, and the No. 1 thing I learned was I don't ever want to do landscaping for a living. Yes, so my brother was a landscaper and so it allowed me to do that.

So we put a lot of emphasis on trying to understand that if we want young people to do good academically, we also have to extend their school day to be able to do that. I do want to let the member know that when you do that, when you do extend that school day what often happens is for some of our most vulnerable young people, a big part of improving graduation rates is engaging parents in their child's educational career. For a lot of people that seems like something logical that happens. But, for a lot of parents, particularly parents that have connections to things like residential schools, that is not always the case.

* (15:40)

So we want to try to find ways in which we can engage parents. One of the best ways to do that is when you connect after school programs, allow parents to come and celebrate successes not only in the classroom but outside of the classroom, engages

them in their child's educational career, which we all know when young people are engaging through curriculum, when there's an extension of their school day, particularly for unique programs that remove barriers that are culturally sensitive we're in a very—we live in a very diverse province, in a diverse country that take into account those things—and we engage parents, chances of young people, particularly young people that come from backgrounds of poverty, young people who are vulnerable not only do the academics go up, but their chances of graduation increase as well as their opportunities to access post-secondary.

Mrs. Rowat: By the minister putting on the record that he wouldn't want to be a landscaper, my daughter wants to be a landscaper. So I'm not going to show her that in Hansard. She's going to school to be a landscape architect. So I'm not going to—*[interjection]* She's out of the greenhouse now, so I don't think it would be much different. But anyways I appreciate the comments and I appreciate the perspectives that he's shared.

Can you share with me, if you have the statistics or the stats on graduation rates for all Manitoba children, now that would be on reserve and off reserve over the last few years? It would be interesting in reading to see how we're going forward with regard to this very serious issue.

Mr. Chief: Yes, when it comes to graduation rates or the data, that would be, once again, the question for the Minister of Education.

Mrs. Rowat: With regard to the area of poverty, we have the highest number of children using food banks and I know that that's a tie in to education and, you know, a number of other issues. And, when we have a significant number of young children using food banks, it raises a number of concerns. It raises concerns with regard to, you know, school participation. It talks about the issue of depression, family dynamics and that type of thing.

What have been the discussions with healthy child of Cabinet with regard to this? I know that Winnipeg Harvest and the Social Planning Council of Manitoba have been strong advocates of this province doing more with regard to poverty levels, especially with young children. Can you give me your perspective on that?

Mr. Chief: Where we—the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet has spent time recently in terms of poverty, there has been a lot of focus on early

childhood development. We wanted to make sure that we're doing a couple of things and that—looking at our programs and finding ways in which to make sure they're reaching, of course, our most vulnerable families, and that, of course, would include families that are poor. We also wanted to create structures for people who want to participate in that, to get involved and being able to support that. Much of evidence that we see—much of the research and data, of course, we know when you make investments into early childhood development that's when it's going to make the biggest impact on a child.

And so there has been a lot of focus on how do we draw and not only engage more people but draw in more people to participate in that. And that's why I gladly say, and I do say for the record, that people like Gregg Hanson, people like Dave Angus, people like Nora Chipman, people like Art Mauro and many others have taken a very keen interest in the area of early childhood development with a focus on our most vulnerable families. We, of course, do recognize how the difference the Prenatal Benefit makes in someone's life for not only the mother or future mother but, of course, for that child. We know when that child's born, there is—they're born with a healthy baby weight. We know there's less preterm births. We also know that increases breastfeeding which, of course, has all sorts of positive health outcomes for the baby. And so, you know, we take into account of how do we make sure that we're going to reach more mothers with our Prenatal Benefit.

We understand that it doesn't stop there, that for many families we want to have our Healthy Baby community support program where we're providing improved access, and I know the member did talk about the need for a network of support. Well, that's exactly what the Healthy Baby program provides. It engages people to make sure that families are getting their support.

When we were able to talk to moms, as I know we were talking yesterday about the PIIPC program and the incredible work that they're doing, it's not only in terms of looking at the research, it really, really engaging families and giving them that opportunity. There was a mom who was a single mom with four children living—born into poverty. She didn't have—she didn't get the prenatal care for three of her children but did get prenatal care for her fourth child. And I tell you, it made a huge difference.

Things like our parent-child coalitions where we bring together people—I was able to sit, actually, with the member from Lac du Bonnet—one of the first things I was able to do was to sit with the member from Lac du Bonnet, hear from Dr. Rob Santos, share vital information to members of his region. We were able to share thoughts and ideas, and I wasn't surprised that we actually agreed on a lot of not only the findings, but a path forward in how we support families. Similarly, I was able to be with the member from Portage la Prairie through parent-child coalitions and share this information. These—this is what's drawing in so many new partners.

But we know, and without question, that we're going to have to work every single day to find innovative approaches, to engage as many people as we possibly can to make sure their services and resources are reaching the families who need it the most. We know how vital that is for parents; we know how vital that is for children and young people. And we'll, as a department and as a Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, continue and commit to working at doing that every day.

Mrs. Rowat: I agree, and I think we all agree that collaboration and partnerships at all levels, private and public sector, are important if we're going to move Children and Youth Opportunities and Family Services issues in a positive way moving forward, we're going to need all the help we can get going forward.

I want to ask some questions with regard to child care. Currently, I guess, from what I understand, there are enough licensed spaces to accommodate only 16.6 per cent of children zero to 12 years of age. So that's a huge gap in what Manitoba is facing with regard to child care.

I'm looking at Estimates numbers from 2011 and also—2011 to 2012 and 2012 to 2013. There's actually been a shortfall. The Estimates were quite a bit higher than actually what was spent in those years, 9.7 per cent difference and 4.8 per cent—or difference, I guess, not points, but \$9 million less and \$4 million, almost \$5 million less in both of those years. So that's about \$14 million that wasn't spent in child care and early learning. So I'm just wanting to have the minister comment on that. Is that something that is discussed at the committee of Cabinet?

*(15:50)

You know, why would dollars that are estimated to be included in Early Learning and Child Care be taken out of that department when we have such a demand for child care and respite supports for parents who are at risk? Can you indicate to me why there would be such a discrepancy or such a decrease in number of dollars actually going into those departments when, obviously, there's such a need?

Mr. Chief: That would be a question for the minister responsible for child care, which would be the minister for Child and Family Services. She would have that in her departmental Estimates and probably could provide an answer as to—for the member.

Mrs. Rowat: I just think it would be of interest to the minister. We've had two days of Estimates and speaking to the needs of early childhood and the needs to implement and ensure programs are there for Baby First and all these young children's programs five years and under, and when you talk about the significance of *[inaudible]* And I know that you're committed to those areas, but when you see an Estimate commitment of a hundred and thirty-eight, two seventeen, and only a hundred and twenty-eight, four ninety-four is spent, that's almost 10 thousand—you know, \$10 million less being provided for—and no programs and opportunities that you would like to be seeing spent in your area.

So, you know, I'm not blaming you. I'm just, you know, questioning the commitment of government when they put these dollars out there as Estimates, where we sit and discuss them and agree to the need. But, when it comes down to the expenditures or spending in that area, that money's going somewhere else. And so I would encourage the minister who's the chair of that committee and the deputy minister as chair of the deputy component of that, fight like hell for this because, you know, this is an area that is our future.

And, you know, you and I have had some really good discussions here over the last few days, and when I see these numbers, I'm disheartened. Somebody's not fighting the right battles here and I'm very disappointed when we see a negative on the side of expenditures for children when, you know, we've just went over a tonne of very serious issues facing our young people.

So I'm going to close on that, but I want to say that continue the fight and, you know, and I'm committed to doing that with you. And, you know, there's some very serious concerns I have if dollars

that are allocated for children are not being spent on children, then I'm very disappointed.

But, anyways, on that, I thank the minister and his staff for all that you've done and providing answers for me, and I look forward to the continued dialogue with the department.

Mr. Chief: I'd like to thank our officials for their support, but I also want to thank the member for her questions. I also do—I do want to say for the record I do look forward to working with the member, of course, in co-operation to—for the betterment, of course, all children, youth and families in Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you everyone for your comments, and as this as the last department that will be heard in this section of the Committee of Supply, let me also put on the record my thanks to all the departmental staff and the ministers and the critics who've come forward. And I think we all owe a special note of thanks to the poor folks in Hansard who had to record and transcribe and, in some cases, I'm sure, translate what was said, whether it was, you know, history in the making or not. But thanks very much to everyone for making this possible.

We will now move to consideration of the resolutions for this department.

Resolution 20.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$30,665,000 for Children and Youth Opportunities, Healthy Child Manitoba Office, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 20.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,470,000 for Children and Youth Opportunities, Youth Opportunities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

This brings us to the ever-exciting consideration of Estimates, 20.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 20.1.

We regrettably have to bid farewell to the hard-working staff for consideration of this final item.

The floor is open for questions, if any. Seeing no questions, here's the resolution.

Resolution 20.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,112,000, for Children and Youth Opportunities, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities.

It also concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255.

Thanks to everyone once again. Get out of here. Committee rise.

FAMILY SERVICES

* (14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Good afternoon. This section of the Committee of Supply will continue with the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services.

Would the minister's staff and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I'd like ask a few questions on procedure, I think, from the minister.

Come to my attention that when someone is on income assistance and they reach the age of 60, if they have any eligibility for Canada pension, they are required to file early for that. Is that the correct interpretation of that?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): I'd like to provide to the member—today he had asked—I think it was him that had asked for a list of the funded agencies within the Community Living division, and I have this for him now.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Family Services, to table the document?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes, please.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, for the clarification of the record, the minister has supplied this list and is just giving it to the critic, not tabling the document. So that's acceptable to all of us concerned.

And who has the floor here?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We—there are a number of policies that direct our services when it comes to Employment and Income Assistance. I want to make sure that I'm giving the member the correct information, so we're just clarifying what you've asked, and we'll let you know by the end of this process.

Mr. Wishart: I would like to acknowledge receipt of the list at my request, so that it's on the record and the minister's happy regarding that and I'm happy regarding that.

I want to touch a little bit further on the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry and the results from that. And one of the recommendations that is very far-reaching is suggestions of change to the Office of the Children's Advocate to expand its mandate and change its method of reporting. And I just wondered if the minister would care to make comment on where her department is on that and if she sees that as something that they would change the legislation on in the near future.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That recommendation has been referred to the implementation planning team to review and to work with the community stakeholders with the Aboriginal organizations, the authorities and the agencies as well as with the Children's Advocate's office itself. There's some in-depth investigation or evaluation that has to go on around this process that was presented in the recommendation. We know that this is a very similar model that was implemented in BC, and we know that there are some learnings that we will be able to obtain from them and be able to decide on and how we proceed with that particular recommendation that's been provided.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that.

So, basically, any recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry are going to be referred to that. Does that also include the long-standing recommendation that movement be made on a new system of keeping track of children? Is that also part of that recommendation, or is that something that is ongoing? Because that recommendation has been around since about 2005.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I—the recommendation specific to the technology services for our Family Services agencies and authorities, it has—this is a recommendation that hasn't been referred to the implementation team. I think that there will be conversations that will happen with the authorities and the leadership councils specific to this

recommendation. But the department has been working for a number of years on tendering a proposal looking for specific software and we've been successful in having a relationship now with the business that is now at the point where—I think in this budget year we have \$5 million that has been—that will be applied to going forward with our investigation and scoping the project of the new technology system.

We believe, as Commissioner Hughes does, that it is a vital part of the service that we provide of knowing what services are being provided to families, knowing where the children are, and will help us do better planning as well as protection for Manitoba children.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you, Madam Minister. So could the minister please give us some idea, then—progress is being made, obviously. When does she anticipate that all authorities and all agencies will have access and be in use of a unified system?

I know children are not numbers, they're a very individual thing, but keeping track of them is a very important part and has been part of the recommendations from the earlier Phoenix Sinclair inquiries and is a significant portion of the one that's out there now, the latest one. So can you put a clearer timeline around this?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'd just like to clarify for the committee that there is a system that is being used by the agencies and by the authorities across the province. We call it CFIS, and this has been providing service for us. We know that it's time to upgrade, and that's why we made a commitment to go forward with a new technology system.

I'm being told that, through the—following the scoping practice and implementation, that it will take us between three and four years for full implementation across the province.

Mr. Wishart: Well, thank you for that answer. Three and four years from the first—from now, and the first recommendation was in 2006, so we're looking at a total of about 15 years from initial recommendations with a—to where we'll get to the final result. Is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: It is important that, as we proceed with the implementation and scoping as well as the—of these technologies that we are doing our due diligence. I don't need to tell the member how quickly technology is changing across the province or across the country and the world, so we need to

make sure that we're doing that. We need to do our due diligence. We need to go through specific processes. We want to ensure that at the end of that process that we have a system that will provide us with the information that we need to ensure that children are protected, as well as having commitment from all of our partners that they will embrace this new technology.

So there is a—multiple strategies that have to go into place. There is a strategy of choosing the appropriate technology and the software. There's a strategy of continuing to collaborate with our partners. And then the most important part will be the training of all of our staff and the implementation of the full system.

We are a very large organization in child welfare and family services, and we need to make sure that as we proceed that we do it in a manner that we are getting the best service for the families across the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Wishart: Thank the minister for that answer.

I also wanted to go back on questions that my colleague asked yesterday regarding the hiring process for Southern First Nations Network of Care. And I understand from the discussion yesterday that a so-called headhunter or firm was hired to do the process of—and advertise and interview for the position of chief executive officer for that agency. Is the minister satisfied that the process was followed?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I believe and I strongly support the work that the administrator did with his working group, how they tendered the contract and did the interviews.

I don't know the specifics of every step that happened. This is a human resource issue, so I cannot evaluate whether it was perfect or not.

* (15:00)

I can tell you, at the end of the day, that we are excited that the choice that the administrator made to hire a CEO that has decades—years of experience and is respected around the community.

We also have board members, advisory board members, who also have endorsed her placement as a CEO. And Wayne Helgason has described her as—she has solid experience and she has education that is appropriate for the position. That is an endorsement that I think is really important.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister and I thank Chairman here.

But, as the—there was an appeal of the process that was addressed to the minister. I think it's important that we're clear that she is satisfied with the process. She believes that the process that should have been followed in this, particularly when she hired an outside firm to provide a recommendation, is the process that was, in fact, followed. Is she satisfied that that's the case?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: This, again, as I mentioned yesterday, is a human resource issue. I wasn't involved in the process that was identified.

And I have to say that—I'm sure the member knows—that this—as I said, a decision was made by the administrator, and that there really—there is no such thing as an appeal on a—when an organization makes a choice of who the employee is that they want. So I'm not sure about calling this letter appeal. I think it was—I did receive the letter. We have forwarded it to the administrator, and asked for him to respond to the individual, and provide her with the information, if possible. Because, again, this is a human resource issue, and confidentiality must be respected and followed. So I'm—this—like, as I said, the letter's been referred to the administrator for a response.

Mr. Wishart: So, just to be clear, the offer of the position was then made by the administrator? It didn't come from the deputy's desk or the minister's desk?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The offer was made by the administrator.

Mr. Wishart: But the approval of the individual, at one point, was on the deputy's desk? Is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I said, that this is a human resource issue, that there's confidentiality around it.

But, as the member knows, that there's an administrator that is in place at the southern authority, and the administrator reports to the minister or to the deputy minister. That is their responsibility. There was—the offer was made by the administrator that was—the conversation—there was a collaboration between the deputy minister and the administrator.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that answer.

So, just to be clear, the board, at that point was not part of the decision-making process. It was the

administrator who, at that point, was working for the department. Is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The administrator for the southern authority is currently the CEO, as well as the board.

Mr. Wishart: So is he a board employee or is he your employee?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I believe his salary is paid by the southern authority. No. Oh, just a second. Whoa. I'd like to correct the record. One moment, please.

I apologize. I need to correct the record that his salary—there's a debate about his salary.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I apologize for the confusion.

Under the legislation it does say that if an administrator is placed that it is the authority's responsibility to pay that salary. But, in this case, the department has still been paying the salary for the administrator.

Mr. Wishart: Well, thank you for that clarification. And I just want to clarify one other statement you made a little earlier, and maybe I misheard, but I thought you said that he—as CEO he was also the board chair. Is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That's correct. You had heard me right that the administrator is the CEO and the board.

Mr. Wishart: The entire board then? He's effectively the entire board?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes.

Mr. Wishart: The administrator then made the decision entirely on his own, but yet a few moments ago you said that the person hired got recommendations from the board. There is no such board.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That would be the advisory board that was established.

Mr. Wishart: Not the formal board, just a temporary advisory board to the administrator, is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That's correct. It's an advisory board that has no authorities or powers.

Mr. Wishart: Well, clearly, there has been some—at least miscommunications in this process. I would hope that the minister would turn her full attention to making sure that due process was followed. And it is concerning when we hear that third parties are hired to give recommendations, and yet it appears those

recommendations were not followed. I recognize that this is an HR issue and, certainly, there's a limit to what can be discussed in a public situation like this, but making sure that due process was followed, especially when you go to the trouble of hiring a third party to give you a recommendation, it's certainly something that I would like to see the minister take care to examine again, and I would encourage her to do that.

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable member for Portage la Prairie, I didn't hear a question there. You still have the floor.

Mr. Wishart: Yes, and just to finish out the question, so the person that was hired was recommended by the firm Higgins International?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I apologize. Could you please repeat the question?

Mr. Wishart: The person eventually hired for the position was, in fact, then recommended by the firm that was hired to do the job search, Higgins International?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: So I'm—again, we're getting into the human resource part of this question, and I think that I can take this under advisement and if I can share that information I will with you.

Mr. Wishart: Well, I thank the minister for that, and just another final question in regards to this. Higgins International provided a recommendation. Who was that recommendation provided to?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: From what I'm being told is—I have not been involved in a hiring process such as this. But what happens when you hire Higgins International or a like agency to do work, what they do is they will screen the applicant that they find, that they asked to apply, maybe that apply for the job, and then they provide a short list. In this case that information was, I assume, provided to the administrator.

* (15:10)

Mr. Wishart: So returning, I guess, to what we established before, it was the administrator and the administrator alone that made the choice as to who to make the offer to. Is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The offer was provided to the new CEO from the administrator.

Mr. Wishart: And the administrator is in fact an employee of the minister, that's correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: He's an employee of the Department of Family Services. His position was assistant deputy minister for Community Living, and when we appointed him as administrator, that—we used an order-in-council to do that. The order-in-council rescinded his assistant deputy minister position and then he was appointed as the administrator for the southern authority in October.

Mr. Wishart: So, once the administrator, the new CEO, is in position, the current administrator will be going back to his position as deputy minister, is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The strategy that has been put in place is there's still some work that needs to happen within the southern authority and there needs to be a new board put in place, and so there's a process that has to happen. When the new CEO assumes her responsibilities, the administrator will stay on as part of a transition plan to support her but will also assume the responsibility of board chair. But, as I stated yesterday, it is in all of our best interests that the southern authority become whole again and independent, and that's what our goal is and that's where we're striving to be.

Mr. Wishart: So he will stay on as board chair—the new administrator will be or the current administrator will stay on as board chair. And the minister somewhat anticipated my question, and I would like to know what the process will be to re-establish a board.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Just to clarify for the record, I know there's all these titles, and it's very confusing. The person that's been hired, her title will be CEO. The administrator will continue to have the title of administrator, and his responsibilities will, after she starts her employment, his responsibilities that he will assume will be a board chair. There was, I think, and I think it was around—it was in the fall, I think it was around November that the administrator went to the AMC assembly and provided to the chiefs that were present a proposal for the recruitment of new board members. We are—that proposal has been shared with them. We have not had conversations about if they support this proposal. We're waiting to hear about that before we proceed.

So, as soon as we are able to have a functioning board in place, then we will be able to hand over all of the operations of the southern authority back to the board and to the CEO. And, as I've stated, the—we are working on that goal every day to make sure that that can happen.

Mr. Wishart: So how long would she anticipate it would take to re-establish the board for southern authority? If her proposal has, in fact, already gone, did it have any approximate timelines?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'm aware of our time is quite brief here, so I'm going to get a note that's going to outline all of the specifics.

But just to clarify to the record, the legislation states that AMC can appoint the board members, and there is an interest with the leadership at AMC as well with the Southern Chiefs' Organization that the Southern Chiefs' Organization assumes the responsibility to appoint the board. So there is a plan that's being put into place and the administrator had to go to the AMC so they could accept the legislative changes. The deputy minister now is working with the Southern Chiefs' Organization, and they are looking at recruitment criteria and they will be advertising and they also need to be developing new bylaws as well.

But we are—we're—we are not—it's very difficult for us to give the member a timeline. So I'm sorry that we're not able to do that, but we are working towards the goal of the southern authority having a functioning board as soon as possible.

Mr. Wishart: I'll thank the minister for that. Just to refresh my memory, when exactly was the southern authority board dismissed? It's a little while ago, I know you put your deputy minister in temporarily. Can you put a date around that just for my memory?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: November 22nd, 2012, was when the order of administration was made under The Child and Family Services Act.

Mr. Wishart: I'll look forward to hearing more details on that probably in the next set of Estimates, I guess, likely before we get this completely resolved. And I recognize it takes time to put words back in place, but, certainly, we would want to move as quickly as possible on that.

I did want to go back and I had asked a question a little earlier about Canada Pension, you have the answer for that? Yes.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: You were correct that there is a policy that when individuals are in EIA that we require them to access all available benefits and that also would include all federal benefits. So it—at the age of 60 they are asked to apply.

Mr. Wishart: And I think I heard that the answer in that all benefits were used. Does that mean all

private pension programs as well, are they required to file early on them too?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes, the regulation states that you must apply for any benefits that you are eligible for.

Mr. Wishart: Now, I know that anyone who's on income assistance has a \$200 maximum income from other sources if they're working before penalties are put in place. Does that apply to Canada Pension as well?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: When the member makes reference to the \$200 maximum, that's the work incentive program that we have and so that's earned income. So it's—you can't compare the two of them.

Mr. Wishart: So there is no sleeve for pension income, but there is for employment income?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That's what I believe right now, but we will confirm that for you.

* (15:20)

Mr. Wishart: Just to make sure that we're—we get all of the information that we required here. Are there any other types of pension or tax credits that are not exempt from the \$200-income sleeve, the incentive program?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We do not have—there are some exemptions that do exist but, Mr. Chair, we're going to have to provide that list to you, to the member through you.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that in advance, and I will certainly be interested. There were a couple in specific I wanted to be clear about, disability tax credits would be one, child tax credits would be another. So, certainly, if you would look at how those are treated in comparison to Canada Pension Plan benefits, we want to be sure that these things are being treated in an equitable fashion. And I recognize they are different sources of income as compared to employment income, but pension income is at least partially employment income because contributions were made on the part of the individual. So are these things being treated equitably?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I've stated earlier to the member that we'll be—provide that information to him at a later date. But I also—you have to be very aware that these benefits and tax credits have different purposes and are targeted to different groups. So that's why there's maybe differences in what's applied to them as well as, as you use that word, the sleeve.

Mr. Wishart: Well, and I appreciate that and I wanted to share my concern with the minister to make sure when she's looking into this that it's fully understood, because applying early for Canada Pension Plan or private pension benefits greatly impacts the amount of total dollars that are available through those programs to the individual. So the requirement to file early on those I think is actually a fairly significant penalty to the individual, so I want to be sure that they are being treated equitably as to other sources of income. So I would share that with the minister and when she reviews this I would appreciate it if she would make an effort to address that in her comments.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie still has the floor.

Mr. Wishart: I'll move on from that. One of the problems we often run into in rural constituencies is the shortage of child care, particularly in small communities. And I guess I'm looking for some advice from the minister on this. We often find small community groups that are looking for opportunities to establish daycare, child care, kindergarten, in any combination in small communities. And sometimes they have facilities available to them. I guess I'm looking for a little direction as to how the minister would suggest to groups like this that they best approach this problem to make sure that they can get the services in community and that the cost is at least as manageable as possible for as many as people as possible.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'd just—I'd like to clarify with the member his question. You were talking about child-care spaces, but then you were also—I think you mentioned kindergarten and I was curious if you meant kindergarten or if you meant nursery schools.

An Honourable Member: Nursery schools.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Okay. So nursery schools it is. I know that the member is very familiar about the resources that are applied across the province by some phenomenal staff that work in our Early Learning and Child Care branch, and they are available in all areas of the province and are prepared to provide information. There's various—there's a lot of specific initiatives that we've done around funding more child-care spaces. I think we have now 28,000 funded child-care spaces across the province. We have made capital builds in every part of this—of the province. We've also started a new policy that if a new school is being built, that attached to that new school will be a child-care facility, which is

extremely positive as he would know. And, as well, as we're doing that, making sure that we're providing good quality licensed child care for Manitoba families, we also are working closely with stakeholders and looking at the issue of wages and retention of staff with—Manitoba Child Care Association is an example, but also meeting with directors and ECEs themselves.

Mr. Wishart: Well, I certainly appreciate that. I know it's a challenge, particularly in small rural communities. And it is almost a requirement that we establish some type of child-care nursery school, whatever combination in the community to attract people to stay in that community and provide them with some options that are local, rather than having to run the children perhaps in another direction for child care from where the person works. So, certainly, there is a need for more, and I would encourage the minister to do more in this area.

One of the other problems that we have noticed, and I'd like to have an open discussion here with the minister, is there are many people with mental challenges in the service providers, as the minister has supplied me with a list, and I haven't had a chance to look at that. But what we're finding now is that as these people, many of whom who went back to the community, oh, 25 or 30 years ago, in a Welcome Home-type—Welcome Home process, are now reaching a point that some of the facilities, physical facilities, are not well-adapted to them as they lose mobility issues. And really, there were a few options, once they're physically unable to be resident in these homes, and most of them were really just converted houses that were—we used for these not-for-profit agencies.

Where's the minister expect the people that age out of those facilities to be moved to?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add a bit. He—when the member first started speaking, he was continuing to talk about the need of child care across the province, and specifically in smaller locations or small towns in the rural area, and I'm assuming he'd include that in the northern area as well. So we have an initiative that is specific to smaller communities, that provides them with options and support about providing child care.

And I'd just like to put on the record, you know, we've—we have centres that have opened in Carman, Emerson, Headingley, Holland, Manitou, Winker, Ile des Chênes, Niverville, St. Adolphe, Ste. Anne, Vita, Steinbach, Eriksdale, Stonewall, Gillam, The Pas,

Thompson, Dauphin, Brandon, Hamiota, Melita, Minnedosa, Pierson, Russell.

So there are a number of examples. And that was just a smattering of what we've been able to accomplish with our community partners. And I have to really strongly suggest that each of these centres that get built get built because of the volunteerism and the passion of communities. There is examples across the province where municipalities have stepped up to the plate and have offered support because we all know the value of good quality child care, not only for our children, but our—for our families and for our economy because of the employment that it provides.

Now, back to the question that the member had posed, is, yes, there were a number of individuals that were transitioned from institutional care to community care. And they have been thriving in the community, and I've had opportunity to meet individuals within one week of moving from MDC to moving to Selkirk and saw the happiness in this gentleman's face. He was placed at MDC at the age of two and he is now 45. And this will be—I think he'll be celebrating probably six weeks in the community. And, when I say celebrate, he is very excited. He—when I asked him about what was the biggest difference was, you know, he's helping make menus, he's going shopping, he has employment opportunities. But I have to also stress that he has a community at MDC and a family there. And he talks—his name is Kerry and he talks about the joy of being in the community in the—and the opportunities he has, but he also talks about the care that he was provided over the last 43 years and the support that he was given and the opportunities that happen at MDC. We know that they are extremely skilled in the work that they do and the services that they provide.

* (15:30)

Now, we know that people with disabilities are aging and that we need to be able to provide services for them. We have—our not-for-profit organizations are doing exceptional work. We also have partnerships within Health and that if there are medical needs or individuals are medically compromised that they're able to provide them with services as well.

So there is not just one solution. I think that it has to be a combination of things in always making sure that the needs of the individual are at the centre, that they are going to be provided with good quality care.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that. I know she shares my concern that there is a process ongoing here, and I certainly recognize that there are many individuals that are—do much better, frankly, outside of the institutional setting and back in the community as much as possible, and that process is ongoing.

That said, that I'm very familiar with the services provided by MDC. It is exceptional, and their extra activities are such that they have people on staff there to do arts and crafts and recreation and some learning processes to help people function in the community. And, in fact, there's been an implementation—and I'm afraid I can't remember the acronym for it, but—where they go around to the group homes and pick up people on a daily basis, bring them back to the extra services in the—that are available to MDC, and it has been hugely successful and very popular with those individuals.

But I would—we had a specific incident in a personal-care home in Portage, and I'm not sure whether the minister is even aware of this, because it really wasn't in her jurisdiction because once they go in the personal-care home, then they're under the care of Health. But people with—it was an individual with a psychiatric issue and she was no longer able to function in the group home situation. She was wheelchair-bound. So she was put in the personal-care home and everything went very well for a number of months, and then she had an incident, an episode, whatever you want to call it, and became quite violent. And she was still in fairly good physical condition; many people in personal-care homes these days are extremely fragile, and so there was quite a bit of concern about the safety of other individuals.

It was resolved short-term by bringing in security 24-7, which doesn't come cheap and certainly doesn't put the rest of the residents at ease in any way. But eventually we were able to find placement for her in a geriatric unit at Selkirk which exists for that purpose, but it is only a 12-person unit. And we are aware of several more people in the community like this that have been transitioning sort of back and forth between group homes and short-term respite and a personal-care home.

And I've had some discussion with the union and some of the management at MDC, and though they don't currently have facilities, they certainly have the expertise to help with this process because they have not only nurses on staff but psychologists and psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses, which is one

thing in particular that personal-care homes do not have available to them.

So I would like to encourage the minister to look at the option of redeveloping MDC, not as it was but as a place that provides an option for those that age out of personal—or out of a group home situation and require more of a personal-care home scenario but with some psychiatric capability on site.

So I guess I'd like to have a little discussion with the minister, if I might, on what—whether she sees that as a feasible option and whether there's somewhere we can go in terms of researching and developing this option.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I—as I think I mentioned yesterday, the tour that I had at MDC and the staff that I was able to meet as well as the residents and how I was touched by the care and love that they and the nurturing that they provide for the residents in their care, I think—the member will know that there is approximately—I think it's 2,009 residents now that are living at—in the community of MDC. And he also will be aware, as he is a good community member, that there has been ongoing debates and conversations about what should happen to that property, and I can assure you that they continue and that there are—we have a commitment to move 49 individuals from MDC based on the Human Rights Commission's ruling. And we are diligently working on that with the support of MDC and all of our non-profit organizations, and we are having some successes.

As we are talking about how do we proceed, what's the future of MDC? There are lots of conversations that are happening with the employee group, lots of conversations that are happening with families as well because they're part of the planning, and with the residents themselves. Because what I learnt while I was on my tour is that MDC, as it's an institution—you can't deny that it's not an institution—but it's also a community, a community that has provided care to hundreds if not thousands, probably thousands of individuals over the years. And there are some individuals that I know that were transitioned to the community, but the community placement didn't work for them, and they gladly came back. And I'm—maybe the member, when he did his tour he met George. And George is a person that you—George is a person that touched me on a number of occasions when I had my four-hour visit with the folks at MDC. He was there to tell me what was for lunch. He was there to tell me it was time to

go home and he was there to greet me as I left. And I often, when I think about what does transition mean, I think of George. George has the safety of a community where he can walk from his—I'll assume he lives in the cottage—from his cottage around the facility where he knows everyone. He reminds everybody and tells everybody about what's on the menu. And I think that we need to make sure that when we make those decisions about where individuals are going to live that they still maintain a quality of life. And I know that the advocates will often tell me that that quality of life exists in the community and we need to strive for that.

We are committed to moving the—we have 49 people that we've been asked to move, and we have worked on that. I think it's 23 we successfully have transitioned to the community. There are another 26 individuals that are on the list and there are another 17 who we are just in the process now of planning for.

It takes a lot of co-ordination and collaboration to make this—to be effective, and so we are working with the non-profit organizations in the region to make sure that we are having some success.

Mr. Wishart: I would thank the minister for that discussion, certainly, and the minister made reference to the cottages. And I remember it is only three there, and they are certainly, in many ways they were actually one of the forerunners to moving people into—back into the community. They were part of the transition process, and I recognize that MDC is probably the only institution of its kind left in Canada and, certainly, we recognize that at some point there'll be an evolution for everybody in the facility.

But I guess I'd like to go back to my point that we see—in our community see some opportunity to provide another service, another level of service that Manitobans need, in particular, those that are physically unable to continue in the group homes because, as I mentioned earlier, most of them are, in fact, just homes that have been adapted somewhat, but are not—often not very wheelchair friendly and there's mobility issues. And we don't really have any other facility because the personal-care homes already have substantial waiting lists on them, and they don't have staff on hand that are trained in psychiatric nursing in any regard. So we see in the lovely park-like setting that MDC actually represents an ability to redevelop something along the line of a personal-care home that is dedicated to those with

mental challenges. And it—the minister, I'm sure, has toured some of the newer parts of the Selkirk facility and, certainly, it represents, I think, that option. And I would certainly encourage the minister to work with her colleagues, which would be Healthy Living, I believe, in regards to the personal-care home option—or Health and Healthy Living, to see if something can't be done in terms of redevelopment.

* (15:40)

We know that we have a pool of trained individuals in the people that work there and we also have a pool of professionals in the nurses and psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists and psychologists that are on staff there that would be, certainly, available and would provide them with a wider range of clientele to work with.

So I guess I'm looking for a little response on the minister in terms of where we might go with this proposal, if there is someone in her department that we could begin discussions with, or should we just go straight over to Health and try there?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I can assure the member that this is a conversation that has been happening at—on an ongoing basis, that there are people that have been working on this file for a number of years, on what's the future of MDC, along with the many advocates, and we will continue to do that.

What I can do is I can offer a briefing for the member. If he would give me about a month, then I'd be able to give him, hopefully, some direction about where we're going and what it could look like. I know that you're very interested and I understand why, because of the quality of service.

I just wanted to let the member know that there are two other institutions similar to MDC that are still operating. One is in Alberta, called Michener, and one is in Saskatchewan, and I'm—oh, Valley View, I used to work at Valley View—Valley View, and both of them, there's been commitments and dates provided about closure of them.

I think that, as we move forward with what this plan is, there are a number of issues that we need to address. You're right that the workforce there is second to none. Many of the individuals, they graduated out of high school, went the next day, started working at MDC, and many of them took their psychiatric nursing training there. And I saw the passion and commitment that they have, and I agree with you that we need to ensure that we do not lose

that expertise. So that's part of the equation as we move forward.

The other part of the equation and the priority is making sure that as we move forward that we're able to provide safe environments for individuals that we're transitioning out. We do not want to put them in situations that either put them at harm or give them setbacks. We need to make sure that we are providing them with similar services.

So, when I have information to share, as the member is the representative for Portage la Prairie, I—as I've done before on files important to him, that I will offer a briefing and share the information and ask for his advice. He knows his community very well and I'm sure that he will be able to provide us with—enlighten us about a strategy, and I welcome that.

We'll also be working with the employees as well as the families and the residents and we will be in conversation with other government departments about what does a strategy look like.

Mr. Wishart: And I thank the minister for that, and I'd be very happy to participate in a briefing. And if she would be kind enough to extend that offer, we have some people in the community who have also expressed interest in the redevelopment process. Would you be prepared to include them, or am I getting a little further ahead than you want to go?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: He's a good MLA. He is—we're not ready to do that yet. I think the time when we go out to communities, we need to be confident that we have a plan. Maybe it's not finalized, but it's a consultation and information, so when that time is right, I will look to the member to provide me with names of individuals that—we could co-host a meeting in his community and have that conversation.

Mr. Wishart: Thank Madam Minister. I appreciate that I might be a little keener on moving this forward than the average person, I suppose, the average—but we certainly are very aware of what's going on in the community. And I did want to emphasize that, with a little bit of foresight and creativity, we could redevelop the site, which, frankly, has great potential, because, as I mentioned earlier, it's a very park-like setting, fully serviced, you know. The property's available, in fact, you already own it. You know, redevelopment would—on that particular site would be very logical. It doesn't have to in any way

reflect what was there before, in terms of institutional structure.

Like I said earlier, I think the closest thing I saw to what I thought would be most appropriate was some of the newer parts of the facilities at the Selkirk facility that was certainly very accommodating, very friendly and provided individuals with the ability to live in their own little community, not—and this one's not separated from the larger community physically in any way. In fact, it's pretty much integrated into the community in many ways. So we see a great deal of potential to do that, yet we would still be able to have access to some of the newer recreation facilities that are onsite but because it's physically just a little off the beaten path. It's also a little more secure and safer so that, certainly, there isn't the risk when people are out enjoying fresh air and out into the community itself.

So, that said, I believe I've come to an end of what I would like to do in terms of questions. So we'd be prepared to proceed and, of course, provide the minister with the opportunity for some closing comments.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: How much time do we have there, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairperson: Fifteen minutes, approximately.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: All right, well, I just want to—*[interjection]* No, I won't. He's had to listen to me talk for a few hours. I will not take up the full 15 minutes.

I just wanted to say thank you for your thoughtful questions that you provided, and, obviously, I know with the community members that you've been meeting with, that you have an interest and a passion about vulnerable people in our province, and I trust that when opportunity presents itself that we will be able to work in a collaborative way. And I think, you know, MDC is one of those options that we'll have to work together and we just need to proceed very carefully because there's lots of emotions on both sides of the debate about MDC and about the lands and how do we proceed and about the residents themselves and the staff.

So it—we will have to go through a very thoughtful process but one that includes the community as well as the municipality as we proceed—or the town of Portage la Prairie so—the city, my apologies, the city of Portage la Prairie. That's why, when I was listing off the child-care

communities, I was trying to be very careful about the sizes.

But—so it's—we have—as I listened to myself speak yesterday and heard how often I said about opportunities and transformation, it's an exciting time right now for the Department of Family Services. I think that we have opportunities to provide supports to families and to strengthen and enhance all of the divisions that we have within the department and I am extremely privileged every day that I get to work with such dedicated staff in the Department of Family Services, that are committed to making Manitoba a better place for Manitoba's vulnerable people, as well as the volunteers and the not-for-profit organizations that also provide services for our clients and our neighbours and our friends.

So, with those words, thank you.

Mr. Wishart: This is not in any way a question, but I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the staff that have been here with us for the last few hours in terms of Estimates, but also the many staff that work with the family service—Child and Family Services area. I recognize there are very many dedicated staff that go the extra distance and certainly I would encourage the minister to move—I know it's not wholly her responsibility as the payment of EIA is actually over in the other department—but to move as quickly as possible in implementing the increase in the housing allowance.

* (15:50)

We've already been hearing from a number of individuals that noticed the—you would think that people actually don't actually read the Throne Speech, but apparently some do and have no—or, rather, the budget speech—and have noticed that there is a scheduled increase and certainly are already planning on how they use it. And so certainly encourage movement in that area, as rapidly as possible, so that the people in the community can put that in place and move forward with their lives.

There's a lot of supports that are necessary supports that are provided by this department and they do a lot of good in terms of helping people get re-established in the community. And for those that are disabled in any way in the long term, they provide the continued supports that are necessary to maintain themselves as independently as possible in the community.

I really, truly believe that one of the measures of a civilization is how we treat our most vulnerable,

and this department's responsibility is how we as a society treat our most vulnerable, so it becomes an important measure of the society that we live in.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We'll go back and forth until we use the last 15 minutes to see who's going to get the last word here.

I agree that, you know, that's how we need to judge our society.

Just so the member knows, and I think he—you've already—have been made aware of this, but the Rent Assist program will be implemented as of July 1st, so that—we needed some time to make sure that we were moving forward with it, and over the next coming years we will be working towards our implementation of the 75 per cent towards market median rent. We need to do it in collaboration with our partners and to make sure that we are doing it in a fiscally responsible way, and that's what we're committed to doing.

I'm proud to be a part of a government that has supported the most vulnerable people in our population over the last 15 years and has done that by making incredible investments to front-line services. And the Community Living division this year is one of those examples, 8.2 per cent. Overall, a 4.1 per cent increase to Family Services during these economic times is very, very remarkable and ensuring that we are maintaining quality service for the most vulnerable people and not—and not, I must stress—reducing front-line services.

So we'll continue to do that as we proceed forward with the next—with this coming year. And, as I said, I look forward to work with the many community organizations and Department of Family Services.

Mr. Wishart: Apparently, Mr. Chairman, we are to use up the available time, so I guess we'll continue to go back and forth.

An Honourable Member: How much more time do we have?

Mr. Wishart: Not long. *[interjection]* Well, no, that's not how this works, just for the record. None of that's on the record.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie still has the floor.

Mr. Wishart: I still have the floor. And appreciate some of the comments the minister has made in this

regard. I know we certainly have some challenges out there.

I did want to share with her a problem that concerns me, I guess. We—and you know that we have in our community MDC, and we have a number of staff that have worked there, many of them for many years, as you pointed out, and some are still there and some are—have retired. But I could not begin to count how many times one of the former staff from MDC has come to me and said, I saw one of the former residents of MDC homeless on the street in Winnipeg.

Now, I know that many of the homeless have mental health issues, but, for the life of me, I'm having a hard time figure out—figuring out how they went from MDC back into a group home in the community, which, hopefully, they did, and then, at some point, they must have left that group home.

Is there not a process in place to make sure that when they leave that group home that that's voluntary and that they are provided with an option of coming back? Or is—are they not searched out in some way? Are they just lost in the system? We don't seem to know what goes on there. I have approached some of the group homes and they certainly say if someone chooses to leave and not return, it's really beyond their control.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I just want to clarify for the member, and I'm going to talk really slow right now, that for the community living—

An Honourable Member: We have questions.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Oh, okay. Did you have to?

The Community Living division that we—once a person is transitioned from MDC to the community that they are still participants of the Community Living division. So we are still involved in their lives. They still have an agency that represents them. They still have support workers that are engaged with them. They still have a worker that is assigned, or that works for Family Services and does some of the liaison with them.

There is—you'd asked—can people go back? And, as we know, George went back but there's only a certain window, a period of time in which a resident can say I want to go back. So, in that six-month period, when they may not feel comfortable or safe in the community and want to return to MDC, we will allow that to happen.

We know that for some placements that they do break down. That's the reality, that there are sometimes not the right match made, but our staff, as well as the agency that represents them, are aware of that and always working for a new placement.

So I would strongly suggest that if you have staff that are approaching you and advising that they are concerned, that they have seen past residents of MDC homeless, that they contact us right away because we need to make sure that we're providing them with the services in which we've committed to.

And so we do our best to try and know where our clients are, and some of them, that's part of being in the community, is that they have mobility. And we need to make sure that we respect that right and find that balance between their right and safety and making sure that we're providing good quality service.

Mr. Wishart: Yes, now I got lots of questions. Just to be really clear on this, all you need is a name and they—and you will search them out?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes, if we—if there is a name that you can provide with us—to us, we can't share with you any information about that individual but we can ask the staff for that region to investigate who the person is, whether they are a Community Living client or not and where they should be living and then figure out how do we provide them with the supports to get there.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Madam Minister, a question regarding shelters, woman shelters, domestic shelters in the—sorry, a question regarding domestic shelters in the province. Is it a requirement that the shelters are in government-owned buildings, or can they be buildings that are privately owned?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We are very fortunate in Manitoba that we have a system that I don't think there's any other jurisdiction that has a model like we do, where individual shelters are being supported. And we do have, like, mini-shelters, and I think all of them are with Manitoba Housing, through Manitoba Housing-owned properties. And I know that there is an interest. I think it's Agape, that they work on an expansion and I know that Manitoba Housing has met with them, as well as individuals from the family violence branch.

It's been felt that, as the member knows, operating facilities are extremely costly, and when we can take the pressure off of a board of directors or

an executive director and have Manitoba Housing provide that support, whether it's maintenance to the building, ongoing maintenance, that that's really important. And so we have received a lot of accolades across the province—or across the country, for this specific initiative.

* (16:00)

Mr. Goertzen: So is that a policy where there's any—because there are policies and then there are policies, right, and is there an ability to see flexibility on that?

I think—and you mention the case of Agape House, and that is certainly one of them, although I think there are others in the province, but it's one that's closest to my region, and to my heart on that.

And I know that they have struggled with space for many years in their current undisclosed location that they're in. And, as a result of the growth of the region—and also, I think, they've been asked to do more at different times too, and so that's been—that's the cause of a lot of problems with their space. I've seen their space, I think, in some ways it's not always safe the way it's set up, or at least—at the very least, it's not ideal for them.

So I understand that they have an opportunity, they've been doing fundraising. As the minister knows, lots of people willing to give to good causes in my area, and in other areas of the province too. But, you know, they have an opportunity to build a facility that would be in the several hundreds of thousands of dollars in a residential area, but I think that there was some roadblocks, or they thought there were roadblocks because they wouldn't be able to own the facility, and that was causing some challenges, and maybe some of those challenges have been overcome. But I'd hate to see, you know, the safety of women and children and their families put at risk or not get the support they deserve over an issue of who owns the building. And is there an opportunity to see flexibility in that policy?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The issue of domestic violence has no preference about what demographic it touches. And so it's important that we have a variety of services across the province that support them.

So I'm sure the member, he's aware of our five-year strategy with our priorities to support victims and families. also with our prevention and awareness strategy, and training programs. We also have committed a million dollars for capital improvements and making sure that we're able to make these

improvements to the shelters that are owned by Manitoba Housing.

I know that the board of directors at Agape have approached the Family Violence Prevention Program. They've approached members of Manitoba Housing to say, is there some way that we could look at doing business differently? I have no doubt that they have the capacity to do the fundraising that they need. I think that—the conversations are ongoing, I can't make a commitment today to the member about where we'll land. I do know though that there are some benefits about ownership being with Manitoba Housing because of the expertise that we have to provide maintenance and support and to reduce some of the operating costs to the shelters.

The shelters over the last two decades have really changed. There's been—the people that use them, why they access them, have changed. And so I'm looking forward to in the next—in the upcoming year, of working with community stakeholders and having a conversation about, what does—what do we need to be doing to better support individuals that are impacted by domestic violence and to challenge us to think outside the box. To look at what our other jurisdictions are doing—sorry about that—and to make sure that we are providing the good quality service.

I know that the shelters are ran by dedicated staff as well as committed board of directors, and we are very grateful for the supports that they are providing.

One of the aspects that's interesting, a phenomena that happens in Manitoba compared to other jurisdictions, in other jurisdictions, second-stage housing for domestic violence is—there's a lot more individuals accessing it than is happening here. So we're interested in looking at what does second-stage housing in Manitoba, what do we accomplish? What's the barriers for individuals accessing it? Because we know that a number of women that are accessing the shelters, often it's the issue of housing that brings them to the shelter, and an inability to find adequate housing for them and their children, and we need to work with all of our partners to ensure that we're doing that. So we believe that, you know, improving our second-stage housing, as an aspect, is a priority.

Mr. Goertzen: And I'll just leave it with—and, I mean, I chose to raise this in a—this is about as non-political a forum as we get in this place—to raise it in a non-political way, because I just think that the work that they do at Agape House is really important, as I know the minister does. And they are

looking to have that dialogue, and, if she's looking to think outside the box, I think that that's positive. I would just hate to see this project not happen because of a question of ownership. And I think if there's ways to ensure that it can happen without it being lost, is an issue of who owns the bricks and mortar, then we'd all be better off to get through that and find a way through that challenge so that the women and the kids who need this service can get that service there. So I'll leave it with the minister. I appreciate she's having dialogue and that there is maybe an openness to look outside the box on this.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I will make a commitment that—I'm planning to tour Steinbach in the very near future, so I will go and meet with the director, and if there are board members that would like to meet with me, I do feel that there's opportunity for us to look at how's the system is designed and how to improve it with always looking at how do we best support families. So we will continue to have the dialogue. I guess one of the pieces that I would say about—sometimes, it's really easy to do the fundraising for a capital project and get the capital project up and running, but sometimes it gets very complicated for the operating money. And that's what we need to work on with all partners.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply because the total time allotted for Estimates consideration has now expired. Our rule 76(1) provides, in part—sorry—76(3) provides, in part, that not more than 100 hours shall be allowed for the consideration of the business of Supply. Further, our rule 76(5) provides that when time has expired, the Chairperson shall forthwith put all remaining questions without debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call in sequence the resolutions on the following matters: Family Services and the Civil Service Commission. I would remind members that these questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned according to the rules of the House.

Resolution 9.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$136,175,000 for Family Services, Community Service Delivery, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$530,805,000 for Family Services, Disability Programs and Early Learning and Child Care, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$445,011,000 for Family Services, Child and Family Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:10)

Resolution 9.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,706,000 for Family Services, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$672,000 for Family Services, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,065,000 for Family Services, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,141,000 for Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015.

Resolution agreed to.

For the information of the committee, the other—one of the other concurrent committees of Supply is still running. So we've concluded our business, so we're going to recess briefly until such time that that has run out and then we'll call the Speaker in.

So we're in recess briefly.

The committee recessed at 4:12 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:21 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply.

I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Minister of Mineral Resources.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on government business, I'd like to call for second reading, Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act; Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act; Bill 23, The Cooperative Housing Strategy Act; Bill 52, The Non-Smokers Health Protection Amendment Act; and Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call bills in the following order: Bill 48, followed by bills 21, 23, 52 and 59.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 48—The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act.

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Robinson: I'm very honoured to speak to a very historic bill in the Prairie provinces particularly and in the province of Manitoba. I want to commend the efforts of Chief Vince Tacan and the members of his community, his council, the elders, the veterans and the citizens of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. They have done a lot of work and a lot of thinking about

the self-government act that is currently before us for consideration.

In saying that, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, along with the Government of Canada, the government of Manitoba, have concluded that a self-government agreement will provide the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation greater control over the affairs of their community.

This will be the first-ever self-government agreement in the Prairie provinces, and it could be served—could be viewed as serving as a model for other First Nations in the province of Manitoba.

There's a long history to the legislation that is before us. Negotiations with the federal government began in 1991. The Province of Manitoba came to the table in 1993, and future similar self-government agreements have taken a fraction of the time that this one has taken.

The First Nations membership ratified the agreement in 2012. The governance agreement was signed off by all parties on August 30th of 2013. Now, as next steps, the federal and then provincial legislation is needed to bring the agreements into effect.

Canada introduced the enabling legislation on December 5th of 2013, with unanimous support of the House of Commons. This is not a land claim agreement or treaty. With self-government, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation laws will continue to apply on its reserve lands and will operate in harmony with federal and provincial laws within the Canadian constitutional framework. Sioux Valley Dakota Nation will have the authority as well to make laws affecting its community, its reserve in over 50 subject areas, such as governance, economic and social development, education, housing and other issues.

Now there are two main agreements to this: first, the governance agreement between Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and Canada, which recognizes the Sioux Valley Dakota Oyate government and establishes a government-to-government relationship between the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and Canada; and the second is a tripartite governance agreement between Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Canada and Manitoba. It formalizes Manitoba's recognition of, and concurrence with, the governance agreement and makes Manitoba a party to the self-government arrangements. The parties that are mentioned have also negotiated a financial

agreement and an implementation plan. Now that the agreements have been approved and signed by the parties, federal, then provincial legislation is required to bring the agreements into effect.

As mentioned earlier, Canada introduced its enabling legislation on December 5th of last year, 2013, and the goal is to have the related provincial and federal legislation come into effect on the same day, the end of July of 2014. Except for its membership laws, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation laws will apply on the First Nations reserve land base.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will continue to apply, and the Criminal Code will also continue to apply. And for decades Canadians have agreed with First Nations that existing paternalistic Indian Act laws must be replaced with this existing agreement with Sioux Valley, and the federal government is agreeing in allowing Sioux Valley to largely step outside of the parameters of the Indian Act and become a model for other First Nations in Manitoba. The members will continue to be recognized and treated as Status Indians under the act.

Overall, this bill has the principal provisions needed for the Sioux Valley governance act agreement to come into force. The declaration that the Sioux Valley governance agreement is valid and given the force of law by provincial legislation is essential because it matches that of what the federal government is doing. The rights and powers of Sioux Valley governance—the governance agreement come from the agreements and the legislation which validates this agreement.

* (16:30)

Now this version is also similar in that Sioux Valley has the capability and the capacity as a legal person and standing in a court of law. So, Mr. Speaker, very briefly, that is the outline of The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act.

I want to congratulate again the hard work of the people of Sioux Valley. I believe that some are in the gallery, and I want to greet all of you relatives from Sioux Valley in being here and in seeing one the steps that we are taking in the Manitoba Legislature in part of a history-making arrangement.

And I want to thank my colleague, the member from Agassiz, my critic, who has been very welcoming in the efforts of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and the work that they are trying to do in finding self-sufficiency and the ability to have a say

over their own lives and also have the opportunity of having the ability to make their own laws within their own territory.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks with thanks to the Assembly and, most particularly, to the good people of Sioux Valley and also to my colleagues in the Government of Canada.

Thank you.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act, and I, too, want to congratulate the chief and council and elders and the citizens of Sioux Valley. It's been a long road. I expect there were people that voted in the referendum on this that weren't even born when this process started.

The tenacity paid off. They finally have moved down the road to a governance agreement that, as the minister has said—and I do want to thank the minister. He briefed me on the bill, and we've had considerable conversation about it, and he gave me a fairly good understanding of what the bill was all about.

It's certainly a pleasure to speak today about this bill. It's a good day in the history of this province and a good day for the Sioux Valley First Nation. I know there were some members of the Sioux Valley First Nation in the audience before. I see some of them are back, and I want to welcome them here. This is certainly a step forward. I know they had their own referendum on this, and the vote was a little more than two thirds in favour it. So there's obviously still a bit of work to do right at home to make sure everybody's comfortable with the process and where they're going with this governance bill.

The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation has been a long time—governance agreement has been a long time coming. Those negotiations started in 1991 with the federal government, in '93 with the Government of Manitoba. And this is the first one of these types of agreements in Manitoba. There are, roughly, 34 in other areas of Canada, but this is the first one in Manitoba. And it lays a groundwork for possibly some more of these types of agreements in the future—hopefully, not taking 22 or 23 years to develop. Hopefully, this will be a 'tenplate' for other First Nations in this province to proceed with the same type of governance agreements.

This agreement will finally give the Sioux Valley Dakota First Nation the recognition and

control that they have been calling for over the past decades, and that's a monumental step forward. This agreement will move another step toward recognizing the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation as what the name entails—a nation—by giving them jurisdiction over the administration over a number of crucial areas of political, cultural, communal services and institutions.

And I had the opportunity to meet with the chief this morning, Vince Pacan—Tacan, and had a good discussion with him. I asked him a number of questions about the process they're in, what the next steps will be. They're looking for this proclamation of the governance act for July the 1st, and they would like to do the proclamation date provincially and federally at the same time. So it's very close to completion. After completion, then the First Nation has their governance accord in place, they can begin to look at by-laws to enact in the areas that the minister referred to in governance of their own nation.

The bill will formally establish a true government-to-government relationship between jurisdictions and allows the governments to move forward in a mutually beneficial manner, and that's very important. It truly marks the partnership and collaboration in Manitoba in a model for communities across the rest of the prairies.

Our Progressive Conservative caucus is certainly pleased to see this bill move to second reading, and we look forward to the bill moving to committee and hearing whatever input may be put forward in committee and eventually bringing it back to the House at third reading.

We know this has been a long, slow, painful process, and, as I mentioned before, it's hopeful that the next First Nation that—and there will be more—the next First Nation that starts this process in this province will be able to use this as a template and move things a little quicker. It's been a long, long time coming.

From the perspective of our caucus, it marks a stepping stone and a platform on which a new relationship can develop, a relationship that's built on trust and mutual respect, a relationship that emphasizes nation-to-nation relationships that is essential to the path forward. The agreement will allow true and meaningful self-governance of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation lands, and that's not a scary thing.

I spent 20 years as a municipal official, as a councillor in a municipality, and to a degree, although we are—municipalities exist at the whim of the provincial government, to a degree it's a type of level of governance, and municipalities have rights through their by-laws to enact certain things in their municipalities and over their jurisdictions, and this is exactly what the First Nation will have the ability to do from here on, and that's very important. There's things like—right now, we're seeing flooding in many areas of Manitoba, and in a lot of cases, especially on First Nations, very little say over what flood mitigation, what works are done on the flood. These become things that the First Nation can be in charge of from now on.

Policing is another area where, certainly, they'll have to make some agreements, whatever agreements they may choose to do because they will have the right to do that on policing matters for the reserve. It's long past time that Aboriginals themselves are at the forefront of issues and policies aimed at Aboriginals, and this, certainly, will be a win-win situation for all concerned as far as I can see the process moving forward.

* (16:40)

With this agreement, First Nation leaders will be able to determine what solutions and policies will best serve their communities—that movement towards self-determination, moving away from a model of external imposition, and allowing the individuals within this group to determine their own destiny, and I think that's what this is all about, and that's very, very important.

I know there's probably some others that may want to speak to this bill. So, with those few words, I do welcome the members of the First Nation here and look forward to this bill proceeding to committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this historic occasion when Sioux Valley First Nation will become a self-governing First Nation later this year, and this bill is one of the—nearly the last but not quite the last steps that have to happen before that—the day of the completion of this, and we expect probably in July that that will happen.

I want to congratulate individuals from Sioux Valley—the current Chief, Vince Tacan, and others for the tremendous work over many, many years that

has been done to get this far. I think it's a major accomplishment to have endured this long and to come this far. Sioux Valley, which I've visited on a number of occasions, is a beautiful community along the Assiniboine River and with a lot of really good people.

I think it's noteworthy, and it's worth talking a little bit about some of the steps along this journey. The journey started in 1988, but, in 1991, there was an initial agreement—framework agreement to move forward. At that time, the chief was Robert or Bob Bone, and, you know, sadly, Bob Bone is no longer with us. He passed away, I think, three years ago, and I'm sure it would've been great if he'd been here. But, you know, he made a lot of important contributions to the people of Sioux Valley, and I remember, you know, working with him on a number of issues over the years. So it's certainly fitting that we recognize his role early on.

And, of course, the councillors back then were Oswald McKay, John Sioux, Eugene Taylor and Edward Wanbdiska. And what they started then has progressed step by step, and one of the really important steps was in 2001—March 2001. March the 2nd, there was a comprehensive agreement in principle. Chief Ken Whitecloud; the minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development at that point, Bob Nault; and, I believe, the MLA for Rupertsland; and the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was there at the same time. And that comprehensive agreement laid out the steps for moving forward and was a very important step along the way.

In the interim, there had been, in the '90s, Chief Ronald Hall, Chief Ivan Ironman, before Chief Ken Whitecloud, and each, I'm sure, had a role in taking this process step by step.

The—things progressed and, you know, finally things were far enough along that in October of 2012—I believe it was October the 4th—there was a vote in the community. And, you know, everybody had a chance to vote, and the agreement was explained carefully to people—the importance of being able to move forward in self-governance and the signal importance of this step, noting that this will be the first—not just in Manitoba but the first in the Prairies, and so a significant step for all the Prairie provinces and not just Manitoba. And that vote, of course, in 2012, was when Vince Tacan was chief, and in the interim there had been others. Ken Whitecloud had served on more than one occasion and Donna Elk had served for a term, and so that

there were a number of chiefs who played a role, an important role as this process moved forward.

I think we had actually a meeting in Sioux Valley when we had the Healthy Kids task force, and when we were there, it was interesting to note how well-organized things were and how passionate people were on improving the health care of people in the community, and I think that spoke a lot for the type of community and the state of organization in the community, and that was, as I said, in 2005.

Following the vote in October 2012 and that vote passing, the legislation has been prepared at the federal level and at the provincial level. There was—the terms of the agreement were signed off by all parties, I gather—I think it was August the 30th, 2013, and then toward the end of the last year the federal legislation was introduced and it was passed and received royal assent on March the 5th.

It is a significant step forward because it moves the community of Sioux Valley out from under The Indian Act and into a position where the community will have the ability to pass and implement their own laws in many areas of government. I think it's been said there's something like 50 different areas, but it will certainly include a lot of very important areas for the community. And those laws will be operable within, of course, our Canadian Constitution, within the framework and work together with the provincial and federal laws, so that in Sioux Valley the laws that are passed in Sioux Valley will have precedence and that will provide the means for the self-government.

This historic occasion, I think, is—it needs to be commented that, you know, this is a happy occasion which is being, from my discussions with a number of people in Sioux Valley, being received very, very positively and people are looking forward to it. I had the occasion, quite recently, to talk with a Sioux Valley resident who is an artist, Elvis Antoine, and he was—his eyes lit up and he was very enthusiastic and he was telling me about how when he was younger he used to do a lot of running around the community and how he played hockey and various other—baseball, I think, and ran races and, you know, how this was going to be really good for the community, and he's now fairly well-known for his art and he's been involved in painting for, I think, now for many years.

But it's just an example of the enthusiasm that people have for this step in self-government as well as an illustration of one of the many, many

contributions of people who have been—come from and lived in and are from Sioux Valley.

* (16:50)

I should mention, also, not just Ken Whitecloud but Katherine Whitecloud, who was chief for a while and who has played an important role, not just as chief of Sioux Valley but in a variety of other areas in a broader context in Manitoba. She participated in a forum, an event that we held last year at one point and, you know, she has a, you know, an important perspective on what is happening with, you know, First Nations people in our Manitoba context and our Canadian context, and speaks strongly about the important role of women in her own community as well as in Manitoba—because that was the event that we had, which was to recognize some milestones that women have achieved in Manitoba and Canada.

So I think that we should all celebrate this because it is such an important achievement. And we should remember, as we are moving forward, that just like, you know, many other, you know, areas, that there is important—not just to recognize this but to look forward to being able to work as legislators with the people in Sioux Valley.

You know, new change doesn't always come easy. It's important to—that there's a broader understanding of how important this is and what this means. And it's important that there's a willingness for people in this Legislature to work with the people in Sioux Valley, back and forth, because it's not as if there's all of a sudden a fence around it. It's—we're a part of one province and part of one country, and, you know, if we're going to prosper, we need to be working together. And, you know, I, as I'm sure other legislatures, pledge to be able to work and help, where needed, where asked for, whether it relates to health or education or economic development; these are all critically important areas.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about how important this is. I know that there's some others who would like to speak, and so I will pass the podium over to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and others who want to say a few words as well.

Thank you.

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): I just rise today to put a few brief words on the record for a number of reasons and, first of all, to congratulate the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

I came to this Chamber as a decolonization scholar and as a non-Aboriginal ally in—on the path to self-government. And I am fortunate and humbled to have been able to work with colleagues like the current Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson) and his predecessor, the late Oscar Lathlin, and I have learnt much from them. But, as someone, like I said, that comes from this academic background, I just want to congratulate Chief Tacan and his predecessors and all from the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation for the work that you've done, for your patience, for your perseverance and for your leadership. This is a historic day.

This is a historic and long process, and one that I look forward to seeing occur much more frequently in the future. You are showing leadership in self-determination at this time, and you have shown it over the years, and this is something that all Canadians, whether we are Aboriginal or we are newcomers, should be proud of.

This kind of co-operation, this rebuilding of nation-to-nation relationships, is so important. It brings us back to the place, that path that we diverged from, too many hundred years ago. When newcomers first encountered the First Peoples here, we really should have forged much more strongly nation-to-nation relations. And we know that the course of the past 500 years took us very much off that path and to the detriment of our First Peoples.

We had, at various times, tried to partner and move things forward, but we know that you can't undo 500 years of damage, Mr. Speaker, in a heartbeat. But this agreement recognizes the nationhood of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, and it recognizes the importance of nation-to-nation agreements and relationships. And, as we all know, that in the traditional sense of treaties, they are about living relationships that evolve over time. And I look forward to the prosperous evolution of this relationship with the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Thank you so much for your work and your leadership.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 48?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is second reading of Bill 48, The Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act.

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

Bill 21—The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern and Aboriginal Affairs, that Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act; Loi sur la Société canadienne du Port arctique de Churchill, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, seconded by the honourable Minister of Northern and Aboriginal Affairs, that Bill 21, The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, be now read for a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand today with my colleague who represents Churchill, Minister of Northern and Aboriginal Affairs, having seconded this bill, and I'm reminded, as I speak today, of the obligation we all have in this province to support the Port of Churchill. I'm always reminded, by the way, of the degree to which there's a tremendous legacy we have with the port.

It started in the 1880s with a dream, the vision of prairie farmers to have a connection, a deep water port through Hudson Bay, and it's interesting if you look at the evolution of the history of the Port of Churchill. It was constructed a couple of decades later, in the beginning of the 20th century, was interrupted during the First World War, was finally completed after a change in location. Originally, the

port was going to be at what is York Factory and was changed—the latter part of the construction period. It was opened in 1929, and it's been a remarkable achievement that we've had the Port of Churchill in place ever since. I want to say remarkable—remarkable not the least of which is because of the many challenges the port has faced, not so much geographic, not so much in terms of climate.

I have always said it's an irony that the shipping season in Churchill was actually longer when there were wooden ships sailing into Hudson Bay than currently, that had very much to do with insurance regulations today, and we have been working on that. But I'm struck with the degree to which that tremendous vision of Churchill's often been up against vested interested, political and commercial, that haven't recognized its true potential.

And, dare I say, as we saw a grain shipment crisis in terms of rail this year, thank goodness we had the Port of Churchill—640,000 tonnes, one of the best seasons of recent years. And that, I might add, is an important lesson because the Port of Churchill has huge potential. And, as arctic shipping opens up, the Port of Churchill has even greater potential. The Northwest Passage, the holy grail of shipping, is opening up for potential shipping. There's tremendous ability to ship right across the Pole, and I want to say that I really believe that the history of the port and the history of Churchill is only just being written now. We're into the early chapters, and I look forward as we debate this bill, not only to talk about the specific role this bill can play but how we can match that true potential—

Mr. Speaker: When this matter's again before the House, the honourable Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation will have unlimited time.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 30, 2014

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