

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

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
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
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
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	Ind.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
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PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
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REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
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ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
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SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
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SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
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WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 28, 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, 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 300—The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I move, seconded by the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 300, The St. Charles Country Club Incorporation Amendment Act, be read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, the bill is very simple. It just gives the St. Charles Country Club the opportunity to use proxies in voting. 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, petitions.

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.

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 Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority region.

(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 K. Campbell, R. Gretsinger, R. Smith and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding the provincial referendum.

This petition is submitted on behalf of I. Burnside, C. Burnside, D. Clark and many other fine Manitobans.

Tabor Home—Construction Delays

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to the petition is as follows:

(1) Morden's population has grown nearly 20 per cent in five years.

(2) Twenty-three per cent of Morden's population is over the age of 65.

(3) The community worked for years to get the provincial government's commitment to build a new personal-care home and, as a result, construction of the new Tabor Home was finally promised in 2010.

(4) The Minister of Health initially indicated that construction of the new Tabor Home would commence in 2013.

(5) The Minister of Health subsequently broke her promise and delayed construction until spring 2014.

(6) The Minister of Health broke that promise as well, delaying construction again until fall 2014.

(7) In March of 2014, the Minister of Health broke her promise yet again, once more delaying construction of Tabor Home until 2015.

(8) Too many seniors continue to live out their final days and months in facilities far from home and family because of a shortage of personal-care-home beds in the area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to stop breaking their promises, stop the delays and keep their commitment to proceed with the construction of Tabor Home in 2014.

And this petition is signed by E. Dew, J. Klassen, R. Peters and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Multiculturalism and Literacy): I would like to table the 2012-2013 annual report for the Manitoba Adult Literacy Strategy and the Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Seeing none, ministerial statements?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of my honourable colleagues to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us this afternoon the Ambassador of Mexico, His Excellency Francisco Suárez Dávila, and the honorary consul general of—consul of Mexico, Mr. Jim Downey.

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

And also, seated in the public gallery today we have with us from the Manitoba Parents for Ukrainian Education, we have 56 grade 5 students from the East Selkirk Middle School, Springfield Heights School and R.F. Morrison School under the direction of Mr. Joseyf Mudryj, Ms. Marianna Cap and Ms. Michael Ilyniak, who are the guests of the honourable minister of agriculture, food and rural initiatives.

* (13:40)

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Export Sales—Rate Increases

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, in the—many things were said by the government in the last election campaign. One of them was that Hugh McFadyen wasn't telling the truth about bipole. It goes on to say, fact: the bipole will not cost taxpayers a single cent. Wow, that's a nose stretcher. I mean, we've had two special rate increases approved by the Public Utilities Board, one on April 13th, one on May 14 this year, which will

cost Manitobans a lot of cents, in fact, per year, \$30 million.

Now, that is a real monstrous broken promise stacked onto other broken promises that we continue to make Manitobans aware of and they are too aware of.

Now, with this American-first hydro plan that the government is pushing forward, I'd like the Premier to explain not only why his government broke their promise in respect to bipole but why they expect Manitobans to pay for their broken promises.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, \$29 billion of export revenues over the next 30 years, very significant, keeps Manitoba's rates the lowest in North America; \$9 billion of new contracts which will additionally pay off the cost of Keeyask as well as bipole, keep the rates lowest of North America, a proven business model. Historically, when we built Limestone, \$1.6 billion, generated \$6 billion worth of revenue, kept Manitoba Hydro rates the lowest in North America.

Not only, Mr. Speaker, does the member opposite—he says he does not believe we should build hydro for export. That would ensure rates go up in Manitoba. The export revenues—even by the Public Utilities Board, the export revenues, the Public Utilities Board, the regulator, says, have kept rates lower in Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: Collisions over there, Mr. Speaker.

The Public Utilities Board actually says, quote, the cost of Bipole III will no longer be covered by export sales. Okay, so what we have is, again, is a broken promise by the government that bipole wouldn't cost taxpayers a cent, when we know it's costing them right now \$30 million and more as we accelerate into the future here.

But the fact of the matter is the Premier has been continuing in his talking points, claiming that Americans are going to pay for all this. He's said that before; he said it again just now. He keeps repeating his talking points when, actually, the data doesn't support any of that. In fact, what it says is that we're exporting at a loss and Manitobans are subsidizing it. So it's time to discard the old talking points.

It's time for the Premier to come clean and explain to Manitobans again—for the first time, I shouldn't say again—for the first time why it is that Manitoba ratepayers should have to subsidize his plan to Americanize their hydro utility.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is so misinformed.

The export revenues are profitable for the Crown corporation known as Manitoba Hydro. On page 3 of their last report, the PUB acknowledges that exports offset the requirement for domestic rate increases. Gross export revenues are projected at \$408 million in 2'13-2'14 and \$383 million in 2014-15, nearly \$800 million of export revenues coming to Manitoba, keeping the rates the lowest in North America. That's savings to every Manitoba.

Every year we've had a—for the last two years we've had an independent accounting firm evaluate the cost of electricity, the cost of home heating and the cost of auto insurance in Manitoba. We have consistently been the lowest in Canada. That's a huge benefit for Manitobans.

Member opposite needs to know that. The member in opposite needs to acknowledge export revenues have kept the lowest rates in North America.

Mr. Pallister: And at many income brackets, the highest income taxes in the country of Canada.

The Premier needs to read the Public Utilities Board report more thoroughly where it says on page 31 of the order of April 26th of last year, the cost, and I quote, the cost of Bipole III will no longer be covered by export electricity sales. The capital cost of those projects has nearly doubled. And it goes on to say that Bipole III may not achieve any incremental positive revenue from exports within a 20-year planning horizon.

Okay, higher rates for Manitobans, another broken promise from the NDP, and all this vote buying in the States. But the Premier's probably not running in Wisconsin, so he should concern himself with the fact that when he claims rates aren't going up due to his government's decisions, it flies in the face of the hydro bills that Manitobans see on their kitchen tables every month.

The reality is this is a boondoggle. It's a boondoggle of enormous proportion, and a bipole west line that costs a billion dollars more and is less effective is costing Manitobans higher rates.

Why doesn't the Premier stand up and admit that he misled the people of Manitoba in the last election campaign and apologize today to those same people?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is just so fundamentally wrong about his vision for Manitoba Hydro in Manitoba.

When he was in opposition—when he was in government he said he would not privatize the telephone system and then promptly went ahead and privatized the telephone system. We went from the third lowest rates in Canada to among the highest rates in Canada.

Manitoba Hydro is a Crown corporation. Our—offers power at below the actual cost of providing it because of the export revenues, which pay down the cost of new dams and make that power available at a more cost-effective rate to Manitobans when we will eventually need it.

The member opposite needs to remember when he was here in 1996, in government, the two existing bipoles, which are very close together, went out of service for a brief period of time. A one-week loss of our transmission capacity in Manitoba would cost the Manitoba economy over a billion and a half dollars. That would pay for the bipoles, Mr. Speaker.

He wants to put the Manitoba economy at risk. He wants to put our exports at risk, and he wants to put the lowest rates in North America at risk. Shame on him.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Manitoba Hydro Development Cost to Ratepayers

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the biggest risk for Manitoba taxpayers and ratepayers would be to get fooled again by that Premier. That would be a big risk.

When the Premier, which he does almost daily, misrepresents our position on this side of the House, he does himself a disservice. He has actually more accurately represented the position of Tim Sale or Ed Schreyer or Len Evans, people who should pay attention to because they are respected Manitobans, and he should listen to them if he doesn't listen to us. And, of course, he doesn't listen to us, Mr. Speaker.

And the fact that he goes back and misrepresents the '90s been well established this week. But the fact of the matter is that was in the last century, and it was in the last millennium, and the time that Manitobans pay their bills, whether it's taxes or hydro bills, isn't the last century. It's every month. It's right now, today—today.

And so if the Premier insists, as he continues to do, on turning around, looking back to the last century, will he admit that he's ignoring the needs of Manitobans in this present time?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has a growing economy and a growing population. The forecasts show 10 to 12 years from now, unless we build Manitoba Hydro, we will stop having a sufficient supply and we will start importing energy to Manitoba. That's when the prices go up. By building ahead of time, it's like building your house and renting it out before you need it. When you'll need it, the cost of your mortgage is less because of the rent you received.

By building hydro before we need it and selling it into the export market, when we need it, the cost of the dams is paid down and we get the lowest rates in North America, a proven business model that has worked in the past when the members opposite opposed it, will work in the future when the members opposite oppose it, working right now in Manitoba when members opposite want to stop exporting power when it's generating three to four hundred million dollars of revenue each year. That's bone-headed, that's bad policy, that's bad for the future of Manitoba, and it's bad for the citizens and businesses in Manitoba, which have the lowest rates in North America.

Luxottica Plant Closure Manufacturing Job Losses

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): What's bad policy, Mr. Speaker, is promising to Manitobans not to raise taxes in the last election and turning around and doing that at their first available opportunity.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker, today we learned that Luxottica is shutting down their manufacturing plant in Winnipeg, forcing 200 Manitobans out of jobs. We're told that production is being moved to a plant in Toronto.

So I wonder if the Minister responsible for Jobs and the Economy can now finally admit to Manitobans that her high-tax-and-spend policies are driving Manitobans out of the province.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Acting Minister of Jobs and the Economy): Certainly, our priority has always been skilled jobs and growing our economy here in Manitoba, and that's something that we're committed to do, and we're continuing to do so, Mr. Speaker, by

investing in training opportunities, and it's regrettable that this decision was made.

Having said that, we do have staff contacting the employees to assure them that there is an opportunity for training supports, and we have 13 different offices throughout the province, the Manitoba Jobs and Skills Development centres, that can help them transition into skilled jobs.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's our investments in infrastructure, it's our investments in public infrastructure that's going to support 58,000 jobs in a \$5.5-billion economic action plan to build our economy here in Manitoba, and we'll continue to do so.

Mrs. Stefanson: We're talking about the world's largest manufacturer of eyeglasses that is leaving our province, Mr. Speaker, as of tomorrow, and there are 200 families that are going to be coping with job losses.

The minister likes to claim, I know—and the minister likes to claim that he's bringing more jobs to Manitoba, but it's simply not true, Mr. Speaker. The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, the government's own numbers, indicate that last year Manitoba lost nearly 4,500 more people than they gained from other provinces, the highest in seven years.

Are these 200 families going to have to move away to find work too?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about one of the largest HVAC producers in the country, in E.H. Price, where we supported them by a \$14-million expansion and a MIOP, which the members opposite said was a photo op and a bad idea, and that's 175 good jobs, 175 skilled jobs.

Let's talk about one of the largest bus manufacturers in North America, Mr. Speaker, New Flyer, which is adding 30 new jobs to dealing with selling 89 more buses to Atlanta.

Let's talk about Canadian Tire and the Cloud Nine Digital Innovation Centre, which we supported through a tax incentive, which they said was a bad idea.

As far as developing an environment that's conducive to growing the economy and to good, skilled jobs, they don't get it.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'll remind members opposite what Mr. Price said. He said that Manitoba is a

difficult place to do *[inaudible]* Mr. Speaker, to do business.

Mr. Speaker, 200 more manufacturing jobs leaving Manitoba is a perfect illustration of why the NDP government's high-tax and low-wage policies are failing Manitobans. High taxes chase jobs to other provinces and then Manitobans move to other provinces to chase those jobs. It doesn't make sense.

Will the minister please tell us how many manufacturing jobs need to be lost before he abandons her—his failed NDP strategy?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker, our strategy has seen a net growth in population of 127,634 people from 2000 to 2013.

Now, in contrast, in 1989 to 1999 there was a loss of 28,199 people who chose to move out of Manitoba. Now, I'm looking forward to the Bomber season. That represents the average attendance, roughly, at last year's Bomber season, the number of people that left when they were in power, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've grown our province by over 127,000 people. We're growing the economy. We're investing in infrastructure. We're investing in training. They vote against investing in infrastructure. They vote against training.

We're on the side of Manitobans and good skilled jobs for Manitobans. Where do they stand?

Maple Leaf Foods Future of Operations

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, the community of Brandon is very concerned about the impact of Maple Leaf Foods' announcement of shift reductions at their Brandon plant.

Not once has the Agriculture Minister picked up the phone and called Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon. And by his own admission, the minister has never even visited the site in Brandon.

Why is this minister so content to sit back and put 2,200 full-time, union jobs in jeopardy?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): It's pretty evident that the member opposite is choosing to pick his words very carefully. Let me assure you, as the Agriculture Minister, as this side of the government believes that Maple Leaf, first and foremost, is very important to the Brandon's economy and to the Manitoba's economy.

Staff have been communicating with Maple Leaf. We're continuing to talk to the executives in Maple Leaf all over Canada and we will continue to work for the betterment of the economy in the Brandon area and will continue to work for the betterment of job placement and find opportunities for the betterment of the—sustain employment of the people working at Maple Leaf. But, definitely, Mr. Speaker, it is our priority in the department to speak to Maple Leaf and move forward.

Mr. Pedersen: It's unfortunate that the minister admits he's never, ever picked up the phone and phoned Maple Leaf himself.

The minister continues to blame everyone else, everything else but himself for the mess his government is responsible for.

Jobs will be affected in Winnipeg if Maple Leaf Foods continues to face a shortage of product in their Brandon facility. They further process the product out of Brandon.

This government has intentionally created the shift reductions occurring at Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon, yet their own minister won't take responsibility for their own failed policies.

Why doesn't the minister just admit he really doesn't have a clue how to undo the mess he's created?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Obviously, as the member opposite is bringing forward the importance, we realize the importance and we have been. We've supported the pork industry for a lot of years. We've put dollars into the Lagimodiere processing of curing hams and pork. We've put dollars towards the Growing Forward programs that are available for producers.

But we also put forward the importance of the environmental things, and we are working with Maple Leaf, we are working with producers, and yet the members opposite supported the lake—save Lake Winnipeg towards clean, healthy water for the farm for the area of concern.

So I'm asking the members opposite, are they changing their minds towards save lake programs and the environmental programs as we move together with the pork industry and Maple Leaf industry of environmental partnerships, at the end of the day, for the betterment of everybody in the province of Manitoba and the employment of Maple Leaf employees in Brandon as well.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, this minister is responsible for firing 10,000 farmers in the last term of office, shift reductions in the Brandon plant, an ongoing crisis in the supply of product and a cloud of uncertainty hanging over the community of Brandon, 2,200 full-time, union jobs at risk in Brandon, which will spill over to job losses at Maple Leaf Foods plants in Winnipeg, yet this minister does nothing.

Is the minister planning to force the closure of the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon in order to make this problem go away? It's the problem he created. Is that what his plan is for this plant?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Yet members opposite tend to not use speed-dial to the federal department, because this government, this department, has moved forward for the beef industry in the province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, we have supported the community pasture program for the young generation. They sat back and said nothing to their federal cousins.

We brought forward excess moisture that the producers had been asking for when they were in power. They were deaf ears. They chose not to listen to the crop producers. We brought that forward, excess moisture through crop insurance. We brought forward the opportunity of forage insurance program.

We continue to work with agriculture producers. We want to continue working, but yet they sit on their side, pick and choosing. But at the end of the day, we have jobs that we need to save, teachers and nurses. They chose to fire 1,000 nurses and—

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

ER Services Senior Case Concern

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, a tiny, frail, older, disabled woman fell and hit her head. There was profuse bleeding, discolouration and a hematoma on the side of her head the size of a baseball. An ambulance took her to the Grace Hospital ER where she was forced to wait almost eight hours to see a doctor.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain why somebody with a possible head injury had to wait almost eight hours before being seen by a doctor.

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I thank the member for raising this in the House.

* (14:00)

The situation as presented sounds tragic and does not sound how we want people to be taken care of in our emergency rooms.

I would ask if the member could please give details either to myself or to my office so we could look into it, because the family would like some answers and so would I.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, these situations are coming up every day. She doesn't know how to handle them.

This patient has had two previous strokes. Sadly, this Minister of Health has said that strokes aren't her priority and she does not seem to care that Manitoba is the only province in all of Canada without a dedicated stroke unit.

So a patient that has had two strokes falls, hits her head and has a hematoma on the side of her head the size of a baseball.

Can this Minister of Health please explain how that wait of almost eight hours is considered to be safe patient care in this province?

Ms. Selby: And again, I would ask this member to bring information forward to either to myself or to my staff so that we can look into it, because we know that Manitobans want to be able to depend that when they go into an emergency room that they receive the care they need when they need it.

Certainly, I know that people in our emergency rooms, the doctors, the nurses, the staff working there, have a very difficult job. But I know that they do the best that they can. They try very hard and they work under some very difficult circumstances.

One of the things that we've been doing is making sure that there are more people working in emergency rooms. We've got more doctors in Manitoba. We've got more nurses in Manitoba. We want to make sure people get the care they get.

But we're also making sure people get the right care, and for those who may not need to be in an emergency room we're opening ACCESS centres, we're opening QuickCare clinics to make sure people with less urgent needs can go somewhere else to perhaps see a family doctor, to leave those urgent cases for those specially trained people in our emergency rooms.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, that answer was not satisfactory at all. She really has no credibility and does not seem to understand the issues.

These problems are going on in the ERs every day. It's not just a one-off; this is happening all the time. She should be on the phone finding out what's going on in the ERs, not expecting us to come forward and give her information.

This patient looked like she had a tractor run over her face. In fact, when she was diagnosed, she had a small arterial tear in her face. As the patient's friend said to me, having a person who is already disabled waiting for that long holding an ice pack to her face is just cruel. Not only is it cruel, it could have been very unsafe.

So I'd like to ask this Minister of Health to explain why her government is failing ER patients so badly.

Ms. Selby: And again, I would ask if this member could bring some information forward, because we want to know that our families are getting the care that they deserve when they need it, and I want to know that as well.

What we've been doing around the province to improve emergency care is by training more doctors; we had a record graduate number of doctors coming out of medical school this year in Manitoba. It's hiring nurses; we have a record number of nurses working.

But, Mr. Speaker, this member should ask her leader, when you cut a half a billion dollars from the budget, how does that improve health care?

Child Sexual Assault Reduction Plan

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, child sexual abuse is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable. For victims, the emotional scars can last a lifetime, and it can be generational.

Today StatsCan reported that Manitoba has the highest rate of sexual assaults among children of all provinces in Canada: 316 children out of 100,000 report to police that they've been the victim of a sexual assault, and that is only those who report. We know that many will never report to police because of the shame of the crime that they feel.

Why, after 14 years in government, has this government, after so many announcements, not been able to get this statistic under control and ensure that less people, less young people, less children, are the victims of child sexual abuse?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, Mr. Speaker, I do thank the member for the question. I know that every member of this Assembly is concerned about sexual assaults affecting our children.

And, indeed, the report that has been released today shows that the territories and Manitoba and Saskatchewan do have rates of crimes that are well above the national average. What I think is most upsetting is that the report shows that almost 90 per cent of all those cases, in 90 per cent of those situations, the offender was actually known to the victim. So, unfortunately, it's tragic for all of us to consider that many of these cases are happening within families, within small groups.

And that's why, of course, we believe that supporting families and getting the best services out to protect children is the right way to make investments. We believe that by supporting families, we can prevent these incidents from happening, and by putting supports in place when children do come forward with a very, very difficult disclosure, we've got a response, and it's taken very, very seriously.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that every member of this Assembly cares about this issue; I don't doubt that and I'd never suggest otherwise. But the reality is that caring is not enough.

Members of the government, including the Minister of Justice, the member of—the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross), the Premier (Mr. Selinger), they have special responsibilities. They have roles in which they have authority and they have the ability to do things to make this better, and clearly those steps that the Minister of Justice talked about in his reply to the first question are not working. We are leading the country in this horrible crime; that's after they've been in government for 14 years.

Manitoba's rate of sexual assault of children is 50 per cent higher than the national average. It's time to stop coming up with excuses and actually have a plan that's going to reduce this number.

Why has this government not been able to reduce the number of those who are impacted by this terrible crime?

Mr. Swan: Well, certainly, Mr. Speaker, when a terrible incident like this happens, we want to make sure there are responses in place.

That's why we have social workers, when disclosure is made, to go in and investigate and make sure that cases that pass appropriate tests are then passed on to the police. That's why we've invested in police, to make sure we have police officers who have the expertise and the ability to investigate and, if it's appropriate, then to lay charges against individuals responsible. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we've also invested in Crown attorneys and we've allowed the Crown attorneys office to add to their expertise so there are specialized Crown attorneys that can effectively prosecute cases of this kind.

I believe everybody understands that sometimes the evidence in these cases is very, very difficult and it is often very challenging to get convictions in court. That being said, we don't shy away from doing that. We invest in those resources, we invest in the services because we believe the children of our province deserve nothing less.

Mr. Goertzen: But to listen to the minister's response, you'd think we were the best in the country. We are the worst in the country, Mr. Speaker, in this terrible crime.

I've visited the child exploitation unit and seen the men and women in uniform who do that terrible work, and I know they don't have the resources to even scratch the surface when it comes to online predators. I know that when high-risk sex offenders leave our provincial jails, Mr. Speaker, the department of this minister isn't ensuring that there are peace bonds against those high-risk offenders to—and ensuring that there's electronic monitoring where appropriate. I know that children who've been sexually abused, they don't have the intervention resources to ensure that not only are they able to heal emotionally but that they don't perpetuate the crime and that the cycle is actually broken.

Those things aren't in place. Those are both preventative and punitive measures and they're not happening in the province of Manitoba and that's why we have the worst rate in this country.

Why won't he finally say enough is enough, stop talking about what he actually thinks he's done and do something that's going to make a difference?

Mr. Swan: I did, indeed, have a chance to visit the child exploitation unit at the Winnipeg Police Service. I am very pleased that, thanks to proceeds from the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund, we've given that unit more resources and more tools. Had I

listened to the advice of the member for Steinbach, there would be no fund. There would be no support. That would not exist to be assisting those police officers.

I am very proud, Mr. Speaker, that Winnipeg, Manitoba, is the home for the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, and that organization works closely with our government, with various agencies to get information out to our young people. Programs such as Kids in the Know, that I hope every member of this House is familiar with, is now available for every student in the Winnipeg School Division and for students in many other school divisions which serves to prevent but also—also—can assist children who may have been affected to come forward with disclosures.

We don't want to sweep these under the rug. When a child comes forward with a disclosure, there's got to be a support system in place. We're continuing to provide that and that's necessary for our children.

Land Transfer Tax Teranet Fees

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the land transfer tax in Manitoba was originally established so that the costs of registering property transactions in the provincial property registry system could be covered.

The transfer of our province's property registry system was official on March 29th of this year, and since then Ontario's Teranet owns and operates Manitoba's property registry, with the understanding that it is to be self-sufficient based on fees charged. Manitobans are now being charged both land transfer taxes and Teranet fees.

* (14:10)

I ask the Premier: Where is the money going that is now being collected in the land transfer tax?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): The member will know that we've started the process of eliminating the taxes for seniors with respect—on their property with respect to education. That's a very significant commitment that's rolled out. The member will also know that we've increased the education property tax credit for all homeowners in Manitoba from \$250 a year to \$700 a year, and for senior citizens they're eligible for up to \$1,100 a year. So \$1,100 plus an additional \$200 this year, and for everybody in Manitoba \$700 versus \$250, Mr. Speaker.

The member will also know that we put a rent assistance program in place that lifts the—or assistance for people requiring support for affordable housing in apartments to 75 per cent of the median rent in Manitoba.

All of these measures are in—designed to keep the cost of living affordable in Manitoba, to ensure Manitobans have access to resources to have a affordable cost of life in this province, and those are just some examples of where these resources go.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I understand that Teranet will collect the land transfer tax for the NDP government and then the money will then go to the NDP government and into the expanding maw of general revenues.

Will the money raised by the land transfer tax have any relationship in the future to the registering of property, or will it fall prey to the Premier's lack of accountability so that Manitobans will be paying for items like, you know, the extra 20 per cent of the Premier's salary which he legislatively ensured he continues to receive even with the current budget deficit? I ask the Premier: Which is it?

Mr. Selinger: The member has voted against, every year, our affordable housing program. We built a record 1,500 units of social housing in the province of Manitoba over the last four years, Mr. Speaker, over the last five years. Huge investment in housing in Manitoba at a price point that Manitobans can afford, at a maximum percentage of their income. We also have a major affordable housing program in Manitoba, and we expanded both of those programs by 500 units each going forward. Record amount of social housing, record amount of affordable housing, record amount of property tax credits, record amount of relief for senior citizens on education taxes with respect to their property.

All of those items keep Manitoba affordable, keep Manitobans housed, and I could talk about all the money we're putting into jobs, infrastructure and training as well on the next question.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, Manitobans want a straight and accountable answer as to where the money is going.

As I table, in Saskatchewan they have modernized accounting for land transfers. They have got rid of the unaccountable land transfer taxes and only have fees which directly relate to their property registry sales and costs.

What does the Premier—how does the Premier justify usurping the original intentions of the land transfer tax to fund the Property Registry and to make this change so that there's no longer accountability to Manitobans?

Mr. Speaker, I ask: What gives the Premier the right to completely sever the land transfer tax from funding the Property Registry and instead to use the money as a provincial slush fund?

Mr. Selinger: The member may have missed it, but we're providing very significant support to 'meem' people in Manitoba with respect to taxes levied on property. Property tax credit, \$700, rolled back from \$325 to \$250 when the opposition was in government. The property tax credit for senior citizens, \$1,100. Relief—additional relief on property taxes for seniors of \$200, Mr. Speaker, this year. A record build on social housing in Manitoba, a record build on affordable housing in Manitoba, a very significant tax credit for people to build apartments in Manitoba, which has seen a record number of apartment units being developed in our jurisdiction, all of these things are housing Manitobans and keeping the cost of housing for Manitobans very affordable.

We want Manitobans properly housed. We want Manitobans working. We want Manitobans to have good jobs. As we do our skills agenda, as we do our infrastructure agenda, as we do our innovation agenda, that's where the money's going, Mr. Speaker, to make sure Manitobans are working and living in decent housing.

École Viscount Alexander Community Places Program

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Housing and Community Development made an important announcement yesterday regarding investments made into Manitoba communities.

Can the minister please offer more detail about this announcement and how it will positively affect the lives of Manitobans?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Housing and Community Development): Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

And I was very pleased yesterday to be at École Viscount Alexander school in Winnipeg with my colleague the Minister of Education and the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview, where we announced the

Community Places Program and \$2.9 million in funding that'll support 227 projects throughout the province of Manitoba. And it's a wonderful program that actually leverages—this amount of money will leverage over \$13 million in support from other sources.

It's a great example of what we do best here in Manitoba, working together with communities, parent volunteers, school volunteers, community clubs. We're going to be impacting museums, we're going to be impacting seniors housing, we're going to be impacting a variety of different structures throughout the province, playgrounds, and it's going to have a tremendous impact on our communities, Mr. Speaker. Since its inception, over 7,200 projects have been completed.

Home Care Services Dominion City Office

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the NDP record over the last 14 years is clear. They have closed emergency rooms, they've closed agricultural offices, they have closed and are closing Hydro offices, and now they're closing Home Care offices.

The Home Care office in Dominion City will be closed. Seniors will be forced to drive over 30 kilometres to meet with anyone, something that is just not feasible for many of them.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government cutting front-line services in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): That's just not true. Mr. Speaker, we're increasing services all around Manitoba, whether that's in rural Manitoba, in urban Manitoba, whether that's more doctors, whether that's more nurses and expanding our Home Care program.

Mr. Speaker, there is one party in this House that cut rural funding when they were in government and they sit across from us.

Health-Care Services Rural Manitoba

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, can I take that answer as that they're not closing the office in Dominion City?

The only threat to seniors in this province and the only threat to front-line services in Manitoba are the members sitting on the other side of this House. This government has cut front-line services for 14 years and they're not stopping.

Seniors deserve access to services close to home. They deserve a government that doesn't desert them. What seniors deserve and what they're getting is two different things, thanks to this NDP.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government cutting front-line services in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): I'll say it again to the member and to everyone in this House. We are not cutting front-line services to anyone in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Home Care office in Dominion does not have proper connection to the Internet. Now, that means that the co-ordinators can't access Procura, which is what they use for scheduling appointments with clients, and so they are going to move the office so that they can better serve the community. But front-line services will not be touched.

Vita & District Health Centre Collaborative Emergency Centre

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, the Vita hospital emergency room has been closed for 587 days. The residents of southeast Manitoba have been suffering far too long.

The minister promised a pilot collaborative emergency centre to the people of southeastern Manitoba. They got their hopes up, but unfortunately this minister has done nothing to bring forward this proposal.

Mr. Speaker, when will the people of southeastern Manitoba get a collaborative emergency centre?

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Health): As I've told this member before, the money is still on the table for staffing the Vita ER.

Mr. Speaker, it's why we're graduating more doctors. It's why we're hiring more nurses. This year we had a record number of doctors graduate; 109 doctors graduated from the University of Manitoba medical class this year. Ninety of them are staying in Manitoba, 19 of them are doing residencies in rural Manitoba, and that's on top of 19 new internationally trained doctors that have just been hired in rural Manitoba as well.

So I will tell this member that we will keep recruiting, that's why we have more doctors, and we'll keep bringing more doctors to Manitoba.

* (14:20)

Mr. Smook: Mr. Speaker, I'm asking about the collaborative emergency centre, not about doctors. It's a pilot project that the minister is responsible for. That's the question I am asking.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister avoid—why is she avoiding her responsibility and neglecting Manitobans? The people of Vita have been without an emergency room for 587 days. It seems as if the minister knows how to talk the talk but needs to learn how to walk the walk.

Mr. Speaker, when is this minister going to come to Vita and fix the mess that she has created?

Ms. Selby: Mr. Speaker, I was pleased today to be joined by EMS and rural paramedics to talk about some exciting things we are doing for emergency care. One of the things we're doing is bringing 25 new paramedics to rural and northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, in the '90s, when they were in government, 80 per cent of paramedics were either volunteer or part-time; 70 per cent are full-time now and are highly trained, and they're going to get more training. We also announced today 16 seats at Red River College for advanced-care paramedics that are going to help rural paramedics advance their training so that they can provide even better care to rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Time for members' statements.

Negev Gala Dinner

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Last night I was pleased to attend the 2014 Negev Gala hosted by the Jewish National Fund of Canada, Manitoba-Saskatchewan regional branch.

This year, the gala honoured accomplished lawyer and community activist, Joseph J. Wilder. Mr. Wilder's leadership and vision have helped shaped our province and touched the lives of many. His extensive record of community service includes leadership positions with the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canada-Israel Committee, the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council, the Winnipeg Football Club and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Mr. Wilder's also a former school trustee and senior partner at the law firm Wilder, Wilder & Langtry.

In recognition for his service, Mr. Wilder was awarded the Sol Kane Distinguished Community

Service Medal in 2008 and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

It was truly an honour to join the Jewish National Fund of Canada in recognizing the accomplishments of Mr. Wilder. He gave a moving speech that reminded the audience of the importance of community service.

The gala also featured a stellar performance from the young and incredibly talented jazz and pop vocalist Nikki Yanofsky. Nikki's flawless vocals had us all on the edge of our seats, and her performance helped solidify the Negev Gala as one of the best events of the year.

Each year, the Negev Gala brings together members of Manitoba's Jewish community to celebrate their culture and passion for philanthropy. I want to congratulate this year's honouree, Joseph J. Wilder, and thank him for countless years of service to the Jewish community and to the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ride for Dad

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I rise today before the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to acknowledge the tremendous success that the annual Ride for Dad event had over the past weekend.

When most of us think of motorcycles and bikers, we think of rough-around-the-edge types clad in leather on the open road, not to be taken lightly or upset. We often forget that many motorcycle enthusiasts are just average people who have big hearts. You'd needn't look any farther—further than the May 24th annual Ride for Dad for proof of this.

The event this year had record attendance with almost 1,500 participants and they raised over \$275,000. This money will all stay within the province and go directly to prostate cancer research and education. Over the past six years, over \$800,000 has been raised for this noble cause, and bikers from across the province have joined under its banner.

With a nice, balmy 27°C temperature, it was a great day for a great cause, Mr. Speaker. The event began at the Polo Park Shopping Centre and continued, led by a police escort, westbound on Portage to the Perimeter and then heading north to Selkirk and Gimli before returning to the city to convene for the official after-party.

Early detection and testing is one of the key messages the ride hopes to communicate, and with the great showing they had this weekend, this goal is quickly becoming a reality.

On behalf of all members, I would like to congratulate and thank all the organizers and participants for the excellent work they did to make this event such a success and raise a significant sum for a worthy cause.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Murray House

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Cancer affects every family. Everyone can call to mind someone close to them who has fought cancer, and everyone can empathize with those who must travel away from their families to undergo cancer treatment. That's why the western Manitoba community is incredibly grateful for the establishment of Murray House in Brandon.

Mr. Speaker, our government worked tirelessly to build and fund the western Manitoba cancer treatment centre. As a government, we are committed to building the best cancer treatment in Canada, working to deliver the fastest screening, diagnosis and treatment.

Today, thanks to Murray House, those from western Manitoba communities undergoing cancer treatment now have a place in Brandon to call home. Murray House provides safe, comfortable accommodations for out-of-town patients receiving care at the western Manitoba cancer care centre. This residence offers eight bedrooms for patients and their families, giving people struggling through some of the toughest moments in their lives a feeling of home and the support needed to focus on their health.

Murray House was made possible thanks to the Brandon Regional Health Centre Foundation and the generosity of several dedicated community members. Over the course of 14 months, the BRHC Foundation's A Sense of Home campaign committee worked tirelessly to meet their fundraising goal to build Murray House. Fundraising campaign co-chairs Laurie Murray, Kerry Auriat and Karen Chrest have been passionate and committed advocates for the creation of Murray House. The dedication of these individuals has been truly contagious, rallying members of the community across Westman to build Murray House.

The Murray family, in particular, is to be commended for their outstanding contribution towards developing Murray House. Their incredibly generous contribution truly made this centre possible. On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I should mention that some of my best childhood memories revolve around the Murray family. Danny was my best friend as a kid, while Chris, Paul and Doug all figured prominently in my early life. Clair and Millie's grand historic house on Victoria Avenue was like a second home, and their example made a lasting, positive impact on me.

Mr. Speaker, generous individuals and organizations from across western Manitoba have helped build a place that will help those fighting cancer find a safe, comfortable home during their stay in Brandon. Thank you to all the fundraisers, donors and community members involved in the creation and development of Murray House. Thanks to you, this incredible home away from home is here for those in need.

On behalf of the Manitoba government, we are grateful for your positive citizenship.

Thank you.

Adrien Grenier

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): It is my honour to stand today to recognize the courageous act of bravery of Adrien Grenier. Adrien, based on his humble nature, would certainly feel he's had too much recognition for just doing what he had to do. This demonstrates the ultimate trait of a true hero, doing the right thing at the right time no matter the personal risk.

Mr. Speaker, a hero is an ordinary person that did extraordinary things. A true hero is never really a hero at all, at least not in their own mind.

Adrien Grenier from Altamont was awarded the Medal of Bravery by His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. Adrien received this honour for the heroic role he played in saving his three brothers from a house fire that completely engulfed their family home on October 10th, 2011.

Adrien just acted. On that night, he awoke to fire and quickly broke an upstairs window where he and his three brothers were sleeping. He shook his brothers awake and ushered them outside where they jumped to safety. Once outside, Adrien took control of things by making sure his parents were safely out

of harm's way, calling 911 and moving vehicles out of the fire's path.

The Canadian Medal of Bravery recognizes people who risked their lives to save or protect others. They put their lives on the line to help another person. Doing the right thing is what makes Adrien Grenier Canada's Medal of Bravery recipient and our very own homegrown hero.

On behalf of all members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, I would like to commend Adrien for his bravery and his well-deserved award of the Canadian Medal of Bravery.

Thank you.

Sister Susan Wikeem

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud Sister Susan Wikeem, a dedicated role model in our community, on her retirement after 36 years of service at the St. Mary's Academy. She has performed many roles during her years, starting as a teacher in 1974, then quickly moving into the vice-principal role and then to principal the following year.

In 1987, she was appointed to the Provincial Council of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary board. It became evident that Sister Wikeem was destined to influence others and to have a positive impact.

In 1995, the directorship position for the academy opened and, without much hesitation, she assumed the role. Last year she received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Sister Wikeem has devoted most of her life's service to the academy, demonstrating extraordinary leadership and championing the academy through a successful facility redevelopment plan. Sister Wikeem truly understood the historic value of the academy in her encouragement for it to participate in Doors Open Winnipeg, allowing the public to experience the rich history of one of the city's most immaculate buildings.

* (14:30)

In 1985, the Sister Susan Wikeem Bursary was established to provide financial assistance to deserving students. Sister Wikeem has always been a proud advocate of her students' academic, community and athletic accomplishments. Her exemplary knowledge of governance structures transitioned the academy to a lay board of directors for St. Mary's Academy and established the creation

of the St. Mary's Academy Foundation. She's overseen the ongoing implementation of their strategic plans, producing improved programming, a renewed board with a stronger governance model and effective stewardship of resources. Enrolment has been high under her leadership and the school's positive image in the community.

I thank Sister Susan Wikeem for her exemplary service and wish her a joy-filled retirement.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances? Seeing no grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could call for third reading, the bills in the following order: Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended); Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act (Opening Birth and Adoption Records); Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved Consumer Protection and Enforcement); Bill 34, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (High-Cost Credit Products); Bill 62, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Contracts for Distance Communication Services); Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act; Bill 31, The Police Services Amendment Act; and bill 51, the legislative assembly act.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call bills in the following order for concurrence and third readings, starting with Bill 50, followed by bills 59, 18, 34, Bill 62, Bill 3, Bill 31, followed by Bill 51.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 50—The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended)

Mr. Speaker: Starting with—under concurrence and third readings—we'll call Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended).

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), that Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and

Employment Standards Code Amended); Loi sur la protection des travailleurs temporaires (modification de la Loi sur le recrutement et la protection des travailleurs et du Code des normes d'emploi), reported from Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any debate?

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put some words on record regarding Bill 50, the protection for temporary help workers, the worker recruitment and protection act and Employment Standards Code amended.

As this is the third reading of the bill, I feel that it is important to provide the minister with some final input. A lot of this I have already said, but I will say it again.

Mr. Speaker, this bill introduces many drastic amendments which will deeply impact the work of temporary help agencies across this province.

The first part of the bill introduces amendments to The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act to require the temporary help agencies to be licensed. Licensing these agencies to keep track of who is operating them is fine, but we all know that the devil is always in the details.

Regulations will set the licence fees and we all know what has been happening to licence fees in the last couple of years with this NDP government. I do not think that there have been very many licences—licence fees that have not gone up. Under this NDP government, it now costs more to be born, get married, go hunting or fishing and even die.

This NDP government's track record of keeping promises is not very good, so I suspect that the fees that will be charged will be a money grab.

Mr. Speaker, one key provision of Bill 50 is to add provisions to The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act that could prevent temporary agencies from charging conversion fees after six months and would dictate that a conversion fee could not be greater than 20 per cent of the employer's annual salary.

Mr. Speaker, temporary help agencies incur significant costs in the advertising, recruitment, background screening, risk and overhead costs, which they cover with the fees they charge their

clients. If temporary help agencies are not able to recover their overhead costs, they may be forced to shut down or leave the province.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen the lineup of people waiting at these agencies, hoping to get work for the day. Temporary help agencies help a lot of employees find work that they may not be able to find on their own. Who will these people turn to in order to find work? Bill 50 seriously entices agencies to seek to do their business elsewhere in Canada. This means the potential for thousands of jobs lost.

These agencies already meet the obligations under The Employment Standards Code, and it does not make much sense to introduce stricter provisions around their services, especially when they are a tremendous contributor to the provincial economy and employ thousands of employees. Bill 50 will cause much harm to the temporary help agencies and their ability to provide service to their clients.

There are more and more companies across North America using temporary help agencies. Companies are having more demands put on them during busy seasons and are looking for extra workers for short periods of time. Temporary help agencies are able to provide those companies with the workers they need and provide workers with jobs.

Mr. Speaker, even the provincial government uses temporary help agencies. They use them in different areas. Agency nurses are a good example of temporary professionals. There are a lot more temporary professionals being used. There are retired professionals that only want to work part-time. These part-time professionals come with a wealth of knowledge and are an additional welcome to the workforce.

We live in an ever-changing world. In the past few years, we have seen great changes in technology and changes in our economy. We have gone from local economies to global economies. Mr. Speaker, companies need to change the way they do business in order to survive in this global economy. If they do not change, they will not be in business. These added pressures have seen the need for companies to be able to add extra workers when needed. Temporary help agencies provide this service.

Mr. Speaker, companies are changing the way they do business, and government needs to work with these companies and think outside the box and come up with solutions for today and the future. If

this government thought there was a need to revise The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code amended, they should have reached out and talked to everyone involved.

One such group is the Association of Canadian Search, Employment and Staffing Services. ACSESS is a well-respected national association representing members of the staffing industry. They have a combined membership of 320 corporate entities and represent over 1,000 branches across Canada. ACSESS's purpose is to foster the growth of the industry by promoting quality services, dignity and respect among workers, adherence to all relevant legislation and employee rights, as well as ongoing liaison with governments and the public to ensure a full understanding of the industry and its practices.

I would ask the minister what groups had input into Bill 50. Were groups given proper amounts of time to provide input into Bill 50? Did groups have meaningful consultation with the minister and her staff? Were the temporary help agencies consulted? Or was this a bill where groups were told what was in the bill, but their concerns were not addressed?

*(14:40)

Again, this NDP government does not have a good track record for consulting with anybody on anything. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Labour is so concerned about how temporary help workers are being treated by the agencies, she should really be concerned about this NDP government and how it's treating Manitobans. This minister went door to door and promised no tax increases in the last election. This minister was part of destroying the taxpayer protection act. These actions were extremely harmful to all Manitobans. When will this minister bring legislation forward to protect Manitobans from this NDP government?

The taxpayer protection act affects all Manitobans, and I would support the minister in bringing back the taxpayer protection act.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 50 has the potential to hurt as many workers as it does to help. I do not see the urgency to rush and pass this bill without giving all people involved opportunity to provide input on it. Temporary employment provides a bridge to permanent employment and we need to be careful that we are not taking a step backwards instead of forwards.

We know this NDP government feels that everyone should work for the government. The NDP

feel that they should be spending Manitobans' money at the Cabinet table, but the right answer is that the government should work for the people and the money should be spent at the kitchen table and not at the Cabinet table.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have failed in their accountability to taxpayers. There are several examples of this. One that is right in this department, the failure to see what was happening in the Office of the Fire Commissioner for a period of four years.

After promising no tax increases during the election of 2011, the NDP broke their promise not just once, but twice. The budget of 2012, 2013, both contained record tax increases, the highest in decades. These tax increases hurt business. When business hurts, so do jobs and the economy, and the residents of Manitoba suffer.

Mr. Speaker, it is this government's job to protect workers in their workplaces and to make sure that their workplaces are safe. But it's not just that they need that; protecting workers means protecting job availability and workers' ability to get those jobs. Government needs to help businesses and industry to help understand how to best protect workers but also help them remain competitive and viable as they work to form the basis of our economy and create the jobs that Manitobans rely on.

In the last few months, I've had businesses call me and have concerns that the NDP government has moved to an enforcement model and not one of helping business to meet compliance; inspectors walk in, write a compliance order and leave. Government should be more focused on prevention and working with these businesses to reach compliance. Mr. Speaker, if you have a healthy business climate, you have a good economy.

On this side of the House, ours is an approach of openness, of working with employees and ensuring a reasonable balance between taking steps to ensure workers are protected and maintaining business competitiveness. In contrast, this NDP government has failed to protect Manitoba workers and Manitoba families with their high tax, high spending. We cannot be competitive with our neighbours when our PST is 8 per cent and Saskatchewan's is at 5 per cent.

PC caucus believes in promoting training, investment and innovation for Manitoba businesses while also supporting and promoting the rights of Manitoba workers. In the last number of years,

Manitoba has lost some 35,000 people to other jurisdictions. That number represents a city the size of Brandon. We are losing our youngest and brightest and best trained workers to other provinces. Mr. Speaker, this has to stop.

Government needs to create an economy that is capable of creating long-term, well-paying jobs for young Manitobans so they can work and raise their families in Manitoba. We need our young Manitobans to stay in Manitoba, raise their families in Manitoba and grow old in Manitoba. A PC government will bring and bring balance and democracy back to labour legislation.

If this government is truly interested in best protecting temporary workers and ensuring they are available to find work when they need it the most, this government needs to work with all stakeholders and make bills that have a positive effect on all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I enjoyed the opportunity of putting some words on record on Bill 50. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly to the Bill 50, the protection for temporary workers act.

There are—I think we need to acknowledge that there are important roles that temporary workers play in our society and that temporary workers are pretty important, tend to be forgotten sometimes, tend to be not given as much attention, and when we're talking about temporary foreign workers, sometimes they're treated like second-class citizens, and, clearly, we need to do better than we are.

I'm ready to support this legislation, but I did want to say that I think that there are things that we can do better to support the temporary workers and to support, in particular, temporary foreign workers because of the situation that they are often in, very dependent on circumstance, and make sure that those temporary foreign workers who come to our country who would like to stay here, have that opportunity.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 50?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question, the question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and

Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please signify by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: Opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote.

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

* (15:00)

Order, please. The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 50, The Protection for Temporary Help Workers Act (Worker Recruitment and Protection Act and Employment Standards Code Amended).

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Nevakshonoff, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Rowat, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 25, Nays 17.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable—we'll now proceed to call for concurrence in third reading, Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act, opening birth—[interjection]

Just to ensure that the record is clear, the motion is carried.

Bill 59—The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act (Opening Birth and Adoption Records)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to continue with concurrence and third readings of Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act, opening of birth adoption records.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), that Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act (Opening Birth and Adoption Records); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'adoption et la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil (accès aux documents de naissance et d'adoption), reported from Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any debate?

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I'd like to put a few additional words on the record. I did get a chance to speak to this bill before when it was in second reading, but there was some comments that came forward in committee just to make absolutely sure on behalf of the families that some level of privacy is honoured in this whole process.

Certainly, the bill, which we joined many in calling for because it's been—something that has been promised for five or six years, is an important bill for many families in Manitoba for several reasons. I mean, we certainly have a lot of families with adopted members or who have adopted children who have reasons of their own, usually health reasons, to want to track back. And anything prior to 1999 effectively is completely closed to those people right now, going right back, actually, 1925, which is the—we'll—I doubt that we'll find too many at that particular point—we are going to find children from that generation that would still have access and need

to get records and, in particular, health records would be important to them.

But I also had the opportunity to reach out to the Metis Federation, and I think everyone in the House is familiar with how they determine their membership, and there has to be a blood linkage going back to some Metis ancestry. And they have, actually, standing files out there of over 3,000 right now that are in abeyance, waiting for access to these types of records. So this would certainly be a very important bill for that—and 3,000 would be an understatement, because that's 3,000 individuals—once they—if they qualify under their definition, then their children would qualify as well and perhaps even second and third generations. So, certainly, it's a very important bill to the Metis Federation, and they are very supportive, as are we, to see this move ahead. I think our only regret around this is that it has taken so long.

There are a few areas in the bill that are a little bit unclear as to whether or not if there is medical information from the current generation, such as heart conditions, that—whether we can reach back and notify parents and siblings, that is uncertain, and that was something that came out in a committee. And I would certainly encourage the registrar who will be in charge of this to come up with a way to deal with this. It is written so that that could be done but there isn't necessarily a mandate to do it which is something I think would be very important.

And as I said earlier, this is a very important bill on a personal point because I am an adoptee, and so certainly tracking our—my family connections backward, this bill has been—this lack of access has been a barrier for our family. We simply have no way to track back into the '50s in our—in my case, and that there's simply closed records, so there's no opportunity to do that.

* (15:10)

It wasn't very important from my point of view for many years because I had a wonderful family that I was adopted into and certainly had every benefit that anyone born into that family would have had, and certainly very valuable. But now that I have children on my own—of my own, we certainly begin to wonder about health connections because we've never been able to fill in the second sheet on the health history for children simply because we knew absolutely nothing about it, and there are so many more things now that we are aware are linked through the—your ancestry, through genetics that

relate to health, and so certainly it's important to have access to that information for many reasons.

So we certainly are pleased to see that there's finally been movement in this area and that we will be able to help so many families in this province, and when we talk about families, many of these families are adoptive families. They have created their own family by gathering together individuals, adopting family members and certainly they have created every bit as respectable and honoured family as a birth family might be. So it's very important that we provide them with the tools that they need to find out what's—what went on in their background, find out the health records and find out if there are any family members, even half-sisters and half-brothers in some cases, that are out there, and we did have presenters come to committee who had that experience. They had been adopted out of Alberta and, therefore, they had passed this bill—a bill similar to this sometime ago. So they had the experience of actually doing the tracing and tracking and had found a brother, in his case, and found quite a bit of medical information that he was able to pass on to his family which will be valuable to them in the future. In fact, the example, and he is—it was an interesting case in that this gentleman had also adopted a child into his current family and that girl had had a traumatic experience and had a brain bleed. And they tracked that down, and through the Alberta registry—because she was adopted in Alberta—they were able to find family medical history. It indicated, in fact, that was an ongoing problem in the family. And so they were able to get—now that they knew they had a problem, they were able to find special medication to help to deal with that issue so that it certainly would be prevented from occurring again.

So it was a working example of how valuable this can be on an individual basis, but it also will reach out and reunite a lot of families, adoptees that have been lost from the family tree, and I mention the Metis Federation in particular where it is very important in their structure to show those blood linkages.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this bill, one that many Manitobans have been calling for for quite a long period of time, so we're pleased to see it finally get to the floor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just going to put a few records on the—a few words

on the record on Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

It—this government is very—has been very slow in bringing this bill forward, but, thankfully, it is finally here, and the bill as it's put together is pretty good. I think that the—there's some issues, particularly around making sure that health knowledge can be transferred even where individuals don't want to actually connect physically or in person. And—but overall this is going to be an important bill and an important step forward for Manitoba and for many Manitobans.

It's really important for people to be able to connect to others in their birth family where they so would like, and I think it's extremely important that people who are adopted have information on the health history from members of their biological family. So this, hopefully, will help many, as I'm sure it will, and also help people who are interested for reasons as establishing Metis heritage, as an example, which can be very important as people move forward and are able to participate in the ethnic and cultural background that they are from, which in some cases is not always obvious but needs to be recorded in order for people to get the associations and to get the benefits that they should be having from those ethnic and cultural associations.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on Bill 59?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House is ready for the question.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 59, The Adoption Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act (Opening Birth and Adoption Records).

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

**Bill 18—The Business Practices Amendment Act
(Improved Consumer Protection
and Enforcement)**

Mr. Speaker: Now proceed to call for concurrence and third reading, Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved Consumer Protection and Enforcement).

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), that Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved

Consumer Protection and Enforcement); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales (mesures de protection et d'exécution améliorées à l'intention du consommateur), be reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, indeed, a pleasure to speak today on Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act. This is another bill, a consumer protection bill, if you like, that has been brought forward by the government. There certainly has been a number of consumer protection-type of bills brought forward by the government over the last couple of years. Clearly, they are trying to send a message to the public that they are concerned about consumer protection.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I would suggest to you, that Manitobans should be more concerned about being protected against the actions of the NDP government. And that's maybe where I'll start with some of my comments today.

Clearly, it would be nice if we would have a signed contract by the NDP for all the election promises they make—*[interjection]*—because they seem to break those election promises. And I suppose the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is probably right; even if we did have a signed contract by the NDP, they would do whatever they could to break that contract.

And I will reference the Manitoba Jockey Club. If we go back here not too long ago, the Province signed an agreement with the Manitoba Jockey Club that they would have a certain amount of revenue from their VLTs, and there would be a—some cost sharing in terms of the VLT revenue.

So, within a matter of months after the NDP were elected, they thought, you know, of course, we need some more money, we need some more revenue, and they looked to the contract they'd signed with the Manitoba Jockey Club and decided it was time to tear that contract up, start over so that they could get their hands on more revenue.

And we all know where that whole process ended up. They—of course, the Jockey Club had nothing to lose, so they took the NDP to court to try to do what was right, what they felt was right and to protect the industry itself going forward and certainly

to protect the contracts that they thought they had signed in good faith with the government, and clearly the government did not act in good faith.

So it is somewhat ironic that the NDP would bring forward legislation that speaks to protecting consumers. Clearly, the legislation is intended to look after some of the bad apples out there. This legislation, of course, will give more powers to the government under certain situations.

* (15:20)

There's a few cautions in here I would like to bring forward. There's certainly some changes in definition in the scope of this legislation, and a lot of these definitions are somewhat subjective and certainly open to interpretation. And they will certainly be open to interpretation by officials of the departments that will be enforcing the rules and the regulations underneath this particular legislation. So that's always a concern moving forward when we are opening the door, if you will, to allowing—giving more rights to enforcement personnel in this particular situation and under this particular act. So there's certainly some concern with the wording in terms of the definitions there, again, being very subjective when we talk about some of the issues in the legislation and talking about trying to protect people within this legislation.

The other issue that I want to just briefly mention, too, is an issue—and we tried to raise this issue in committee the other night when this particular bill came up for discussion in committee, and we thought it was a reasonable amendment. Certainly, the—under this particular legislation the government now gives themselves extra authority to enter into a premise, and this is pretty key, I think, to fundamental rights of Manitobans. Clearly, this legislation will give those people that are acting on behalf of the government more authority to enter into residences and businesses.

So we thought it would be prudent for the inspectors to show, first of all, who they were to the public without having the people to actually ask for identification. We thought it should be incumbent upon officers acting on behalf of the government to show that type of identification, and I think that's pretty important, kind of a fundamental right that Manitobans should have.

The other issue in this legislation, too, it's under 14.1(2), it references again the ability of an individual to, again, go into a facility or a business

without a warrant, and that again raises a bit of a flag with us. Again, it gives those officers more encompassing power than we think may be warranted.

So, with those few words, I just wanted to put those words of caution in regard to this particular legislation on the record. We—I guess this particular legislation will come into force once it does seem—receive royal assent. There was no people, no persons came forward in the committee to speak to this particular legislation, so just for those few words of caution, I just wanted to put those words on the record.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, I rise to talk about Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act. While in general support of this legislation, I'm, in looking at this legislation, concerned not only about consumer protection, but to make sure that there is the right balance in terms of protection of business owners, particularly against things like false accusations.

And in the event that a business is found to be in breach of the act, will the results be made public? What privacy has the business owner in terms of the rights? Are inspectors able to inspect private documents like emails during the inquiry related to a business? Do inspectors have to comply with other privacy laws when conducting their inspections?

I think that there's some areas here which could have been clarified more and, certainly, we want to make sure that consumers are really well protected. But we need to do this with an understanding of what is reasonable in terms of what businesses are asked to do and what rights enforcement personnel have to enter businesses and homes and so on.

So I just put those words on the record and, you know, that basically is my comments on this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Business Practices Amendment Act (Improved Consumer Protection and Enforcement).

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

I declare the motion carried.

**Bill 34—The Consumer Protection
Amendment Act (High-Cost Credit Products)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Next order of business is concurrence and third reading of Bill 34, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (High-Cost Credit Products).

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing, that Bill 34, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (High-Cost Credit Products); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (produits de crédit à coût élevé), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): A pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 34, again another consumer protection amendment bringing—brought forward, this, of course, dealing with the high-cost credit products.

And just to outline, first of all, this particular legislation deals with a very specific product that's out in the marketplace these days, does not apply to, of course, payday loans, mortgages, or credit extended by banks or credit unions. So it applies to some of those other products that are out in the marketplace.

First of all, I want to make note of a couple of presenters that came to committee last week to present. First of all, John Silver, who works for the Community Financial Counselling Services, and I—he made a very interesting presentation to committee. And I do want to thank, certainly, him and his organization for the good work that they do for many Manitobans, certainly Manitobans that find themselves in difficult situations financially. So, certainly, organizations like this and the people that work in those organizations do provide a very important service to many Manitobans across our province.

Also, I want to mention, too, Gloria Desorcy, who was there from the Consumers' Association of Canada, and clearly I want to recognize the good work they do on behalf of consumers in Manitoba, and certainly referenced the situation that some consumers find them in these days, in terms of having to seek out these type of loans. Clearly, again, we will see, as this bill moves forward, how it is

going to impact Manitobans. Certainly, we'll see how that does work for them.

This particular bill will come into force on a day fixed by proclamation, so we will see what the government—how quickly the government wants to move this particular legislation forward.

I just want to make a comment. Clearly, these types of loan products are becoming more prevalent in Manitoba, and it's an unfortunate sign of the—both the economy and I think some of the government policies that we have in Manitoba that are forcing Manitobans to use these particular types of loan instruments.

* (15:30)

Clearly, the NDP tax strategy, where they're taxing Manitobans to the highest extent, almost of any province in Canada, also with a new—an additional fees and surcharges they are providing to Manitobans actually leaves Manitobans with less money in their pockets at the end of the day and, as a result, Manitobans are finding it more difficult to live from payday to payday. And that's why we're seeing a—more demand for payday loans and some of these high-cost loan activities as well.

So, clearly, the government policies that are in place today and their high-taxation strategies do impact a lot of, especially, low-income Manitobans. And we find that it's the low-income Manitobans that are actually forced to use these high-credit instruments, and, as a result, it's becoming more and more tough for those particular families and individuals who are using these very high-interest and short-term loan instruments.

Clearly, I think it should be noted, too, a lot of the people that may be using these instruments are Manitoba seniors. And, unfortunately, Manitoba seniors are getting squeezed more and more as time goes on. And clearly seniors on fixed incomes are finding it tougher to live from paycheque to paycheque.

You know, even things such as discussed today in question period, things like our Manitoba Hydro rates—clearly all Manitobans will be impacted by increasing hydro rates which, at the end of the month, leaves them less money to service their bills and, again, pushes people into these types of high-interest loans.

And the other thing that I want to mention, too, at this point in time, when we talk about loans, is the

situation the NDP are in. Clearly, we've had a number of deficit budgets the last few years. We've seen our—a debt to the Province surpass the \$30-billion mark. Clearly the cost to service the debt that the Province has is going to grow, especially if interest rates increase, which I'm sure they will in due course. That will have a very dramatic impact on the Province's ability to service the debt and pay down a debt, and certainly not freeing up any extra money for important social services that we need.

So, clearly, Manitobans are finding themselves in that type of situation as well where, just the way the tax policies are, it's becoming more difficult for Manitobans to live from paycheque to paycheque, and we're seeing the same sort of a situation with the NDP as well.

So, with those few words and a few cautionary notes about this particular legislation, I think there'll be other members of the Chamber that want to speak to this particular legislation as well.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just a few comments on this Bill 34, the consumer protection amendment act which deals with loans with high interest rate charges. And certainly what we've seen over the last number of years with what are, in effect, payday loans, is that, you know, first there's one bill, and then there's some loopholes found, and then there's another bill, and we're on probably the third or fourth bill related to payday loans to try and close loopholes.

Certainly, it would have been good if the government had done a better job right at the beginning in making sure that many of these loopholes were closed. May not be easily, but, you know, what is done in, you know, computer security business is to have people go in and try and figure out ways to get around a legislation, and I think the government could have done a better job.

But, that being said, it's important that we move forward and close loopholes as they start to be used, to make sure that people are not taken advantage of in paying extraordinarily high rates of interest on loans.

And there also, in my view, needs to be measures which relate to improved education. It's good that we have people like John Silver and others who work very hard to try and help people on low incomes and assist them and help them not in—to get into problems of such loans in the first place.

But there clearly is still work to do, and pleased to support this legislation.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 34, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (High-Cost Credit Products).

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

**Bill 62—The Consumer Protection
Amendment Act (Contracts for Distance
Communication Services)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Our next order of business is concurrence and third reading of Bill 62, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Contracts for Distance Communication Services).

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing, that Bill 62, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Contracts for Distance Communication Services); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (contrats de services de communication à distance), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is opened.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Again, a pleasure to speak to Bill 62, another consumer protection amendment, this one, of course, dealing with distance communication services.

I think it's important just for maybe members of the Chamber to recognize this, what all products are going to be included in this particular legislation. So the distance communication services by definition will now include cellphone services, residential phone services, Internet services, cable television services, satellite television services, satellite radio service, remote surveillance services and then, of course, anything prescribed as distance communication services. So those are the types of products and services that will now fall under The Consumer Protection Act, so it's an expansion of the

existing legislation as well to include those particular products.

Again, this particular bill will come into force by a proclamation. So we always look to see how serious the government is in terms of bringing forward this legislation and actually enacting it. So that's something that we will be keeping an eye as time moves on.

We did actually propose an amendment in committee to this particular piece of legislation, and our amendment dealt with section 12, and section 12 talks about the termination of contracts. And we thought there might be some room for clarification that might help consumers out and, I think, would also help the business community, too, that was providing those particular services.

The way the existing legislation is written is that, once a longer term contract ends, say a two- or three-year contract ends, the contract will be extended on a monthly basis. So it's very difficult to make changes with—outside of that termination of that monthly contract. So what we proposed was that the contract would automatically extend, but it wouldn't be limited to the 30-day or the one-month term so that any changes to the contract, whether it be by the consumer or by the business providing that service, those could be changed at any point in time and wouldn't be necessarily subject to the one-month provision as provided under the current legislation.

Unfortunately, the government at the time decided not to accept that amendment. The minister did signal that they might have a look at it for future reference, but I think it's something that consumers would probably find beneficial. They're still under the provisions of the legislation. There still is protection for consumers there because there still is provisions there that forces the business providing the service to actually make the consumer aware of any changes that would be made in the future.

*(15:40)

So the provision was there, so I think with this particular amendment would actually provide some more versatility to both the consumer and to the business providing that service. So that's why we propose that particular amendment.

This particular legislation also talks to the transparency of contracts. And I think that's clearly important. Again, ironically, I want to point out the lack of transparency that has been shown by this particular government over the last few years. Again,

they're saying one thing prior to an election and doing completely the opposite after the election. And it's really a matter of broken promises that this government has provided to Manitobans, which is clearly unfortunate. And it really speaks to the whole issue of transparency and lack of obligation to Manitobans, as well. So it is somewhat hypocritical that a government with that type of history would bring forward another piece of legislation talking about consumer protection.

I reference the—I'll call it the old taxpayer accountability act. It's basically been tore up by this government. You know, there was at one time legislation that would protect—we thought—protect consumers from a government of the day from increasing taxes such as the provincial sales tax. And the intention of that legislation was to provide Manitobans an opportunity to vote through a referendum if there was going to be an increase in the provincial sales tax or any other major tax.

Well, clearly the government didn't think that was a very valid contract, if you will, with the people of Manitoba. And they choose—they chose to ignore that particular legislation. And, quite frankly, I think that flies in the face of transparency and contractual obligation that a government should have to its ratepayers. Clearly, the concept that there would be no new taxes before the last provincial election was something that the government ran on. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) called the thought of increasing the provincial sales tax nonsense. Again, then they broke their word on that particular verbal contract, and that's very unfortunate.

So the NDP have been anything but transparent and upfront with Manitobans. Clearly, we think the taxpayers in Manitoba deserve better. Their elected officials should share, in a partnership, a level of trust with Manitobans and with their elected officials. And, ironically, they're trying to bring forward legislation to look at contracts with individuals and businesses. So it's quite ironic that they would try to bring forward legislation to make parties obligated to those contracts, where, in fact, they are the first ones to tear up the contracts that they have verbally entered into with Manitobans.

So with those few cautionary notes, I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this particular bill. I know other members of the Chamber would like to speak to Bill 62 as well.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to talk to this Bill 62, the consumer protection amendment act relating to contracts about distant communication services. Certainly supportive of the effort to make sure that Manitobans are protected, but I think it's also true that we need to make sure that, you know, businesses have a good environment to operate in.

And the one, you know, aspect of this, since this deals with—to some extent, with convergence of different forms of communication services, cable TV, satellite television, radio, Internet and remote surveillance, that, you know, Internet is now being used for making phone calls.

The evolution of iPhones and various other communication devices means that you're able to get a variety of communication services that you might not have expected to get on one device. And so, where the bill talks about two or more types of services provided under the same contract, this is clearly important on the one hand, but where you have convergence so the one service or two services they're providing is one service, then this may become a little bit tricky under some circumstances. And this will need to be, I believe, taken into account when it's judged what is a separate service and what is, in fact, a bundled service under one type of service as we have more and more convergence coming together.

That being said, I am supportive of this legislation and look forward to it moving forward. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 62, the consumer protection amendment act, contracts for distance communication.

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

Our next order of business is concurrence and third reading of Bill 62, the consumer protection amendment act, contracts for distance communication. *[interjection]* No, I'm sorry. Let me just cross that one out here.

Bill 3—The Witness Security Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The next order of business is Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Housing, that Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur a sécurité des témoins, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Floor is open.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I want to put a few words on the public record regarding bill 3, The Witness Security Act, and I said at my comments at second reading that I have general agreement with the principle of this bill, but I have some specific concerns about this bill itself.

Certainly, when we look at the issue of witness protection, there are good reasons why we have a witness protection program in the province and, of course, all provinces have similar programs. There are times when witnesses who are testifying in cases do so and put their own selves at risk. Mr. Deputy Speaker, often, these are high-profile cases involving high-end criminal gangs, whether they be OMGs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, or other gangs. Witnesses are often those who have been involved in criminal activity themselves, and by putting forward themselves as witnesses, it's necessary to have their participation to get a conviction that is seen in the public interest against the individuals who are before the courts. However, by putting themselves on the witness stand and giving that information, they recognize that they, themselves, will be put at risk following the trial. And so a witness protection program is something that does exactly what the title would infer that it does. It protects those who have come forward and been a state witness, been a witness on behalf of the government.

And so this is often popularized in film where individuals can be put into a witness protection program and often it's not that extensive, but sometimes, I suppose, it is, where individuals change their identity, where they receive support and are involved in an occupation to protect them from those who might want to cause them harm for having testified in a trial where individuals were convicted or where there was a likelihood of conviction.

* (15:50)

So this bill changes a couple of things, certainly one is it allows an individual who is within the witness protection program to be removed from that program where they have done something to bring themselves in violation of the agreement that they have to be in the witness protection program.

As I mentioned earlier in my comments, those who are entering the program are often coming from a criminal background, and it can be, I suppose, not always a smooth transition as sometimes those individuals don't leave their criminal lives behind despite the best efforts of those who are running the witness protection program. And so there are times, although I imagine rare times, where individuals have to be removed from the witness protection program, and there needs to be a mechanism to do that, and I support that. Certainly, where an individual is in the witness protection program and they are not adhering to the requirements of that program, I support, and I believe our party does support, the ability to remove somebody from that program.

But this bill has a flaw, and I think it's a serious flaw. And I raised this issue at committee and I brought forward an amendment, and I was cautiously optimistic the amendment would be agreed to. There—I know there was a—quite a discussion among the Justice officials and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) at the time, and he indicated to me he was close to accepting the amendment, but for whatever reason chose not to. And I wanted to speak a little bit about that because I think it's a serious flaw and one that would give me pause to not support this bill, even though I agree with the intention.

The process for expelling somebody from the witness protection program is that you essentially put them on notice that they're in violation of the program that they've agreed to enter into, and then their process unfolds from there where they're able to answer to that question about what their actions are within the program. And then, if they ultimately are found to be in violation of that—of the program and their agreement to be within the program, they are eligible to be expelled. Their support can be cut off. But there is no provision to notify individuals that that action is happening. There is no provision that requires that they be notified that their support is being cut off.

Now, I don't know why that was excluded. I actually think it was a mistake, and I think it was a

mistake that was almost corrected at committee. And I think the department was, I think, at least open to making the correction, and for whatever reason the minister chose not to make that correction. But I think it's a problem not to have in legislation notification that somebody under the witness protection program has been cut off from their support. Now, regardless of the fact that an individual might be involved in activities that they shouldn't be involved in in the witness protection program—and action should be taken against them for that—they should at least be notified that they've been removed from support. It might, in fact, jeopardize their protection without that notification.

Now, I think that there is a reason to actually tell people that are in the witness protection program that they are no longer going to be supported; that in some ways the government might be putting them in jeopardy by not ensuring that notice happens. Now, I think that the—during committee, the minister, after spending some time talking to justice officials, said, well, they'll be notified that an action is proceeding against them, that they are considered to be in violation, and that's fine. So they're notified that an action is proceeding against them, but there's no notification about the result of that. There's no notification saying, we've decided to suspend your support payments, and that is concerning. It's very troubling that there wouldn't have that notification in there, because individuals who have gone into witness protection, they're—do so because they're in danger. And, if that support is cut off and they're not notified that that support is cut off, it could potentially put them in danger.

Now, I expect—and I think at the committee, you know, there was some comments about, well, you know, it would be our intention to notify them, it would be our intention to let them know, but there is a prescriptive process for how an individual gets removed from the witness protection program and it doesn't include the notification to them that their support is being cut off. And—I mean, I think just providing—now, the minister at committee said, well, you know, we're concerned maybe that this person will go into hiding, and so we can't get the notice to them. Well, I mean, it's sort of ironic to suggest that somebody who's already in hiding under the witness protection program will go in hiding so—again, so they can't get a notification from the government.

But all I was really suggesting in the amendment, that there'd be—there would be reasonable notice, a reasonable attempt to notify the

individual in witness protection. So they're obviously contacting the person in witness protection to tell them that they believe that they're in violation. Sending the notice to the same address that they sent the first notification to you saying, we've decided to remove your support, seems like a pretty reasonable thing. And I do think, even though a person within witness protection might be violating the agreement that put them in witness protection, you know, there's some, I think, some reasonable expectation that the government, who benefited from the testimony at a trial, should at least notify an individual that they are going to be removed from the witness protection.

So I was surprised that amendment wasn't protected—or sorry, wasn't accepted. Had that amendment been accepted at committee, I would have no problem giving my full support to this bill. But I think it's fundamentally flawed when the—that notice provision isn't there after an individual's had the judgment against them. I understand there's notification originally, but I think that notification has to happen when there's a decision to cut somebody off witness support. So I was concerned about that. It disturbs me that that wasn't in there and I think that that is a significant omission in this bill.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I believe that the provisions in this bill with regard to witness protection and the ability to remove for support for individuals is reasonable provided that the issue which the MLA for Steinbach has addressed is actually dealt with properly, because it's rather fundamental to what is happening here, that the individuals who have been in witness protection, if the support is to be withdrawn that they are properly notified, given advance warning, and then, you know, informed as to when the support is going to be withdrawn.

Clearly, the excuse that somebody is in hiding doesn't really cut it because there must be some way of communicating with these individuals if they are, you know, receiving support. How can they not be somewhere to find them if they're not—or if they have been receiving support. You can't get support to them if you can't find them. So there's kind of a circular argument which the government is employing here. And, you know, this will need to be looked at properly and handled properly if this is to work well.

Now, that being said, I will be ready to support this legislation but hope that the government works

out ways to make sure that it works properly and that we don't run into problems as a result. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the adopting the motion, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to it, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote has been called—requested, call in the members.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Witness Security Amendment Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Gaudreau, Gerrard, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Kostyshyn, Mackintosh, Maloway,

Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Pettersen, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Helwer, Martin, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Rowat, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 29, Nays 16.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 31—The Police Services Amendment Act (Community Safety Officers)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed on concurrence and third readings to call Bill 31, The Police Services Amendment Act (Community Safety Officers).

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation, that Bill 31, The Police Services Amendment Act (Community Safety Officers); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de police (agents de sécurité communautaire), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, very briefly, we look very forward to community safety officers being—becoming part of the fabric of public safety in the province of Manitoba. I was very pleased to have the co-operation of the RCMP, the interest of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and, certainly, the great interest of the City of Thompson, which will be the first community in Manitoba to be the beneficiary of a safety—of the community safety officers.

Mr. Speaker, we know, certainly, that we can benefit by having more feet on the ground. These community safety officers, after negotiation between municipalities and the Manitoba government and the local police force, will be out there, keeping our communities safe. They'll be lining up people who may be having difficulties with addictions or mental health services. They will also be able to enforce certain provincial statutes as required, such as The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act and The Mental Health Act, as well as the liquor act.

We think this is another way to provide greater safety and security in our communities. And I

certainly look forward to joining the MLA for Thompson and the Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation in the city of Thompson in the near future as we welcome the community safety officers to the fabric of public safety in his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, we stand in support of this legislation. We were happy to see an amendment that we brought forward in committee a couple days ago supported by the government. I thought that that was a wise thing to do. The amendment that we brought forward spoke specifically about the training provisions that these rural cadets, or community safety officers, as they'll be known in legislation, would get. And we wanted to ensure that, in addition to the kinds of training that they would get, in terms of public protection and crime prevention, which is important, that they would also be getting training in terms of victim services and social services.

It's my belief that many of these community safety officers will be not the face of law enforcement in their community, but certainly people will associate them with a legal presence in their community. I think you might get situations where some of them might be there for a longer period of time than RCMP officers in the rural communities who are often moved around as a result of their rotational system within the RCMP, Mr. Speaker. So they'll be individuals, I think, who will be approached about a number of different legal issues. Obviously, they won't be involved in criminal matters and they won't be there to provide legal advice, but they will be sought after for advice, I'm sure, on the best places to go for community services, for victim services and for ideas around crime prevention.

So I wanted to ensure that that was involved in the training of these community safety officers. The government accepted that amendment, which I thought was a positive development, Mr. Speaker. I wish they would have accepted the amendment on Bill 3 so I wouldn't have had to vote against that bill. But, you know, you don't win them all, I suppose. But it's important to ensure that legislation is effective and does what it's supposed to do.

This is something, I think, that a number of municipalities, where they've been looking for a greater law enforcement presence—and I don't use that in the term of being either municipal police or the RCMP, Mr. Speaker—but it's the ability to do

stronger bylaw enforcement, to be able to enforce provincial legislation. It's something, I think, that'll be a welcome ability.

I know it's been referenced that the City of Thompson has been a significant advocate for this bill, and that is true. And I commend the city councils and those who are involved in this on—in Thompson, about bringing this forward. But I also know they're not alone, that there have been many jurisdictions in rural Manitoba who've spoken about the need for increased bylaw enforcement, the ability to have some provincial legislation enforced in a way that wasn't specifically through the RCMP or their municipal law enforcement. That would include the City of Steinbach and the Rural Municipality of Hanover, who've had questions about that—growing municipalities, essentially urban municipalities, in many ways, Mr. Speaker, who wanted to be able to have that kind of an option when it comes to law enforcement.

* (16:40)

So I recognize that policing is different in every community in rural Manitoba and the policing needs in Steinbach are different than the policing needs in Thompson, not that they are any less important in either community, but they're different and different parts of Manitoba will result in different needs for policing. And I hope that this program will provide some flexibility to ensure that those needs are met and we look forward to its passage.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly on Bill 31, which will significantly enhance the ability for communities to have community efforts at safety and community safety officers. I welcome this legislation providing opportunities, for example, to the city of Thompson to employ individuals who will be able to improve the community in general and the safety of the community specifically.

Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of concerns. One deals with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' recommendation that the Province of Manitoba establish a consistent approach to contribute long-term, cost-shared funding to assist communities with program set-up and delivery. It's not clear exactly what the Province is going to do in this respect, but, certainly, this needs some particular attention.

Second, I want to talk briefly about the issue of training people who will be community safety

officers. I suspect there will be a bit of a learning experience, that there has already been some learning from the cadet program here in Winnipeg. But I suspect, in particular, as it's expanded out to rural Manitoba, that there—we can't entirely predict the sorts of training and learning that will be needed on an ongoing basis for individuals based on the kind of experiences they have in delivering these community safety services.

And so I think it'll be pretty important not only as the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has suggested and is now part of this legislation, to make sure that the ability and the learning is extended in social areas as well, as an example. But it's going to be important to have some ongoing learning process, and because we'll have people in due course in different parts of the province, some places relatively isolated, that it'll be important to have some sort of a, I would suggest, e-learning process or process online so that people cannot only learn but share experiences and share the ways that have worked to be effective in their communities with people in other communities.

So I would hope that the government will set up an ongoing learning environment in some fashion for these community safety officers. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on this bill?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: House ready for the question, the question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 31, The Police Services Amendment Act (Community Safety Officers).

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

Bill 51—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We will now proceed to call for concurrence and third readings, Bill 51, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Howard), that Bill 51, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Briefly, this bill will implement the recommendations of Commissioner Michael Werier, who was referred the question of non-partisan constituency mailings that members of this Assembly make from time to time, and over time there's been increasing frustration that it is very difficult to obtain guaranteed delivery of members' mailings into their own communities. And I know when my own West End community of Minto—it was becoming incredibly difficult to ensure that anything being mailed through Canada Post was actually landing in the mailboxes or on the doorsteps of people who live in my community. And, unfortunately, despite many discussions with Canada Post, despite great efforts, it was impossible to come to a resolution.

I'm very pleased that Commissioner Werier has looked at this issue and has suggested options for members; options which they can choose to take up or not. What it will allow is, as an individual MLA, to contract with an alternate form of delivery to ensure that their non-partisan mailings get to the right place.

Another benefit, of course, is that in some cases it's possible to obtain those services for less than the cost of Canada Post. I think all of us as Assembly members do have a responsibility to try to manage those costs, and this will help in that regard.

Of course, since we asked Mr. Werier to go ahead and come up with his report, unfortunately Canada Post has now announced that they'll be phasing out home-delivery service across the country, making us, I believe, the only western developed nation without home-delivery service. So I'm even more glad that Commissioner Werier was given this task. I'm disappointed in Canada Post for people who live in my own area and for people who live elsewhere that are going to have home-delivery service taken away from them at the same time as Canada Post continues to increase its rates for mailings, and a corporation which, as I understand it, had actually broken even or turned a profit 17 of the last 18 years.

I know when we had a resolution in this House, it's disappointing that members of the Progressive Conservative Party didn't stand with New Democrats and, I believe, the Liberal, to support home delivery for Canada Post. I know in the course of that debate, I was heckled when I was speaking, saying, well, we don't care about that. And it was one of the members, of course, who doesn't have home delivery in his

area. That is the frequent way the Progressive Conservatives deal with issues. If it's not of benefit to their own immediate communities, they're not interested. This government governs for all Manitobans. We stand up for all Manitobans. We'll continue the fight to try and resume Canada Post service. We'll take up the fight for Manitobans, even if the official opposition doesn't, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to speak to Bill 51, the legislative assembly management act, and I'm glad that the government, after some delay, got on board with this legislation which we'd first introduced two years ago in June of 2012. And after pushing this for quite some time and managing the government to agree to have Mr. Werier look at it and we've had the whole area reviewed, and we are going forward for it. And it turns out to be particularly important that we are going forward for it, particularly with the changes that Canada Post is making in terms of moving away from home delivery. So this bill is going to be absolutely essential if we're going to be able to get our newsletters out and make sure that they get—reach people in our constituencies.

Certainly this—it should be commented that this bill as put forward and—originally put forward and now will result in some significant savings of dollars as well as giving people more flexibility in the way that the members' newsletters and communications are provided to people in the constituencies. So it is welcome in that it provides us the ability to provide the constituents better service, but it also is welcome in that it will be saving money over the way that we were forced to deliver our newsletters in the period of—until this bill is passed and after the changes were initially made by Canada Post to cut back on their ability to deliver mail at less than postal code areas. So it's good that this is coming forward and will shortly be implemented, and I thank all the other members for supporting this initiative and making sure that it proceeds.

Thank you.

* (16:50)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very pleased to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 51 and echo some of the comments of the previous speakers on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, you know, last November, I believe it was, Canada Post announced that they

were going to phase out door-to-door delivery over a period of five years, and since that time there have been hundreds and hundreds of homeowners taping up signs on their windows. You see them all over city of Winnipeg, and it's interesting that when they made this announcement, they announced, I believe it was, that they were going to do it in 22 areas. So I had my assistant check out the areas, the 22 areas that they were planning to apply this to, and you know that there—all but one, I think, is in NDP and Liberal constituencies. I think there's only one area that's in a Conservative constituency, and that's—surprise, surprise—in Alberta where all the ridings are represented by the Conservatives anyway except for two I think it is.

So what they've done here is they've started in northeast—sorry, northwest Winnipeg, and they're planning to phase out door-to-door delivery this fall, and then after that they're planning to move towards the east, presumably just after the election, just after the federal election. Maybe the next day after they'll be moving into the eastern part of Winnipeg.

But people are very opposed to this. We have been out—the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) and I were out over the weekend, and we—there's really no one out there in our area who is in favour of this. And, matter of fact, even the people who are Conservative voters are shaking their heads and think that it's a hare-brained idea. Matter of fact, even the City of Winnipeg passed, I believe it was a resolution a few months ago. Certainly going to be an issue in the civic election this fall, but the City of Winnipeg has put on the record that older areas are not set up for this kind of community mailboxes. In my own area what they're planning to do, the suggestion is that it's going to be set up somewhere on Beatrice Avenue. So people are going to have to walk, you know, from both sides to be able to get their mail. And people know that this is going to be a big mess. City's going to have problems with snow clearing in these areas. They're just not set up for this. Perhaps in new developments you can plan around the new development and make this work a little bit better. But what you will find in new developments, and members know this, is there's no older people.

In the new developments it's pretty much, you know, 90 per cent middle-aged people with young families who don't have any problem. Matter of fact, they can jump right over top of the mailboxes. They're young, but the older people in the older areas

are very, very concerned about this. They're not going to be able to get out and get their mail.

So either—here's their options. They're going to have to walk many, many blocks; many of them can't even walk a block, let alone many blocks to get their mail. The other option is they're going to have these things right out in front of their own house, and with that you're going to have all the junk mail that people take out of their mailboxes and discard and throw out on the sidewalk. So, you know, no matter how you look at it, this is not going to work. Whether you have to walk blocks or whether you have it right in front of your house, people are not taking kindly to this move.

Now, as the minister—as the Attorney General (Mr. Swan) pointed out, most people don't know that Canada Post has been profitable for 17 of the 18 years. If you listen to Canada Post, you would think they're on the verge of going over the cliff, that they are losing huge amounts of money, have been losing huge amount of money and have to do this immediately to stop themselves going bankrupt. But the fact of the matter is the people should know that Canada Post has been profitable for 17 of the last 18 years. So the cuts are not necessary. They're not wanted. They'd have a huge impact on communities and particularly small businesses, and small business is certainly, you know, very worried about this issue because small businesses have to—have no choice but to send out bills and so on in the mail. And, if they're inconveniencing their customers, then that's not something that they are going to be happy about.

Now, what is the solution here? The solution is that rather than cut these services, post offices in France, Switzerland, Italy, these post offices have expanded their business model into profitable areas like postal banking. The question is why has Canada Post not proceeded to at least explore or follow what they're doing in France, Switzerland and Italy, to develop a postal banking type of aspect to their operation?

So, I would suggest that this is a pretty hare-brained idea, dreamed up by the federal Conservatives, and something that is totally unnecessary. And, certainly, the Conservative members have got to be getting a lot of negative reaction. I'd be very surprised—I'd invite them to come on out and knock on a few doors, and let's see what kind of a response they get if they go out there. And I'd ask—invite the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) to come on out and knock on some doors,

and try to explain to the people why it's in their best interest that they do not get door-to-door delivery, and that they have to walk blocks and blocks with canes and walkers to get this.

Now, to make matters worse, to rub salt in the wound, guess what the post office just did? They raised the price of the stamps. Like, that is absolutely shocking. We're up to probably a dollar a stamp. So talk about being friendly—business friendly and wanting—most businesses, you know, want to keep their customers happy. That's how businesses stay in business. They offer good product, they keep their customers happy. So can you imagine what this business did? It raised the price of its stamps up to a dollar, and at the same time, it's cutting service delivery. Like, what kind of a genius thought this up? And, the head of this operation is none other than the Prime Minister of this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the members opposite to stand in their place and condemn this move by their federal Conservative cousins, and let's get them to wake up and stop these cuts.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Well, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes get people who, interested in politics, they say to me, how is it that a Conservative won in Transcona-Elmwood, because it's not actually that common to happen federally, and I just point them to the Hansard of this current member who lost to Lawrence Toet, and who will likely lose to Lawrence Toet in the next federal election again.

Because, when he talks about and has the gall to stand up and talk about raising the cost of stamps—now a lot of people, I would say, don't like the idea that stamps have gone up in price. I don't like it either, but he stood here and supported a PST increase, a price on everything, Mr. Speaker. And yet he's going door to door—he says he's going door to door in Elmwood—and you know what? I'll take him up on the invitation. I'll take him up on the invitation. We'll go door to door together, and he can say at that door—I'll go on behalf of Lawrence Toet—and I'm happy to go and go door to door in Elmwood—and he can say to the people, well, they've increased the price of stamps by 20 cents, and I'll say, oh, and by the way, the NDP increased the price of everything by 14 per cent; which one do you think, you know, is

better? And I'll—probably they might not like either, but they sure aren't going to support the member for Elmwood, who increased the price of everything, virtually, that you buy in Manitoba, by 14 per cent. And he has the audacity to try to go door to door and talk about the increase of the rice of—price of stamps. It's hypocrisy.

Now, I don't know who he was door knocking for because, of course, some days he's an MLA, some days he's an MP. We open the paper, sometimes he's an MLA, other times he's an MP. We don't actually know what he is. I mean, people are probably confused. I suppose that he's probably not getting so much objection at the door, he's getting confusion. People look at him and they go, well, are you an MP? Are you an MLA? What exactly are you? You know, we open the paper and we can't figure out who you're representing, what you're representing.

I think that the member for Elmwood, instead of standing up and trying to be too cute by half on the—at the end of the day, on a Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, he should figure out what he wants to be. Does he want to be an MLA? Does he want to be an MP? Is he upset because of price increases? Is he happy because of PST increases? I think he's got some kind of a conflict; he's got an internal conflict. You know, on the one hand, he's upset because stamps have gone up 15 per cent, but he's totally okay with him, with him, having raised the price personally, being involved with raising the price of everything, by 14 per cent.

I look forward to him taking that message on the federal trail when he goes out there and decides to run federally, and abandon the sinking ship of the NDP provincially, when he jumps—well, he's already half off the ship, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Steinbach will have 27 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

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