

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	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
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 1, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 33—The Municipal Modernization Act
(Municipal Amalgamations)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): I move, seconded by the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 33, The Municipal Modernization Act (Municipal Amalgamations); Loi sur la modernisation des municipalités (fusions), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: It's my pleasure to introduce this visionary piece of legislation that will give the Province the ability to help municipalities move through the amalgamation process in time for the next municipal election in the fall of 2014. The purpose of this bill is to modernize municipalities and create conditions for stronger municipalities and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, a stronger Manitoba through modernization. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

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

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

Order, please. The question before the House is first reading of Bill 33.

Division

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

Yeas

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Nays

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 32, Nays 19.

Mr. Speaker: Declare the motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Further introduction of bills.

* (13:40)

Bill 36—The Public Guardian and Trustee Act

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard), that Bill 36, The Public Guardian and

Trustee Act; Loi sur le tuteur et curateur public, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: This bill would replace the existing Public Trustee Act. It changes the name of the public trustee to the public guardian and trustee to reflect the role as both guardian and trustee of mentally incapable adults. It clarifies and lists the public guardian and trustee's roles, updates provisions to better reflect current practices and policies and takes measures to reduce expense and delay in the administration of estates in trust.

The bill would also amend The Mental Health Act to allow the public guardian and trustee to apply to court to end its authority over mentally incapable adults where an appropriate alternative exists. It also protects the authority of powers of attorney conferred before the public guardian and trustee becomes involved in any case.

Additionally, the bill clarifies the circumstances when the public guardian and trustee must apply to court to determine the best interests of the person in question.

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

**Bill 37—The Emergency Measures
Amendment Act**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): I'm pleased to move by-move, seconded by the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Lemieux), that Bill 37, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mesures d'urgence, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ashton: This bill contains a number of provisions that reflect our experience for the last number of years. It streamlines and further clarifies the provision of orders related to emergency situations. It also gives us the ability to deal with the kind of scenarios that we saw in 2009 with individuals that had refused to leave unsafe areas, and we had first responders responding in the middle of the night by helicopter to evacuate them. It also gives us the ability to ensure the proper operation of our flood operations, Mr. Speaker, our flood protection systems, and I recommend it to the House.

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

Any further introduction of bills? Seeing none, we'll move on to—

PETITIONS

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I would like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipality with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announced on June 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamations will fail to address the serious issues facing—currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force amalgamations—or municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

This petition signed by R. Silversides, D. Buchan, S. Buchan and so many thousands other Manitobans.

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing the municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by the municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

And this petition is signed by T. Watters, R. Teasdale, W. Lelond and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase–Referendum

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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.

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

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 a provincial referendum.

And this is signed by D. Chatyrbok, C. Van Hove, M. Van Hove and many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none—

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flood Forecast Update

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): I stand in the House today to provide a brief update on the current flood situation.

While the forecast was downgraded last week on the Red River, the forecast remains unchanged for the rest of the province.

A flood warning has been issued along the Assiniboine River from Millwood to Virden. And a flood warning continues for the Swan River and its tributaries. People are being urged to remain vigilant along much of the Assiniboine River as there is still ice cover in much of the river and water levels are approaching bank level.

A storm system brought significant precipitation over southern Manitoba in the past 24 hours. Provincial flood forecasters are currently assessing the impact of the snowfall, noting that the warm weather over the previous days has reduced the winter snowpack significantly.

The Red River is continuing to rise, and conditions remain favourable. Water levels at James Avenue in Winnipeg are expected to stabilize over the next 24 hours at 18.7 feet due to the floodway operations. The Red River peaked in Fargo, North Dakota, last night.

The unseasonably cold weather has slowed the runoff, but it is expected to resume in the next few days.

* (13:50)

Significant ice levels developed upstream of the Portage Diversion overnight with inflows to the reservoir peaking at more than 16,000 cubic feet per second. Flows through the diversion this morning

were approximately 8,800 cubic feet per second, with 8,100 cubic feet per second flow downstream on the Assiniboine River. The high flows on the lower Assiniboine River downstream of the Portage Diversion have increased risk of ice jams to the area. The Portage Diversion is being operated to manage the ice.

Manitobans are reminded to remain vigilant, as flooding can affect road conditions quickly, and I want to indicate, too, that flood liaison offices are now open in Winnipeg, Brandon, Morris and Arborg.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I thank the minister for his statement, and I thought, first off, it was going to be an apology. But I actually very pleased to see that the temperature actually has dropped a bit in the House, as well, from yesterday, and I know that outside, as well, the minister reminds me.

And, of course, that's a good thing for Manitobans that we have a slow melt, and I know we're looking forward to warmer weather outside, not necessarily in the House. But I know that we are paying attention very much to the weather around the province and, of course, to our neighbours to the south and, of course, our neighbours to the west.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, the staff is working diligent to make sure things are in place, and I know that all members of this House want to work 'co-operatively' to make sure that due diligence is done, and I look forward to more updates as we move forward.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his update on the flood and the relatively improved situation along the Red River. The concern along the Assiniboine River and the Swan River and certainly with the situation with a lot of flood along the Qu'Appelle River, in particular in Saskatchewan, and with the recent snow overnight in parts of western Manitoba, we clearly need to remain vigilant.

I would anticipate that the minister probably will be opening an office in Portage as well, given the importance of that area and the Portage Diversion, and I look forward to that announcement in the near future. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further ministerial statements?

Seeing none—

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Before we move to oral questions, I wish to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we with—have with us today from the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association Garth Whyte, the president and CEO; and Dwayne Marling, Manitoba/Saskatchewan vice-president, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Rondeau).

And also with us today in the public gallery we have Monika Wetzel, president, University of Manitoba Graduate Students' Association; Amanda McMullin, vice-president internal, University of Manitoba Students' Union; Susan Ally, vice-president advocacy, University of Manitoba Students' Union; Christian Pierce, vice-president external, University of Manitoba Students' Union; and Thao Lam, vice-president student services, University of Manitoba Students' Union; and Rorie John McLeod Arnould, vice-president advocate, University of Winnipeg student union, all who are the guests of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

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

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today Jenna Johnson, who is the guest of the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PST Increase Legality

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, last night, Mr. Speaker, was the deadline for filing our tax returns. The bad news for Manitobans is that's not enough for the spenDP.

The tax and fee increases that they've imposed on Manitobans over the last year plus a few days add up to over half a billion dollars. They add up to over \$400 a person. They add up to over \$600–\$1,600 per year for a family of four. And what they do is they push back tax freedom day so Manitobans will have to work that much longer for governments before they begin to save some money for themselves. All this by a government that promised, Mr. Speaker, not to raise taxes and is promising now to break the law.

Now, the Premier has claimed that he can bring in a PST increase on July 1st up to 8 per cent even though we have a law in place that says you have to have a referendum first and Manitobans should be asked to give their permission.

Now, if the balanced budget law was in force, and the taxpayer protection act is part of it, on July 1st, and the government brings in a tax increase on July 1st, I have to ask the Premier: Wouldn't that be breaking the law?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I just want to give the Leader of the Official Opposition, the member from Fort Whyte, to correct the record again, at \$1,600 per family, a 1-cent increase in the PST would require them to spend \$160,000–\$160,000. And we all know that under our PST system, which is different than the GST that the member—and HST the members opposite support, that we carve out food. We carve out babies' products. We carve out children's clothing. We carve out books. So, really, he's going to have to explain to everybody how \$1,600 per family or a \$160,000 expenditure would be possible in Manitoba. It's a big stretch.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, the member himself knows and made this statement himself when he was a member of the government, that the ability to move forward on our Manitoba Building and Renewal Plan, the ability for us to provide daycares, the ability for us to provide roads—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: At \$1,600 per household, and he knows it, and it embraces a lot of taxes that Manitobans are going to have to pay, Mr. Speaker, regardless of the obfuscation of the member for St. Boniface.

But the spenDP has almost given up now their failed attempt to convince Manitobans of the legitimacy of their intention to raise the PST. They started with the case being flood prevention, but then we found out they had no plan. Then they went to infrastructure and the mayors all said, no, that's not legitimate, and last week they tried to reannounce old school projects and see if that would sell. Whoops, none of that sells. So yesterday they tried the newest diversion, a diversion diversion, Mr. Speaker, just anything to keep their spinners spinning the story that there's a tax increase that's good for Manitobans on the way.

But will the MLA for St. Boniface admit that if the taxpayer protection act is not torn up before July 1st, then when he brings in this illegitimate, unnecessary personal sales tax increase he will be breaking the law? Will he admit that today?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the practice of the House is exactly the same when the member—Leader of the Opposition, the member from Fort Whyte, was a member of Cabinet. He brought in a sales tax on children's clothing. He brought in a sales tax on baby products. He brought in a sales tax on feminine hygiene products, and he brought that tax in and implemented it before his budget bill was finalized.

The members opposite—we all voted on the budget last Friday. The budget in principle has been passed. The member knows that. The tobacco tax has been implemented in Manitoba the day the budget dropped, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is the resources that are being generated will pay for roads. They will pay for flood protection. They will pay for the Sage Creek school in the southeast side of Winnipeg. They will pay for the Waverley West school in the southwest side of Winnipeg. They will pay for new daycare centres and rehab daycare centres. Mr. Speaker, they will pay for things that allow Manitobans to keep working.

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, the Premier avoids answering the question as he does so consistently, and the fact of the matter is there was no taxpayer protection act in place in those old days he's fond of looking back to, but there is one now. There is one now and it's designed to protect Manitobans, and it should unless the government's intent on breaking the law.

The fact of the matter is they've said that they have a hard road to raise taxes, but it's a hard road for Manitoba seniors. It's a hard road for single moms. It's a hard road for working families. It's a hard road for a lot of people, but it's an easy road for the NDP and that's why they chose it.

We say take another road. Reduce your spending by 1 per cent as you promised to do last year. Thirty-seven spenDPers saying they're smarter than a million Manitobans doesn't make sense, and they won't tighten up their spending because it's hard to do. So they want a million Manitobans to spend more so they can spend that money that those people work for and earn.

I want to invite the member for St. Boniface to come to Truthtown and admit that the simple reason Manitobans should pay higher taxes is because he can't get his spending under control.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (14:00)

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it was just yesterday that the member opposite from Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Opposition, was asking for more money. He said nothing had been done for producers when, in fact, a \$120-million program for over 250 producers, an average payout to those producers of \$300,000 a year, was not sufficient for him—was not sufficient for him yesterday. Today he's saying that we should spend less. He should just simply make up his mind.

This is what the member from Fort Whyte said when he was in government. He said this—Mr. Speaker, this is a direct quote from the member of Fort Whyte when the balanced budget legislation was implemented against the advice of experts. He said: Granted, there are restrictions in this legislation the members have talked about that they suggest are unreasonable or would handcuff future legislatures. I do not believe that that is true. I believe the legislation can be, by any subsequent Legislature, withdrawn or repealed. So I do not believe that the hands-being-tied argument is one that has any validity at all.

That's the member from Fort Whyte, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order. The honourable member for Charleswood has the floor.

Tax Increase Women's Services

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, women don't like to be lied to, and the NDP government lied to women in the last election when they said they wouldn't raise the PST. Right after they made that promise, they turned around and added the PST to haircuts and spa services that cost over \$50, services used primarily by women.

So I'd like to ask this Premier to tell these women: Why did this NDP government lie to women in the last election?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I can tell the member opposite one thing that I know for certain that women do like, and that is when their

loved ones, when their children, are battling cancer that they no longer in Manitoba have to worry about paying for cancer drugs that they're using at home.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also add that during the 2011 election, when the Canadian Cancer Society came to every party of this Legislature and said, would you be willing to make this investment for the people of Manitoba, we said yes, and they said no.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, it took years before the Cancer Society could convince this minister to put that in the—to pay for funding for cancer drugs, and this minister waited years and years and years to do it and just did it before the last election.

This extra cost to women was compounded this year by the NDP when they struck again and added an extra point to the PST. A year ago, over a thousand women were angry and they signed petitions saying the NDP has targeted women to pay off the Province's deficit. This is unfair. The NDP must be stopped.

So I'd like to ask this Premier: Why didn't he listen to the women then, and why has he stuck them again with an increase to the PST?

Ms. Oswald: I will concede the point that it did take some time to get the fruit flies out of the operating room at Health Sciences Centre. I will concede the point, Mr. Speaker, that it took us a while to hire three nurses back for every one that they fired. I will concede the point that it took us some time to stop the hemorrhaging of doctors out of Manitoba and have a net increase every single year.

But, Mr. Speaker, in 2011 when we were asked the question by the Canadian Cancer Society, will you make this important investment, we said, even though we're in an uncertain economic time, we say yes, and the Conservatives, when they were putting their best foot forward, they said no.

Future Tax Increase Women's Services

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): And, Mr. Speaker, women don't like to be lied to. They have now been unfairly targeted by this NDP government twice, and this Premier (Mr. Selinger) has not ruled out future tax hikes.

So I'd like to ask the Premier of Manitoba to tell Manitoba women: Can they expect more tax pain in his next budget? He didn't hesitate to have his government lie to them. We expect that he might do

it again. Can he tell Manitoba women that he will no longer lie to them anymore?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I will say loud and clear to this member that we will tell all the women and men of this province that when we are in a situation of global economic uncertainty we will choose to build hospitals, not *[inaudible]* expenditure. We will choose to hire nurses and not fire them. And I will tell the member that we will choose to invest in programs never seen before in Manitoba like the Home Cancer Drug Program, Mr. Speaker, that, to date, over 7,000 people have availed themselves of to the tune of over \$5 million of savings for families that are battling cancer. We make that commitment, Mr. Speaker.

PST Increase Impact on Small Business

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): We've gone from hallway medicine to highway medicine.

Mr. Speaker, Vain Hair and Body Studio is a small business here in Winnipeg. Terry Lakusta, the owner and operator, along with his wife, have created a successful small business out of their passion for helping other people. They were confident they had stability in their business when the spenDP promised not to raise taxes. They expanded their business and were immediately hit with spenDP taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask Terry's MLA, the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick): Why does she and her spenDP continuously punish the small businesses?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, reducing from 8 per cent down to zero per cent is not punishing. And in Budget 2013 we not only continue that, we enhance it by improving the threshold from \$400,000 to \$425,000 so that even more small businesses can reap the benefits of government decisions from this side of the House.

When we chose to support small business, as opposed to members opposite who, again and again and again, choose not to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, the NDP government lied to small businesses, and now the minister won't get up to answer the question. Why is she being paid a minister's salary?

Mr. Speaker, the business expanded and continued to operate with a significantly reduced bottom line. The spenDP raised the PST on the very product that Terry and his wife offered—haircuts, manicures—and as well as their business and building insurance. In another attempt to put Terry and his wife out of business, the spenDP raised the cost of Terry's services and reduced the bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask Terry's MLA, the member for Riel: Why did the spenDP government break its promise to Terry, his wife and their customers by raising the PST?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, small business will continue to reap the benefits of decisions made by this government that shows very good, very solid, substantial support in terms of tax benefits. That will continue.

Mr. Speaker, the across-the-board, indiscriminate cuts, foolish cuts that have been put forward by members opposite will hurt small business. That will hurt Manitoba families. Members opposite can pretend as if that's not going to have an impact on Manitoba families and Manitoba small businesses, but I'm telling you that kind of foolish, indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts will certainly hurt those businesses and will certainly hurt our economy.

We reject that kind of an approach. We'll continue to invest in small business, invest in Manitobans—

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

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, we stand up for all Manitobans and small businesses; that minister sits down.

To top the whole thing off, last week Manitoba Hydro jacked up their rates 8 per cent, coming at the same time as the 'minner' of Finance and the spenDP raised the PST 8 per cent—to 8 per cent. This government's broadened PST wasn't enough; they simply had to do more to ensure that Terry and his wife could no longer make a profit in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the spenDP government lied to the small business owners. The spenDP decided if they are failures, then small businesses should fail also.

Terry trusted his MLA, the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick). Why did she break her promise to Terry by raising the PST?

* (14:10)

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, despite what the member opposite tries to put on the record, Manitobans live in one of the most affordable provinces in our country.

And, Mr. Speaker, Budget 2013 ensures that we remain one of the most affordable places to live. This side of the government put forward legislation that guaranteed Manitobans would pay the lowest bundled costs of hydro, Autopac and home heating. That is real benefits for the very people that that member for Emerson claims to represent in this House today. We're going to continue to build on that advantage and we're going to make it work in favour of Manitoba families and our economy.

Tax Increase Government Promise

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, Mr. Speaker, we now know that this NDP government lied to Manitobans about not raising taxes and fees, and they did. They lied about not raising the PST to 8 per cent, and they did. Manitobans are now seeing the impact on their wallets from this NDP government's high taxes and overspending.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, April 30th, was the last day Manitobans could remit their taxes. Manitobans could look with envy at Saskatchewan residents who pay thousands of dollars less for income tax, and now, while they pay 5 per cent PST, we will pay 8 per cent in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the broken promises and lies of this NDP government are piling up. Will the Minister of Finance stand in this House today and apologize to Manitobans—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The member's time has expired.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance has the floor.

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, I will not apologize for offering Manitoba businesses the biggest no-tax zone in the country when it comes to small business. As a matter of fact, I think that's probably one of the reasons there's so many Saskatchewan licence plates in the parking lot of IKEA here in Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, our tax system and our Manitoba advantage is second to none—

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

Mr. Helwer: He must be reading from a different budget than he gave to the rest of Manitoba, because obviously those numbers don't add up.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans now know they can't trust anything that this government says. The government has not only lied to Manitobans, they have broken their trust.

And what do we get from this NDP government? Manitobans get advice to move to Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), the member from Swan River, advised Manitobans in this House, and I quote the minister, ". . . if the lights are so bright in Saskatchewan so be it—so be it—maybe that's where we have to go," unquote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what kind of advice is that to give to hard-working Manitoba taxpayers who are tired of being lied to every day by this Manitoba NDP government?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member for Brandon West doesn't want to read our budget, maybe he should read the Saskatchewan budget where it said very clearly that Winnipeg was in the top two in terms of affordable cities to live in in this country. The Saskatchewan budget, too, said that Manitoba was in the top three in terms of affordability.

Our budget increased the personal basic exemption for \$250 extra again, Mr. Speaker.

He can pick whatever budget he likes, Mr. Speaker. We are still amongst the most affordable provinces in this country to live.

Assiniboia Downs Government Commitment

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): The Assiniboia Downs racetrack is a Manitoba icon, important industry to this province, that uses income from VLTs to meet its revenue goals. Winnipeg chose to support the Downs' 500 employees in that very way, an industry which spins off \$50 million a year to this province.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) refused to ask the last 10 questions during the session regarding the state of agriculture in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Agriculture: Is he finally ready to stand up to Manitobans for this province and for this racetrack?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Budget 2013 faced some very tough challenges, and we on this side of the House are very much up to making some very smart choices when it comes to battling deficits and debts and investing in infrastructure in Manitoba and, most importantly, protecting the services that Manitoba families want us to protect.

Mr. Speaker, when we looked at our—at the choices we had, we thought it made much more sense to invest in health care and education and infrastructure than \$5 million to purses for horse racing.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, the First Minister appointed Cabinet minister post, and yet he's letting—he's refusing to let them stand up and answer questions.

It looks as if this NDP government has already made up its mind to force Assiniboia Downs out of business. The dictator obviously hates meaningful consultations, referendums, democracy, anyone who opposes his dictatorship in any way. He hates protesters who stands up for their rights.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Agriculture one last time: Is he going to stand up for this \$50-million industry, or is he going to be horse 'whispered' by this First Minister? Is he going to stand up for people of Manitoba?

This is an icon for this province. It's high time they stood up for it, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for Lotteries, I concur with the comments made by the Minister of Finance.

But I find it rather ironic, as well, given the events of the last 48 hours, because if there was any area in the city of Winnipeg that would have been impacted by members opposite, who still don't get the fact that we had to operate the Portage Diversion to protect downstream communities, it would've been the Assiniboine downs because it would've been the west end of Winnipeg. It would've been Headingley, the RM of Cartier and it would have been St. François-Xavier.

So I'm wondering when members opposite are going to face the reality that they were wrong over the last 48 hours, Mr. Speaker. We were right to operate the Portage Diversion, and it would have been the Assiniboine downs and other properties and other people would've been impacted.

Assiniboia Downs Government Subsidy

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'd just like some clarity on the record from the Minister of Finance. He just commented to the House here that he'd prefer to invest in health rather than horse racing. That's fair enough. But he also put on the record today that there's a \$5-million subsidy being paid to Assiniboia Downs. Now, if that subsidy is, in fact, VLT revenues, he is also subsidizing the Winnipeg Jets, all hotels across the province that have VLT installations, dozens of First Nations, in fact, Legions, armies and navies, and so on.

So is the minister—if he's going to be consistent in this House—admitting that he is also subsidizing all these other entities at the same time as he is subsidizing Assiniboia Downs? Is that what he's saying?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Fort Whyte, for the question.

We have priorities in this budget. The priorities are to invest the resources we have in building schools, in building roads, in building personal care homes, in building hospitals, in building our post-secondary sector. We're focusing our resources on things that matter to Manitoba. We're creating jobs. We're creating opportunities for young people to get the skills they need to enter the labour market.

We're moving Manitoba forward; they want to drag it back to the '90s with indiscriminate cuts all across the board.

Mr. Pallister: Just to be clear then, based on the Premier's comments there, he's about creating jobs. The Assiniboia Downs has operated for over half a century. Five hundred people depend on their employment for Assiniboia Downs directly and indirectly.

* (14:20)

The actions of this government in respect of their dealings with Assiniboia Downs have been embarrassing to all concerned. They have pitted the

Red River Ex against two institutions, the Downs and the Red River Ex, against one another. That kind of clumsy ham-handedness is costing people, and it's costing real people, and it's frightening people, and it's reducing the job prospects and the wealth creation prospects for the province.

So if the Premier is saying that in reducing his subsidy, as he calls it, to Assiniboia Downs, he's helping the economy of the province, let him get up and say that, but let him admit that he's also subsidizing the Winnipeg Jets, hotels, armies and navies, Legions and so on. Let's not call a subsidy to the Downs something that is called on as support to various other agencies across the province.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the behaviour of the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite yesterday is the biggest threat to the future of Assiniboia Downs. Their tweets to support people in the diversion to do the kind of behaviour that put downstream communities—that put the lives of downstream communities and the lives of individuals downstream at risk, including the people that work at Assiniboia Downs, would have been a threat to the future of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday I took a matter of privilege under advisement, and I'd like to caution all honourable members, when you're making comments here, please remember that that matter has not been resolved yet and I'm still researching it and I will bring back a ruling for the House. I'm asking all honourable members not to go over the bounds with respect to that particular issue and allow me to bring back a ruling to the House.

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, I'd expect that admonishment would be directed to me after I make my comments as it was to the Premier after he made his, and I'll say this: Yesterday was an embarrassment for the government, an attempt to divert attention away from the real issue facing Manitobans, which is the biggest tax hike they've ever experienced under this government on the heels of a promise, a vow, made to the people of this province—that they would not raise taxes. A half a billion dollars of impact, and the Premier talks about our conduct when he was the one, and his colleagues, who went to the doors of this province and said to people, face to face, I promise not to raise your taxes. And now he is doing it to the tune of over \$1,600 a household.

I don't need a lecture from that gentleman on conduct. I don't need a lecture on honesty. I don't need a lecture on integrity from him.

Let him tell the truth. If he is claiming that they are subsidizing Assiniboia Downs today with VLT money, then he must also claim that he is subsidizing dozens of other businesses and operations across the province. Let him admit that and put that on the record if he wants to be truthful today.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Member's time has expired.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the 1 cent increase on the dollar for the PST will not generate \$1,600 of additional expenditure per family unless they spend \$160,000 a year on those goods and services which are not essential, because we've carved out food.

Mr. Speaker, the resources we're putting in place will build flood protection for the people along the Assiniboine River. It will build flood protection for the people on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin and the people in Brandon.

It will build schools and roads, which the members have been—members opposite have asked for. In the first day back in the House, they wanted \$112 million of roads. Now they don't want to pay for it, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is we will move forward with a program which will ensure the economic future of the people of Manitoba. That's our commitment. We will follow through on that, Mr. Speaker.

University Funding Government Promise

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Liberal Party has repeatedly called on this NDP government to provide multi-year funding for universities so they can better plan ahead.

Two years ago, the NDP made a solemn budget commitment to have multi-year funding for universities, to increase operating grants by 5 per cent a year for the next three years. That included this year. The government threw that commitment out the window with this year's budget.

I ask the Premier: Why did the NDP break its commitment and claw back \$10 million from the money that was allocated for universities in their budget in 2011 while his communications budget remains so bloated?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the funding in the budget in the province of Manitoba is the best funding for post-secondary institutions anywhere in Canada—anywhere in Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, not only has the operating funding the best anywhere in Canada, but we are working with our post-secondary institutions to keep tuition fees down, no higher than the rate of inflation in the province of Manitoba, which is generally quite low. In addition, we have more money for student aid in Manitoba at lower interest rates.

And in addition we're building facilities that will make life better for university students and the communities around them. At the University of Manitoba, a new wellness centre has been announced and it's under way. At the University of Winnipeg, a new fieldhouse has been announced and it's under way. At Assiniboine Community College, we continue to look for ways to expand on the hill, and that plan is moving forward with a site plan, and we're working with the university of Brandon. And if you go to Thompson, you'll see the finest campus for the University College of the North ever—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. First Minister's time has expired.

PST Increase Impact on Students

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the claims made by the Premier, students in this province are having their life made more difficult by this NDP government.

The government's decision to change legislation—so they raise the PST without having a referendum and consulting Manitobans, including students, about how this tax hike will, in fact, affect students—continues to outrage people in Manitoba. Students will now be paying an extra 1 per cent tax on computers, school supplies, countless other items.

I ask the Premier: When he decided to raise the PST, how many students and student organizations did he consult to learn how increasing the cost of living—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The member's time has expired.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for the question because it also allows me to underline a very strong policy we have in Manitoba called the graduate tuition tax rebate program that allows anybody who graduates from a university

anywhere, but in particular a university or a college in Manitoba, to get 60 per cent of their tuition back in the first five years that they establish roots in this province. It actually gives them an advance on that graduate student tuition rebate. In their latter years of education, they can apply for advance on that to keep their costs down.

Tuition costs in Manitoba are among the lowest in Canada for post-secondary students. They will remain so by the legislation we've put in place. And we will continue to expand opportunities for access to post-secondary education.

There was no such thing as University College of the North when the members of the opposition were in government. That institution now exists under northern governments—under northern governance, Mr. Speaker, and it has some of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

University Funding Government Promise

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier actually listened to students, he would find that the rebate program is not actually working as well as he thinks it is.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, Bilan Arte, deputy chair of the Canadian Federation of Students in Manitoba, said because of the NDP's budget universities and colleges will be forced to balance their budget on the backs of students. Either through tuition fee increases or program cuts, students and the quality of education they receive will bear the brunt of this budget.

I ask the Premier: Will he reverse his cuts the budget has made to post-secondary education, or will students have to bear the brunt of his NDP's budget?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have legislation which controls tuition and fee increases in Manitoba. This legislation now is being widely emulated across the country.

We have given the largest increase to the post-secondary sector of any provincial government across the country, Mr. Speaker. And I only need to remind the Leader of the Liberal Party and the member for River Heights that when he sat at the Cabinet table in the '90s, the reductions to post-secondary education in the '95-96 budget—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for River Heights, on a point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: If I get a seconder—all right, yes.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for River Heights, on a point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, could I make that a matter of privilege?

Mr. Speaker: I need to understand clearly, then, is the member for River Heights rising on a point of order or a matter of privilege?

Mr. Gerrard: I'm rising on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, one needs to understand the situation back in the 1990s which the Premier refers to. What one needs to understand, that if you look carefully at that period, that overall, because equalization transfers were increased, that Manitoba was relatively spared any problems, and that this government is trying to build a false construct by trying to compare what happened in the 1990s and what is happening now.

You know, most—many of the students, in fact, that are here now were either not born or were not—were very, very young at that time in the 1990s. And the Premier needs to recognize that for these students, they are facing a situation now and they are concerned about a situation now—they are not concerned about the situation when they were not born or 1 or 2 years of age—and that the students who have come here today to listen to what this debate is all about and to listen to what the Premier is doing with respect to the provincial sales tax and the support for universities, they're not concerned about what happened in the 1990s when they were very young or not even born.

The Premier, therefore, should restrict his comments to the situation today. And I would say to the Speaker and to the members here that it's time that this Premier reserved his comments to things which are appropriate to the question and the situation.

And I would move, seconded by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), that this matter be referred to a committee of the Legislature for consideration.

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to advise the honourable member for River Heights that this matter needs to be in writing. So if you would have that motion in writing, I would then be able to put it under consideration to the House. So I'll give you a moment.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I know you'll make a wise decision in this regard, but I suggest to you there is no question of privilege here.

There may be discomfort of what happened in the '90s. The reality was that there was a 39 per cent cut in the '95-96 budget of the Liberal government of the day, when the member for River Heights was a member of the Cabinet, that resulted in some severe hardship for provinces.

There was no controls by the members opposite, the official opposition, on tuition, so it doubled during that period of time. There were serious cutbacks to post-secondary education in terms of funding. The public schools were also cut even though they weren't part of the transfer payment issue, Mr. Speaker.

So we can see very clearly that this is an important debate, because history does matter. We are doing things differently. We have legislation in place to do—control tuition fee increases.

We have given a 2 and a half per cent increase to post-secondary education, which is the best in the country, and we are looking for ways to move forward to improve access in quality and facilities for post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker: Further to the matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for River Heights, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the O'Brien and Bosc House of Commons Procedure and Practice, page 145.

In there it indicates that matters of privilege raised by the honourable member for River Heights, that the House—this appears to be clearly a difference of—over the facts regarding this particular matter, and that in past Manitoba Speakers have ruled on several similar situations or occasions that a dispute between members as to the allegations of fact does not constitute a matter of privilege.

So, with greatest of respect to the honourable member for River Heights, I must rule that this matter is not a matter of privilege but is indeed a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now, the—I think we had concluded the question and the answer, and we'll move on to the next question and that would be the honourable member for Concordia.

ORAL QUESTIONS

(Continued)

Child-Care Services Funding for New Spaces

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I can say, Mr. Speaker, as a student in the 1990s and a current University of Manitoba student, that this Premier listens to students and cares about their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, having access to quality child care is crucial to Manitoba families to help them be successful and to contribute to the economy by working or furthering their education. The hard work and dedication of child-care workers in this province is helping to build a quality child-care system that is safe and affordable with an emphasis on early childhood learning.

Can the Minister of Family Services tell us of today's announcement on child care?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I want to thank the member for Concordia for the question. I know he and I share the incredibly great experience of being parents to small children so this is something that we think about often.

Today, with the Premier, I was at the Morrow Avenue Child Care Centre where we announced that this year we have funding available to open a thousand child-care spaces, and those spaces will be throughout the city, throughout the province. We know that those will meet—help to meet the needs of parents and families who we know have a very high need for quality child care.

And in doing so today, Mr. Speaker, we very clearly resisted the advice of the Leader of the Opposition of put the brakes on, stop opening child-care centres, stop investing in families. Today, we took a different choice.

PST

Future Increases

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Also as a father of a young child, I know one of the greatest lessons that we can teach our children is that it's important to keep our promises, Mr. Speaker. And later today we're going to be debating an Opposition Day motion and it will give all the members opposite, those who are parents and those who want to give examples to their grandchildren about keeping their promise, that Opposition Day motion will give the opportunity for the members opposite to vote against the PST tax increase because all of them said that they wouldn't increase the PST during the last election.

So I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger) whether or not he'll ensure that his members are going to follow the promise that they made in the last election, set an example for our young children and for all the children in the province by keeping their promise and not raising the PST, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I hope very much that the day unfolds as the Opposition House Leader has just committed that it will unfold. It would be a first for the week. So this afternoon we will see what happens. I'm always in suspense for what's going to happen in the afternoon, but we will have a chance to debate the very real differences between us in this House.

We on this side of the House believe that even when it takes a difficult choice, even when it takes the strength to make a hard decision, that it is worth investing in the things that matter to Manitobans. It's important to spend efficiently and we'll be talking about some of those things this afternoon as well.

But we are not going to go back to a time in this province when we increased tuition fees, when we cut support to hospitals and child care—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time is expired.

* (14:40)

Manitoba Hydro Rate Increases

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): The big, tough decision that they're talking about on that side is lying to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. That is not—that is not—a kind of leadership.

Last week, taxpayers were hit with the 8 per cent big NDP PST lie. On top of that, this NDP hit Manitoba Hydro ratepayers with a further 8 per cent in the hope to save, and I quote, Manitoba Hydro's financial and credit rating integrity.

Mr. Speaker, as today's the day that Manitoba Hydro ratepayers will begin to pay the full 8 per cent rate hike, why has the NDP compromised the financial integrity of Manitoba Hydro and then forced ratepayers to pay the hefty bill? Why did they do that?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of a corporation—how did Manitoba Hydro manage to keep the lowest rates in the country? Tom Adams, a Toronto energy consultant, said we had a gigantic advantage when it comes to our rates because we use hydroelectricity and that our public utility is owned publicly. In addition, we know that not only do we have the lowest rates now, we'll have them in the future because we're building hydro rather than be in a situation like Saskatchewan that has to spend \$15 billion to renew coal and to go nuclear.

Manitobans know that we're running out of power. We need more power. In 2022, our population's up by 110,000. We want the power to be there. We want it to be clean. We want to build it for Manitobans. We want to export it, and it will be the lowest in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Restaurant and Food Service Industry

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): It's a pleasure to rise today to talk briefly about Manitoba's fourth largest private sector employer. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about the restaurant and food service business here in Manitoba and, indeed, across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, today we're joined in the gallery by representatives from the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, and we're happy to have president and CEO Garth Whyte join us; as well, Dwayne Marling is the Manitoba/Saskatchewan VP.

Clearly, the industry is very important to Manitoba. In fact, in Manitoba the industry represents 6.7 per cent of Manitoba's workforce. That's 42,400 people directly employed in the restaurant industry, certainly a huge economic driver

here in the province of Manitoba. Oddly enough, it's interesting to note that 22 per cent of Canadians, their first job was in the restaurant business, so, clearly, an important employer. There's also 10,000 indirect jobs in related industries here in Manitoba as well. And, clearly, the decisions that the government makes on a daily basis impacts all Manitobans and impacts small business across the province.

This industry's been hit threefold by this particular government. We've had an increase in the provincial sales tax as you well know, which has a big impact on business. We had an increase in the liquor prices here over the last couple of months as well—would certainly impact the retail business—and thirdly, we've had an increase in the minimum wage charged to—on behalf of most students in most part.

So, Mr. Speaker, this industry's been hit threefold by this government, and certainly there's some interesting challenges ahead for the industry. We're certainly here to support them in any way we can and reference again the work that the government's doing to really make it tough for this industry to survive.

We welcome the gentlemen here and look forward to discussions tonight.

International Workers' Day

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I rise in recognition of International Workers' Day. May Day is a worldwide commemoration taking place on the first day of May each year. Since 1891, this day has been used to raise collective awareness of the struggles and victories of the labour movement everywhere.

At its inception, May Day set out to honour the 1886 American general strike. Amongst the chaos, an explosion in Chicago's Haymarket Square killed several police officers. This culminated in the unjust arrest, trial and execution of eight anarchist political prisoners. The more than 350,000 demonstrators pushed employers to recognize the eight-hour workday. Three years later, the International Workingmen's Association proclaimed May 1 an international working class holiday to remember the prisoners' sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, in Winnipeg, there is a strong tradition of remembering May Day. On May 1, 1920, a march was held to protest the imprisonment of Winnipeg General Strike participants, as well as the oppressive social, political and economic conditions of the time. From the 1920s and through to the

1940s, May Day parades were held in Winnipeg, attracting thousands of supporters every year. Their march peacefully advocated for social change.

Today we see this tradition revitalized in the form of a month-long festival known as MayWorks, honouring and promoting the many contributions of working people and their organizations toward progressive social change in our province and worldwide. This year's theme, Another World Is Possible, will highlight recent activist movements.

Mr. Speaker, May Day allows us to reflect on the benefits that organized labour has brought to all of our lives—safer and more equitable working conditions, improved wages, including minimum wages, and many of our beloved social institutions. The working people among them who took part in the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike deserve our sincere thanks. I encourage all Manitobans to attend MayWorks and never forget this important piece of our history. Thank you.

St. Jean Baptiste Bridge

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, on February 17th, 2013, a community of St. Jean Baptiste was divided. Their bridge, constructed in 1948, linked the east side and west side of the Red River and acted as a vital link for agriculture and trade.

On October 24th, 2012, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation made a decision to close the bridge. Engineers had discovered that the bridge was shifting on its piers and was unsafe for all traffic. The plan that I was informed of was to lift the three spans of the bridge off the piers, repair the piers and reuse the spans. The community was not informed of any plan whatsoever. We remained hopeful that the piers would be fixed and the bridge reopened, as was indicated.

The community received no answers. They wrote to the minister, they called the minister, they phoned the engineers—no answer. Nobody cared to pick up the phone and give them a simple answer regarding their bridge.

On February 15th, 2013, I received word that the bridge was going to be imploded in the next 48 hours. With little to no advance warning, the community—begin to demand answers, and the government had none. My office was in constant contact with the minister's office, and we received no firm answer as to why the bridge was being imploded. We were simply at a loss for words.

Mr. Speaker, the community of St. Jean Baptiste deserve better. They deserved, and continue to deserve, a government that will answer their questions, that will help them recover what they've lost. They have yet to receive an answer as to when this community will be made whole again.

Since 1876, when the ferry service first made this community one, situated on both sides of the Red River, today it is separated by that same river. Over the course of floods and droughts and severe weather, this community has remained unified in the face of many troubles. We can't say that it's the case today, Mr. Speaker. St. Jean deserves its bridge. The minister has an obligation to this community, and he has failed.

Thank you.

National Mental Health Week

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Mr. Speaker, next week is national Mental Health Week. Mental health issues take many forms and can significantly impact quality of life for individuals and their loved ones. With approximately 1 in 5 Canadians directly affected at some point in their life, no one should feel stigmatized or uncomfortable disclosing their personal struggles.

This year, the Canadian Mental Health Association will focus on youth mental health. Mr. Speaker, 10 to 20 per cent of Canadian youth are affected by mental illness, and up to 70 per cent of young adults with mental health problems first experience symptoms in childhood. Twelve per cent of females and 5 per cent of males aged 12 to 19 have experienced a major depressive episode, and 3.2 million Canadian youth are at risk for developing depression. Canada's youth suicide rate is the third highest in the industrial world, and suicide is the second highest cause of youth deaths in Canada.

Through Manitoba's mental health strategy, Rising to the Challenge, and specific initiatives, such as our northern Mobile Crisis Team and Canada's first stand-alone mental health crisis response centre opening soon, our government is working to promote mental wellness and improve services and supports for all affected Manitobans. Thanks to everyone in the field of mental health care; you are leaders in this extremely important fight.

* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker: Now, we'll move to grievances.

Seeing no grievances, orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Okay, are you sure? I can stand up? It's all right?

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce, in accordance with rule 28(3), this afternoon will be used for the consideration of an Opposition Day motion.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced, that in accordance with rule 28(3), that this afternoon will be used for the consideration of Opposition Day motion.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Mr. Speaker: And the first Opposition Day motion we have is the one from the member for—honourable member for Steinbach, that this Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to find savings and efficiencies within government rather than 'reet'—raise the retail sales tax, known as the provincial sales tax, from 7 per cent to 8 per cent.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I move, seconded by the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler),

THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to find savings and efficiencies within government rather than raise the retail sales tax, known as the provincial sales tax, from 7 to 8 per cent.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Fundamentally, Mr. Speaker, this Opposition Day motion and this afternoon centre around trust. It's around the trust between we as MLAs, as elected officials, have with our constituents. It's about a promise and promises that we make. And, as politicians, each of us make promises at different times of our political career, and it's the highest order that we can do and to—can have with constituents to say to them that we're going to do something, that we will fulfill something for them or on their behalf.

And constituents, those people that we represent in our individual 57 ridings, they expect us to fulfill that commitment, to fulfill those promises. Whether it's day-to-day promises, Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with case matters and we promise to return a phone call or get back to them—that's a promise that

we make, or whether it's those larger promises that we make to not increase taxes, for example.

And that is what we're talking about today—a promise. A promise that was made by this NDP government and that was made by the Premier (Mr. Selinger) on behalf of all of the MLAs who were elected by the NDP government today. A promise not to raise taxes; a promise that if they raised the PST or even the speculation of raising the PST, was nonsense. That's what the Premier said during the campaign, and he spoke on behalf of all of his MLAs. And each of the MLAs that ran in the last election, who were elected here to this Legislature, went door to door, went home to home, went coffee party to coffee party, seniors home to seniors home, and told those constituents, when they were asking for that vote, that I promise you—they made a promise, Mr. Speaker—that we will not raise your taxes.

And now, Mr. Speaker, we see, after two years or almost two years of government rule since the last election, that that promise hasn't been fulfilled on behalf of these NDP MLAs. That the promise that was made between the individual MLAs and the constituents that they went to, seeking a vote, when they were looking for something, has been broken. And that reflects badly, I think, frankly, on all of us. It reflects badly on the institution of politics.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are here this afternoon to urge and to give another chance to these MLAs to fulfill the promise that they made. Now, I know that each of the NDP MLAs, they voted for the budget that said in the budgetary documents in the speech by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) that the PST would be increased, and that was a motion of confidence. The government can fall on a motion of confidence; this is something different.

This is simply an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for each individual MLA in their individual constituencies, to stand up and say, what I promised you during the last election when I went door to door; when I came to your homes; when I organized a campaign event; when I attended a coffee party; when I promised you that I wouldn't raise your taxes—that I'm going to fulfill that promise. And each of them will stand up here today and make a decision. They'll make a decision, not whether or not to sustain their government, as a matter of confidence might be, but to make a decision whether or not to fulfill their promise; the promise that they

made to each of their individual constituents. And we will ensure that they're held to that.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that individual members here have been trying not to speak too much about the PST increase to their constituents, trying to obfuscate and have other, sort of, issues come to attention. I read with interest the report from the Legislature by the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), who shares a newspaper that I also have the opportunity to put comments in as well each week, and it was after the budget, after the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) introduced his budget, and it's entitled Budget highlights report from the Legislature by the MLA for Dawson Trail. And I read it carefully. I don't—I admit I don't read every one of his columns he submits to the paper, but I read this one carefully. And, you know, there was something missing in the Budget 2013 highlights. Do you know what was missing? Any reference to the PST tax increase. The single largest thing, I think, that Manitobans would take away from the budget was that their PST—if it goes through under Bill 20 and it hasn't gone through yet, but if it goes through under Bill 20 it would increase from 7 to 8 per cent. And yet the member for Dawson Trail failed to mention it at all in his Budget 2013 highlights and I wonder why that is.

I'm sure for the member of Dawson Trail—it would be similar for the members for Kirkfield Park and of Southdale and various constituencies for the NDP, that they simply don't want to highlight the fact that they broke a promise to their constituents, Mr. Speaker, that they don't want to remind them that they broke a promise to their individual constituents. But we will remind them. We will give those constituents the information that they need in terms of what happens here this afternoon, because the government members will have an opportunity in a couple of hours to stand up and to say not whether or not this is a vote of confidence on their government, but whether or not they are going to fulfill their very clear promise the Premier (Mr. Selinger) made and that the other NDP MLAs adhered to in their—in the election campaign to fulfill that promise not to raise taxes.

And I know that, you know, the Minister of Finance, he's perched in his seat and he's ready to speak to this Opposition Day motion, and I look forward to hearing comments from my friend on this issue, Mr. Speaker. But I suspect that he's going to try to deflect, that he's going to try to say something different than this was a promise. But he knows as

well as I do what was said and Manitobans know, and, you know, he can do anything he wants. He can dance and skate here in the Legislature around this issue, but it's clear that Manitobans—and he's getting the emails. He's getting the phone calls. He's getting all of the correspondence that we are. He'll hear from people at the Legislature tomorrow, and I hope that he attends the rally at the front of the steps of the Legislature tomorrow at 6 o'clock. I hope he goes there to hear from Manitobans. He knows that Manitobans clearly believe because they were made a promise in the last election that the government would not raise taxes.

And so he, along with his colleagues and each of the backbenchers—and I know that individual backbenchers don't always have as much say in policy as Cabinet ministers do, Mr. Speaker. I understand how the system works, but ultimately they are as responsible to their constituents as each Cabinet minister is. There is no difference and there is no divide in our parliamentary system that the ministers are as responsible for fulfilling their promise as any of the backbench MLAs are.

There's equality there and their constituents expect that they will be as accountable, whether you're a minister in government or whether you're not a minister in the government, that you are as accountable to your constituents, to the people who you made a promise to regardless of the position that you hold in government. So none of the members of the NDP, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), for example, who might not be in Cabinet, none of them should take solace in the fact that they aren't in Cabinet because he is responsible to his constituents as much as the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) is responsible to her constituents. But each of them will have that opportunity in a couple of hours to determine whether or not they're going to fulfill the very clear promise not to raise taxes or whether they'll stand up and vote against this motion.

And we will then fulfill our responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that Manitobans know that their constituents know that on this day when they had the opportunity not to vote on a matter of confidence, but to simply say whether or not they were going to fulfill the promise that they made, whether or not they stood up to the promise that they made or whether or not they decided to in this Legislature clearly say: We break that promise and we break that vow to you that we made. And I think that people would remember, and I know that members opposite, they're gambling that in three years that members of

the public won't remember and I think that that's a misplaced gamble. I think that members of the public understand that this was a significant—that this was a clear promise that was made to them. And in three years they will remember how these—or how these ministers and how the MLAs within the NDP caucus, how they voted.

* (15:00)

So I would ask that each of them consider their options over the next couple of hours, to think about it, Mr. Speaker, so that when they end up voting in a couple of hours, their constituents will know that they did it after having thought about it and having heard the discussion and the debate, and, if they decide to not vote for this motion, that they are clearly breaking a promise, they're wilfully doing it, and they're doing it without any reservation.

So we'll find out what happens in a couple of hours, and then we will communicate that to their constituents, so their constituents know whether they kept their promise or whether they broke their promise. So I hope that the members opposite will listen to the comments from members on this side of the House and be swayed by that and have an open mind and determine whether or not they will vote to keep a promise they made to their constituents or not vote to keep a promise they made.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): And, you know, Mr. Speaker, if the member for Steinbach was really truly interested in the truth, if he was really truly interested in what he called the future of the political institution that he was just talking about, he would look about three seats over in this House and he would say to his own leader, he would say, Mr. Leader, quit pulling facts and figures out of the air that don't make sense. He would say, Mr. Leader, quit making stuff up.

Out in the hallway just now I heard the Leader of the Opposition trying to defend the \$1,600 remark that he made not just today but previously in this House, Mr. Speaker. And he couldn't do it. And that's what happens when you just pull stuff out of the air, which is what opposition has been doing and particularly this leader who makes those things up.

Our—[interjection] Yes, they—I don't think they like when we point those kind of things out, Mr. Speaker, but you know what? They choose to operate that way; they should also choose and just understand that those kind of inconsistencies and

those kind of untruths will be pointed out from this side.

Mr. Speaker, our government, like provincial governments everywhere in this country, and, in fact, the federal government, too, has had to make some tough choices in these uncertain economic times. That is clear. In Manitoba, on top of economic uncertainty, we face, even this spring as members opposite know, we face the third in five years of flood threat that Manitoba families are very worried about.

We need to continue to support our economy, Mr. Speaker. And, of course, we need to have a government that says directly to people, here's the challenges we face and here's how we're going to tackle those challenges, and that's what we've done.

We said right in the budget that we were going to increase by 1 cent on the dollar the PST that we put forward. And we said, and we're coming through on this, we said we would have every nickel of that cent on the dollar go towards infrastructure, go towards flood proofing, go towards hospitals and schools, and, of course, critical infrastructure that Manitoba families count on and our economy needs in order to move forward.

That is vastly different than what members opposite have put on the table for Manitobans to think about. Mr. Speaker, they chose, and it was of their own doing, but they've chose to cut deeply into health care and education. They have chose to fire people. They have chose to do what they always have done. They've chose to do what this Leader of the Opposition did when he was in government.

Mr. Speaker, oh, let's get into these communicators that they keep talking about. The exact number of communicators that were present in 1999, are present today. When they say that they're going to cut communicators, they're talking about flood forecasters; they're talking about people who advise folks in public health. That's how they get to that inflated 192 number. That's exactly the way this opposition operates—it's untruthful. It's as much an untruth as a hundred and—of 1,600 that the Leader of the Opposition puts on the record every chance he gets.

This means—and I know members opposite, they want to skate around this. They don't want to come out totally clean with the people of Manitoba on this, but they have very clearly indicated a 1 per cent reduction in Health. Do you know what that

translates into? Now, they won't agree to this, they duck this and they dodge it, they dive all over when people push back on this—694 nurses, \$52 million coming out of Health, Mr. Speaker—694 nurses.

Now, one of the reasons that this has resonance with people is that this is the same old Conservative approach that we've seen decade after decade, and every chance they get to, do it. What does this mean for Justice, Mr. Speaker? In the area of Justice, this means 58 corrections officers—58 corrections officers from the big, tough party on crime over there.

What does it mean for our public schools? What does it mean for kids in our schools, Mr. Speaker? It means 198 fewer teachers. Again, the same old approach that they've always taken. You know they'd ask a lot—they get up on their high horses when it comes to protecting kids. They get up on their high horses and they say we spend too much on family services. Well, if they had their way and if they did this silly, foolish, across-the-board, indiscriminate cuts and applied it to family services, they would lose 135 social workers—that's what's at stake here.

We understand—we understand that it's difficult to meet these challenges. We understand, Mr. Speaker, that we have to make smart choices in tough economic times. We have made the decision to move forward with this revenue item and we have done so, so that we can protect those services that members opposite would cut.

We've taken this decision so that we can invest in the things that matter most to Manitobans, but we understand—we understand totally that we absolutely need to work with Manitobans. We understand that we are asking Manitobans—in as fair a way as we can, we are asking Manitobans to help in terms of meeting these challenges. We are very committed to doing our part as well.

In the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, he said, you did us—one smart thing last year, and you met your target of \$128 million that you set in terms of a review and efficiencies in government—that's exactly what he said. Now he denies that now, in typical fashion from this Leader of the Opposition. He'll now say, oh, that we didn't hit that target, but he's on Hansard as saying it was a smart thing for us to do. And, Mr. Speaker, we took on that challenge.

We amalgamated regional health authorities; we went from 11 down to five. The number for the Tories, I—if my memory serves me correctly, was 13, Mr. Speaker. We've moved in the area of health care

to reduce administrative costs and have those savings plowed directly into the front lines, not laying 698 nurses off like members opposite have proposed, but investing that money into services that Manitoba families need. That's our commitment to Manitobans and we're coming through on that.

Mr. Speaker, we merged two Crown corporations, Liquor and Lotteries. We found efficiencies there as well, and those savings are saving Manitoba taxpayers real dollars. As I mentioned, we did find \$128 million worth of administrative reductions in our—in your spending exercise that we took on as part of Budget 2012. We've done that. We have moved to consolidate offices in Winnipeg, in rural Manitoba, in the north, so that we can better serve Manitobans at a more efficient cost to Manitobans. That saves Manitoban taxpayers' dollars and we're doing that.

*(15:10)

We have frozen or reduced the budgets of 10 departments across government, Mr. Speaker, understanding very clearly, still, the priorities of Manitobans, and moving to make sure that we save money that can be redirected into the front lines.

We also realize \$75 million when we signed a licensing agreement with Teranet Manitoba. We found a better way to deal with the services, that they're provided by the property registry, and we did it in such a way that it was a real benefit to the Manitoba taxpayer. Services improved, taxes made easier and made lower by what we've done, Mr. Speaker.

So don't let members opposite think that they're the only ones that have some kind of a monopoly when it comes to this side of the ledger, Mr. Speaker. We're taking on actions that save Manitobans money and we reject the kind of across-the-board, indiscriminate cuts that we see coming from members opposite. Thank you very much.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, that member fills the air with more words and fewer ideas than any member in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and that's quite an accomplishment. He has said—he's put on the record a number of falsehoods, but that is his tendency. I'd like to put on the record what we actually said, not what he says we said, just because I think it's a good opportunity to do so.

But, before I do that, I want to talk about diversion. Diversion has a lot of different meanings.

It can refer to things like the Assiniboine diversion, of course. In that context, that means a diversion of water to another area. It can also refer to a tactic, a tactic of trying to draw people's attention away from a principal issue to another issue, and that, Mr. Speaker, is what happened yesterday. It was a diversion diversion. It was an attempt to move people away from the principal issue at hand and get them thinking about something else, kind of a sleight-of-hand thing, used by pickpockets actually, that tactic.

Now, speaking of diversions, I was reminded yesterday as I watched the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in his little antic diatribe thing—I was reminded of a great diversion, a wonderful movie, Wizard of Oz. You might have seen it, Mr. Speaker; it's a classic. And the Wizard of Oz is just a really good diversion, a good way to escape into the world of fantasy, as the member did in his comments.

But the Wizard of Oz—there's a scene. You might remember this scene. It's fascinating. Where Dorothy comes to the gate—the Emerald City. It's wonderful. A big, giant hall, castles—full of expectations. She's going to meet the wizard, the Wizard of Oz is going to be there, the mighty wizard, the great and powerful. And she—you know, they have to bow down and do all this various and sundry sort of kissing the ring of the head person stuff.

And anyway then there's this great curtain and they walk in to this great hall and there's this wonderful curtain. And there's a—some kind of a projected image up there, this big, fierce creature, reminiscent, I guess, in some ways of certain leaders. But the reality is, what happens is that Toto goes running over to the side of the room. And you might remember this part. And the leader's saying, you know, oh, Dorothy, you know, blah, blah, blah, various things—that I'm not—I'm going to do for you but only if you do a lot of things for me, kind of the threats like the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) gave to the people at the diversion yesterday. And, anyway, Toto pulls away the curtain and the voice booms out and says, just ignore the little man—just ignore the little man, don't look at the little man behind the curtain.

And that's what the NDP's doing here. What they're trying to do, with their ongoing and malicious false statements that they put on the record, is they're trying to divert attention away from the fact that they're just human. And I accept the fact they're human; we all are, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is, it is difficult to balance a budget but it is not difficult, as this government likes to claim, to raise taxes; that is not difficult. The difficulty is in finding the savings within your budgeted items. To find those savings is difficult. To raise taxes is not difficult. And to pretend that it is, and to pretend that they are somehow on the side of good and right when they raise taxes as they have done in this last 12 and a half months, more than at any time in Manitoba history, on the heels just a few weeks prior of promising they would not. That is not noble, that is not accurate and that is not correct. The hard road is not raising taxes. The hard road is the one that people must travel who have to pay those taxes and those are the people we're here to defend. Those are the ones that you're here to represent and so am I, and it's those people who've been asked to pay more, \$1,600 more for a household of four, \$500 million of tax and fee increases, Mr. Speaker, \$500 million. More than that if you believe the Finance Minister's budget documents which, I guess, we have to believe.

The reality is that we proposed—and it's one of the first times I'm told in provincial government history that an opposition party actually has done this—we put together a list of reasoned proposals as an alternative to present something for debate that could be of substance in this House. Instead, day after day, members opposite misrepresent the truth of our alternative budgetary proposals. They claim that thousands—I think it's thousands now—according to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) it's thousands of civil servants who'll lose their jobs, and they forget that they frighten our fellow citizens when they make accusations like that. As false as they may be, some people in our province actually still hold out some hope that when a government member says something it's true, and the reality is they forget about the impact they have on Manitoba civil servants and their families when they start throwing around that kind of horse-hockey material. The reality is these people are Manitobans who deserve a little more security in their life, not a lot less; and the reality is that with these tax increases less money is available to those families, less money at their kitchen table to pay the bills, and that is creating insecurity among Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the government changes its tune on an almost daily basis when it tries to give a rationale to the people of Manitoba for why they should pay more PST. It began the day this budget document

came out focused on what matters most to Manitoba families. That's a nice sentiment.

What was the case that was made, Mr. Speaker? Well, in the first two pages of this budget document the talk was almost exclusively about paying higher taxes to support flood repair works. Now, that was the initial case for raising the PST. That was the case the government chose to make. That was the one they said that mattered most.

If Manitobans—as the Finance Minister just said—if Manitobans are willing to do their part we can have flood preparatory works done by this government. But they put in less than half of 1 per cent in the first 14 years that they were in government, less than half of 1 per cent in total and that includes the expansion of the Red River Floodway, a Progressive Conservative initiative. If you take out the expansion of the diversion itself—of the Red River Floodway itself—you're down to 0.18 per cent of a budget.

Now, that means you have 99 per cent-plus that you can manage of the biggest influx of cash into any government's hands in history of Manitoba. And this government saw no reason to invest it in flood preparatory works, saw no reason to do the necessary preventative construction to reduce the havoc and the hardship for Manitobans and they did not invest in flood prevention works over a decade and a third.

Now they go to Manitobans in this document and they claim that Manitobans should pay more PST, but the fact of the matter—to do flood works. But the fact of the matter is they had a record windfall of revenue in transfers from Ottawa, in tax dollars coming from Manitobans, in a low-interest-rate climate, Mr. Speaker, which, as you know, leaves more money on your kitchen table because your mortgage payments are down. That money was available to them more than ever before and they chose not to do it. They chose not to invest it in flood prevention.

So then they broadened their tune. They changed their communications strategy. Using their 192 communications staff, they decided that they would now say that the taxes were going up because of infrastructure demands; we need more money for infrastructure.

But the mayors got together and the mayors had a press conference—of the 10 largest cities in our province—and they said, that's not true, that's not right. They're only committing a small portion of the

new revenue to infrastructure, and they are taking away our ability to do infrastructure investments in our local governments. At the same time, the government tabled a bill today totally disrespecting local governments and saying that they don't have the ability—implying that they don't have the ability—to make those kinds of decisions so this great and powerful Oz government will do it for them.

But then they moved on because that wasn't biting, nobody was believing that. So they said, let's announce some old school projects and let's tell everybody it's for hospitals, schools, and make sure that they believe that if they don't pay more in tax there's obviously going to be fewer hospitals and schools in our province.

* (15:20)

That's kind of desperate, but not as desperate as yesterday, not as desperate as going into this Chamber—coming into this Chamber and trying to make the case that the very people whose flood claims have not been paid, the people who took the brunt of the hit for the additional water into their yards and into their farms and into their businesses and into their retirement homes, that those people are the people that this government is fighting against and we should all disrespect those people for using their democratic right to protest. That is desperate. That is shameful. Mr. Speaker, that's just fundamentally wrong, because it's those people who took the hit for the rest of us, and it's those people who deserve to be fairly treated.

The fact of the matter is this government and its members have the opportunity to do the right thing here today. They went to the doors and said, no tax increases. A number of the backbenchers did that and they know that they did that. And the fact is in the next election they'll go again and they'll have the opportunity—they vote for this motion today—to hold their head up high and say, we did our best, we know we promised not to raise taxes and we voted against raising taxes. But, if they vote to raise taxes today, when they go to those doors they'd better be prepared to be doubted; they'd better be prepared to have their integrity put at risk.

Because the fact of the matter is they are not keeping their promise if they vote against this resolution today; they are breaking it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank you for the opportunity to put some words on the record. I have looked closely at the motion brought forward by the opposition today, and I've listened carefully to some of the comments put on the record today.

And I would like to take this opportunity to provide some information to members opposite concerning one of the ideas that they're raising, and that is the importance of looking within our own departments, Mr. Speaker, and finding efficiencies. And I want to provide the member with an update of the numerous activities that have gone on in the Department of Health in this regard.

Certainly, we know that last year we made a commitment to merge the number of regional health authorities and reduce them from 11 to five, Mr. Speaker, and we committed to redirect those administrative savings into supporting front-line care. And at that time we committed that we would find some 30 to 35 positions, executive positions, to be eliminated and that over the course of three years it was our goal to realize \$10 million in savings.

And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, what I can tell you is that in the first year we were able to eliminate more than 100 board and executive positions and we have already saved \$11 million in the first year, two years ahead of schedule. Those savings, of course, came as a result of reducing audit fees, board meeting and board travel expenses, staff travel, and from the elimination of staff and executive positions. Those savings are indeed, as promised, being redirected to improve front-line care.

And I can also inform the House, Mr. Speaker, that nearly a decade ago Manitoba had among the highest hospital administration costs in the land, but today, as reported by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, we are indeed among the lowest in the country. And the Winnipeg health region is now below the 2.99 legislated corporate spending cap. This is all, of course, part of our plan to protect universal health care.

I can also tell the member from across the way that last year we were able to identify \$45 million in savings that we're reinvesting into the front-line care, and it was a result of productivity initiatives, as, indeed, recommended by some members opposite. We were able to find \$22.8 million as a result of productivity initiatives in the regions. The mergers, as I mentioned, resulted in \$11 million in savings. And by working very hard to get even better prices

on our generic drugs, we were able to realize \$12.15 million. I would inform the House that the productivity initiatives include applying lean management techniques, efficiencies, improving procurement practices, avoiding workplace injuries and reducing the use of printing and paper wherever possible.

We actually have been recognized, Mr. Speaker, for streamlining and innovating within the system to spend taxpayers' dollars more wisely. In a recent TD economics report, Manitoba's health-spending growth over the last decade was actually fourth lowest in Canada and below the national average.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would hasten to add that this was happening at the same time that we were moving forward in capital construction for health, at the time that we were hiring nurses and, indeed, hiring more doctors; a net increase for both, every year since being in office.

I can let the member opposite know that we're also working very hard to invest in even better health services. We know that patients would rather see a family doctor or a nurse practitioner than make a trip to an emergency room when not necessary. Seniors would rather get the help they need at home than stay in a hospital or move to a nursing home. These are preferred options, Mr. Speaker, but they're also less expensive options.

We have invested in a number of lean-management activities, in particular, the Releasing Time to Care project, Mr. Speaker, where we work with nurses in order to take their advice about the day-to-day, on-the-floor management, and have been able to, as a result of that, reinvest millions of dollars back into patient care.

And all of this is to say, Mr. Speaker, that we also take very, very seriously the important task that is upon all of us to look within and to find savings in our own departments.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And it's because of this work and because of these efforts that I can say with confidence to the Leader of the Opposition and to the members opposite, that when I reviewed their plan for the economy—their alternative budget or whatever it is they're entitling that document—a document that just moments ago, the Leader of the Opposition defined as reasoned proposals—I can tell the member with absolute certainty that finding 52 million additional dollars from the health-care system comes only one

way, and it comes the way that the members opposite, in characteristic quick-and-dirty fashion—they did the last time, and they did it because it's easy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is that they would have to eliminate actual employees of the regional health authorities like nurses, like doctors and so on. And that is the simple fact, so members opposite can stand across the way and say, just look from within and find that, but we know a one-year hit of \$52 million is the equivalent of 698 nurses.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says he want to fire another 1,277 civil servants but refuses to identify to us who these people might be. That's because he doesn't see them as people, as we are all explicitly clear.

So I ask him, would the Leader of the Opposition choose, in fact, to fire the nurse practitioners who diagnose and treat ear infections and sprained ankles at QuickCare clinics? Would that be who would be in that group? Would it be the executive director of the Office of Disaster Management who's in charge of overseeing flood preparations, pandemic planning, managing any drug shortages caused by pharmaceutical companies, pulling contaminated drugs from the marketplace? Would it be nurses who immunize children and vaccinate families? Maybe it would just be, right off-the-cuff, the 16 medical officers of health and 21 public health doctors; maybe that is his plan.

The point is that when asked these questions directly, we see, you know, the Wall Street shuffle. We don't see any answers to these questions, we just see that he would talk about his reasoned decisions, and this is hauntingly familiar, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that when he used language last time, like reasoned proposals and spending review, we knew that this, of course, was code for inviting Connie Curran to come to Manitoba and to cuddle up by the fire and talk to the Tories at the same time they were planning the decapitation of nurses and other health-care professionals across the system. We know now, of course, as a result of the CBS morning show—did a little special on Connie Curran, where she sat in her beautiful multi-million-dollar condominium overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge and referring to herself as a health-care entrepreneur.

* (15:30)

So we know when we hear about reason proposals, we know when we hear about spending reviews that the Leader of the Opposition isn't in any way listening to the things that I spoke about in the

first half of this speech—the genuine and authentic activities that have taken place. We know that for him to find a \$52-million cut this year alone in health care, we know without a doubt, that it would mean actual nurses, actual doctors, actual human beings that are helping our families.

And I would just hasten to add that any of the items that we have in flight at this time—like more QuickCare clinics and access centres, like personal care homes being requested by members opposite, like doctors' clinics, like any number of projects that we heard the members opposite asking for on day one when they spoke their hearts' truth, Mr. Speaker—we know that all of those things would come to a screeching halt, and we would be going back to the old school—I think I heard the member opposite reference earlier—to the old school—and the old thinking of Tories of days gone by, and that was a dark decade indeed.

Thank you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was a lot of fear mongering by the Minister of Health, and it is a sign of desperation from a government, an NDP government, that lied in an election, promised something to Manitobans, and then turned around and broke that promise within months of making that commitment to Manitoba. And this Cabinet minister was part of that government, and we will ensure that at the doors in her constituency in the next election people will know that she and all of her colleagues on that side of the House, as part of the NDP government, lied to Manitobans. And they are not going to be a government that people are going to trust any more.

Lots of rhetoric, too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from a Minister of Health—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Lots of rhetoric from a Minister of Health under whose watch a patient died after waiting 34 hours invisible in an ER. Lots of rhetoric from a Minister of Health who is watching over babies that are born on the side of the highways now, because emergencies are turning them away because they have no room. They have no understanding of what is going on, and labouring moms are put in their cars and sent into Saskatchewan and if they can't get to Saskatchewan they're having their babies by the side of the road in the middle of the night in -21 degree weather. A lot of rhetoric from the Minister of

Health who doubled her political staff in her office. If she wanted, and this government wanted, to find some place where they could find savings, all they have to do is look right under their noses within their own offices, because this government has in many instances doubled the political staff in their own offices. And, in fact, in 1999 when this government was running for election, they actually went out there and they said that they would decrease executive staff within all of the departments of government. And that is exactly what they have done the opposite of. And so, interesting enough, we see and hear a lot of rhetoric from this government.

Our House leader earlier indicated that this debate this afternoon centres around trust, and that is indeed what it is about. It is about keeping our word. And, you know, politicians have a lot of work to do, and we work very hard to try to do our jobs. And now what we've done is we've seen a government now that has hurt the whole political process in Manitoba, because this NDP government went out and they lied. And it was such a huge lie, as has been pointed out many times, that what we are seeing is something that is very, very unpalatable in this province. They promised not to raise taxes, and within months of that they turned around and they brought forward the largest tax increase in a quarter of a century. And then, in this last budget they took that a step further, and they stuck it to Manitobans again, by increasing the PST by 1 percentage point.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is very, very hard for this government to have any credibility when they stand in there—this House and they try to be incensed about a number of things when they have actually breached the trust that was put in them by the people of Manitoba. The people of Manitoba voted for them on a mandate, a mandate that they turned around and basically have demolished within months of forming government.

So it's going to be very, very hard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for anybody to believe this group across the way ever again. If the Finance Minister did his homework, which he hasn't done—he's trying to downplay what the PST increase is costing—if this Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) knew how to do mathematics, he would know that the PST increase is going to cost Manitoba families of four \$1,200 more a year in PST taxes alone. And that is not hard to find how to figure that out, because you take a half a billion dollars, which is what all of their taxes and fee increases are, and you look at Manitoba's population, and it is not a hard equation to come up

with. Twelve hundred dollars more a year for a family of four is what the PST is going to cost. So what this government has done is they're pretty much crushing Manitobans under the weight of taxes in this province.

Now, this government doesn't want to listen. We saw that they don't want to listen to a thousand women that have expressed concern over the fact that this government has been mismanagers of the finances in this province and is now trying to crawl out of that hole by hitting Manitoba taxpayers with that extra tax hike.

But I know this government doesn't want to listen to ordinary people, but there are some really interesting comments out there in the public domain by ordinary Manitobans. Leonard Turton, in a letter to the editor, said: The cookie jar is empty. My pockets are empty, and now the Premier wants the lint too. The NDP government should learn how to spend within its means as any responsible, hard-working citizen does. I do not believe in the government's reasons for its PST tax increase. Neither do the majority of people that I know.

Another letter to the editor said: The NDP never seem to run out of excuses to justify tax increases. First, it was the Conservatives that caused the problem, then it was the worldwide economic downturn, and now it's the flooding in the province. The NDP also use the fear tactics of denying your children an education, massive layoffs, cuts to hospital services and the list goes on. How gullible do they think we are? Enough already. There's only one source of income: me, the taxpayer. I am sure that with the bloated bureaucracies the NDP deems necessary, you could find the necessary savings or cutbacks required as opposed to another tax hike. There are good accountants out there that could help you. If you choose to continue showing contempt toward taxpayers, I, as your boss, will have no choice but to ask for your resignation.

And another one—there are so many, I don't even know which one to read. But there's another one, and these are letters that have been written to this government: I will make this brief. I'm outraged and disgusted by the outright lies that the NDP government has caught itself up in in the raft of tax increases with no end in sight to pay homage to the truly awful job the NDP has done under their reign. We need a government who will work as the elected representatives for the people, not expect the people to work for them through financial slavery. There is

a word for that: communism. My wife and I have even discussed moving our family to Saskatchewan as the tax burden under the NDP is already having a quality-of-life impact on our family.

You know, the NDP can hoot and howl about that, but that is an ordinary Manitoban, a taxpayer actually in Winnipeg that has said that. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was another letter actually written to the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), and the member for Kirkfield Park was told: You belong to a party that campaigned in 2011 on the promise to not raise taxes. You broke that promise last year and increased taxes on items such as insurance, hair-care services, manicures, pedicures and gasoline. You will now state that you will break that promise again by raising the provincial sales tax as of July 1st, 2013. To state one thing but then do the opposite not only frustrates your constituents but erodes integrity. Will you stand up for the legal rights of hard-working overtaxed people of Kirkfield Park that you are privileged to represent?

* (15:40)

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's lots more like this. These are concerns being brought forward by ordinary Manitobans, and this government has shown a very, very huge contempt for them and an arrogance to not listen to them and to continue to ignore the concerns that are being brought forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish I had time to read lots more because there are people that are absolutely livid about what this government is doing. This government today, these MLAs here today have a chance to stand up and say no to a PST tax increase that Manitobans are demanding. They do not want to see this government raise the PST.

Will this government listen to the people, listen to the voters that are out there, listen to the taxpayers and will they either have a referendum if they're going to go ahead with this, or will they decide not to raise the PST? It is going to be their decision, I'm sure, and we look forward to what they're going to have to say.

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): It's a pleasure to be in the House today to have an opportunity to speak to the Opposition Day motion. It gives me a great deal of pleasure on behalf of my government to say a few words about education and what's happening here in Manitoba in regards to the investments that we are making in education.

We know that nothing is more important than our children's future success and we know how important it is to provide our young people today with an education so that they can go on to post-secondary education. They can go to university. They can go to a college. They could go to a technical vocational program. They may want to be an apprentice.

And I just, you know, want to thank my colleagues in post-secondary education and thank my colleagues in—the apprenticeship minister for all of the work that we have done in regards to providing opportunities for young people to move into post-secondary education training and good jobs, because if they do that, Mr. Speaker, they are prepared to participate in our economy and if they are participating in our economy that is good for all of our province because we know that good jobs will continue to build our province.

I'm very pleased to remind members opposite that we have—we made a promise in 1999 to invest in our public education system to the rate of economic growth, and that is a promise that has been kept for 14 years in a row. We have kept that promise every year for 14 years. We have invested in our public education system because we know that that is a priority and it provides a bright economic future for Manitoba and it provides a future for our young people.

It is in stark contrast, though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is starked contrast about what happened in the '90s when the Leader of the Opposition was part of the government. Yes, he sat around that Cabinet table and, you know, when they went through difficult economic times just like we are going through right now, very difficult economic times, they made a decision, and their decision was to cut the education budget. They froze that budget five years in a row and they also cut that budget.

And, you know, we're listening to the members today talking about, you know, what they want to do here in Manitoba, and I think that they should be honest with what their—what they would cut because I believe they need to come clean. They need to say, what are they going to cut? Are they going to cut the number of infrastructure projects here in Manitoba? Are they going to cut funding to school divisions all across this province? Because I'm going to tell you right now, when you cut funding to school divisions 84 per cent of the budget of those school divisions are human resources. School divisions are in the

human resource business. If you don't have people at the front of the room teaching young people today, we have a problem. So I just want the Tories opposite to come clean and tell us what they would cut.

We have made a promise to Manitobans that we are going to continue to invest in education, and I am proud to be part of a government that has supported education here in the province of Manitoba. At the same time as we've made these investments, we have also kept education property taxes balanced. I want members opposite—I want to remind them that we have, according to Stats Canada, and it's certainly not my statistic, we have one of the best records in regards to keeping taxes affordable for homeowners.

Last year, our increase was modest, compared to what happened in Canada. I want to—here's an example. In Saskatchewan, there was a 27 per cent increase in property taxes. In Ontario, a 44 per cent increase in property taxes. These are the increases in property taxes since 2000. In Alberta, there has been a 56 per cent increase in property taxes. We have worked here in Manitoba on a tax mitigation strategy so that homeowners don't have to pay as much taxes, and we believe that that is the balanced approach. Invest in education and invest in property tax cuts.

And I want to remind the members opposite that when they were in government and they were decreasing funding to education, they also rolled back the education property tax credit and that has not been our strategy. Not only have we not rolled back the education property tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have increased it to \$700–\$700. So we will continue to invest in our public education system, and one of the most important things that we can do in our public education system is invest in capital.

We are investing in new schools. We are investing in early childhood education centres, in child care, because we know how important it is that young people get a good start and get ready for school. We know that that's what parents, communities want here in Manitoba, and we have built daycares in all of our new schools. That is actually legislation and I want to remind the members opposite that they actually voted for that legislation because we know that if there's early intervention, young people will do better when they get into grade—kindergarten and grade 1. And that is our belief, that we want to continue to invest in education and invest particularly in education capital.

We are also building gymnasiums all across this province. We are also investing in science labs all across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we want to continue to provide those kinds of first-class facilities where learning can happen that is the best for our students here in the province of Manitoba.

I just want to mention that we've done quite a bit of investment in rural Manitoba. You know, I was very pleased to be with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) at the Clearspring Middle School that opened in Steinbach, and we were there celebrating it with the whole community. This is an amazing school, and it was worth the trip, I have to tell you. It was a fantastic opportunity to be there celebrating and seeing that new school open, and I can tell you—*[interjection]* Absolutely, it's got a child care and it's also got this most amazing outdoor education space, and this school is the envy of all of North America. I can tell you that.

* (15:50)

And I just want you to know—well, there's a few giggles from across the way but there—you should know that—maybe the MLA for Steinbach didn't tell you, but they actually went to a conference in the States and presented the school because they've used the building of this school as a teaching school—a teaching model in their school. And it really is a remarkable space, and we're going to continue to do those kinds of investments. And that is in stark contrast to what happened in the '90s when the Leader of the Opposition sat around that Cabinet table, and I think if the members opposite are going to make a commitment to reduce spending in education, I believe that they owe it to the citizens of Manitoba to be upfront and to be honest and tell us. What are you going to cut? Are you going to cut schools? Are you going to cut science labs being built? Are you going to cut funding to school divisions? Because if you cut funding to school divisions, I can tell you right now, there will be less teachers in the classroom. We're sitting here, Mr. Speaker—Deputy Speaker—implementing a class size initiative right now so that young people can have more time with the teacher, so that more one-on-one time with the teacher will benefit our young people and they will do better academically.

And I want to know, from the members opposite, are they prepared to cut funding to school divisions so that there are fewer teachers in the classroom? I want them to be honest about that. I

believe that that is something that they should do, that they should lay out their plan. They should not hide behind, you know, what they are saying in regards to the 1 per cent. I think they should come out and tell us very clearly, what are you going to cut? What are you going to stop building? What are you going to roll back? I believe that Manitobans want to know.

I honestly believe, Mr. Speaker, that if it was up to them they would vote with a government that is an education government.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It was very interesting to hear the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) get up and give her speech, which was akin to trying to put lipstick on a pig.

I mean, during the 2011 election campaign this member, the member for St. Vital, went door to door and promised—she campaigned on a promise that they would not raise taxes. In fact, it was her and her party, it was her and her leader who went door to door in St. Vital and said we will not raise taxes. And the minute they got elected the first thing they did when they walked into this Chamber, the member for St. Vital and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger)—who have quite a history in this Legislature—the first thing they did was raise taxes and the second thing they did is they went and raised the PST and have stripped away one of the rights Manitobans have, one of the rights that takes—taxpayers have is to a referendum. And it's the member for St. Vital who gets up and talks about everything else because she doesn't want her record and the—what her party did in the 2011 campaign where the NDP party and all its candidates went door to door. They misled the public. They lied to the public about the PST increase, about stripping away the rights of people to have a referendum. That's the member for St. Vital along with the member for St. Boniface.

And I would like to quote from an individual by the name of Thomas M. Cunningham, and he is with the US Naval Academy Fire Department, and he writes accordingly: There are various factors that affect a fire officer's performance and the effect that these factors play in becoming a successful leader. Qualities of leadership include, and he lists 14 points, the last point of which is integrity, character and honesty. And he goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, of all the qualities a leader must possess, integrity may be the most important one of them.

And what we have in front of us here today is a government, is a Premier (Mr. Selinger), the member for St. Boniface, along with the member for St. Vital who in 1999 ran on election fraud where the NDP did all kinds of shenanigans—actually, the campaign run and managed by the member from Kildonan. He was the campaign manager who ran the campaign at that time and 13 of their MLAs got involved in election fraud and they actually had to pay money back to the taxpayers for what they had done in that election campaign. And that's how the member for St. Vital and that's how the member for St. Boniface started their career. They started their career on election fraud—words from Elections Manitoba. That's how the two of them go into this Chamber.

But another thing they did in that campaign, and I'd like to read from an official brochure of theirs, and they say, today's NDP will keep balanced budget legislation and hold down taxes, they said. The member for St. Vital, the member for St. Boniface ran on that campaign. The both of them ran and there's a pattern here; there's a pattern of misleading the public. They go on to say, today's NDP will balance the budget and continue paying down the debt without raising people's taxes.

And that's what the member for St. Vital was trying to cover up with. That's what the member for St. Vital was trying to run away from. It's her record. It's her record of saying one thing at the door, getting elected and then coming into this Legislature and trashing everything that they ran on. And then running to the doors a second time and saying complete—complete falsehoods. And then, coming back in this Chamber and completely trashing anything they ran on, election after election after election.

And the thing is that, Mr. Speaker, they've gotten away with it far too long, and this time they've gotten snapped; they got caught by their own words. And I would suggest that members opposite, if they would like, I'll photocopy this document for them and send it to them. And I'd like to repeat again, what Thomas M. Cunningham says: Of all the qualities a leader must possess, integrity may be the most important one of them.

In fact, when the member for St. Vital and the member for St. Boniface got caught in election fraud, what they did is they went to the NDP party, their campaign manager, the member from Kildonan, and said to him, we would like a letter exonerating us. The member for St. Boniface already had leadership

aspirations at that time and said, this could tarnish my leadership aspirations, I would like a letter exonerating myself from any wrongdoing—and they got them. And he would carry it around in his breast pocket of his suit and any time somebody would say, were you involved in that election fraud? And he'd pull out his letter and read the letter exonerating him. Until such time as the media and other individuals, including members of this House, asked him for a copy of the letter.

And you know what the answer was from the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger)—they can't find it. In fact, I believe it was the member for the—St. Boniface who said, I think it was inadvertently shred.

So, now, I guess the question would be, who shred it? Was the member from Kildonan the—you know, not just the campaign manager, maybe he was also the shredmeister. Like, we don't know who shred all these letters, but (a) they issued them on the one hand, when they got away with this—they then shredded all the documents and all the pertinent information. But that's how the NDP and the members opposite got elected in 1999. They then went on and they—that's how they got elected.

And that's why they are so sensitive and so touchy, because right up until 2011, they're still running away from their record. They're still running away from what they ran on. And, Mr. Speaker, back in '99, they ran on not changing balanced budget legislation, and the last piece of it is being gutted right now.

The other thing that the member for St. Vital and the member for St. Boniface don't want you to know about, is the Crocus fund. The member for St. Boniface and the member for St. Vital went to Cabinet and told Cabinet that Crocus was absolutely in a free fall and they said, quickly, let's go into the shop floors; let's go to the union workers, and we're going to tell them this is a great deal.

They sold out their own supporters; they sold out hard-working men and women and told them to buy into the Crocus fund, when by the—later on we found out that the now Premier, the member for St. Boniface, actually went—and they were sending out notices in pay stubs, and I know that they went out in provincial—in fact, we all got one in our envelope, telling us that we should be buying Crocus fund shares.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

And the member for St. Vital and the member for St. Boniface, still owe John Loewen, the former member of this House, an apology for how they treated him and how they mistreated him in this House.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we have here, and we're going to continue to see, is individuals from the opposite side getting up and talking about anything and everything except for the truth, because we know that election after election, time after time, that they have committed to one thing—the NDP says one thing at a campaign and then does exactly the opposite. They go to the electorate, they lie boldfaced to an electorate, and then, when they're in power, they will do something completely different.

In fact, we've got the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan), who, when he realized that there was so much paper piling up because he wasn't doing his job—he would sit at night, in the darkness of night at his computer and delete, delete, delete, hit the delete button and get rid of special warrants. He deleted all kinds of special warrants. That was his idea of attacking crime, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:00)

We need no lessons from members opposite, and now we're at the point where we're going to see a government that is going to not just break its word. They got elected, they ran on no PST increase, but it gets even worse. To get that through, they have to get rid of the referendum requirement. And the question we asked time and time again, knowing full well what the answer was, why don't they hold a referendum? They won't get up and tell the truth on that because they're scared they're going to lose it.

If they actually believed in what they were doing, if they actually had faith in what they were doing they would call a referendum as the act requires—as they ran on in '99, 2003, 2007, 2011. They ran on each and every time and, Mr. Speaker, they have turned their back on Manitobans.

I suggest to all members of this House we pass this resolution. It's the right thing, and maybe members opposite now should stand up for the truth and what's right and stand up for a proper referendum on their PST, the big NDP PST lie. There should be a referendum on that, and members opposite should stand up and they should say to their constituents, you know what? I'm sorry that I ran on

this. What we'll do is we'll give you one more opportunity to have your say.

Do they have the courage to do that? We'll see. We're going to find out later on this afternoon, but I encourage them to do the right thing.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I'm privileged to get to stand in this House today and make a few comments on the resolution that's before us, and I think—as I said in question period—this does give us an opportunity to talk about the different views that we bring to this Legislature, the different philosophies that we bring. And that's good, that's healthy, that's what a democracy is and we can talk about those things. I think it is possible probably to have an informed debate. It probably is possible to have a discussion about this without just wholesale making things up like we've heard from the members of the opposition today.

And I think, you know, one of the things that I've heard—I heard just from the member for St. Paul talking is all about this concern about changing the balanced budget legislation. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that it bears remembering that in the last election every one of the members opposite ran on a commitment to not balance the budget until 2017-2018. That was a commitment that they made. Now, I don't know if they realize this, but the only way they were going to be able to fulfill that commitment was to change the balanced budget legislation. That was what they committed to in the last election. Now, maybe that was a lie in the last election. I don't know. Maybe they didn't really mean it, but that is the commitment that they made. So to now stand as some kind of paragons of virtue, as defenders of the balanced budget legislation when in the very last election a cornerstone of their platform was to change that legislation so that they could bring balance later than we have committed to, I think that that—there's a word for that, and it's maybe not a parliamentary word.

There is some inescapable facts in the world, and one of them is arithmetic and we have heard a lot of abuse of arithmetic coming from the members opposite just today. In question period we heard the Leader of the Opposition claim that a 1 per cent PST increase would result in \$1,600 for each family. Well, if your family spends a \$160,000 a year on PST-eligible items—so that's not home heating, that's not housing, that's not food but everything else, then that may be true. But I can think of precious few

Manitoba families—maybe the family of the Leader of the Opposition, I know he lives in a more rarified income bracket than most of us. Perhaps in his family that's true, but in most families that isn't true, Mr. Speaker.

And then, you know, the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) got a—edged a little closer to the truth, not much but a little bit in her speech this afternoon when she claimed—and these are her words and we'll see this in Hansard tomorrow—that the PST alone would—the PST increase alone would result in an increase of \$1,200 for every Manitoba family. Well, I suppose if your family is spending a \$120,000 a year on things that the PST is on, I suppose that would be true. But that, Mr. Speaker, is not true for most families, at least not most families where I live.

Now, that—it—we did see last week—and it is, you know, I admire the Leader of the Opposition's athletic prowess. But I got to say even I didn't think he could run as fast as he's run from the commitments he made last week on how he would pay to avoid this kind of increase to the PST. And today, you know, he's claiming he's the best friend of people who work in the public sector. He would never do the things that he said he would do last week. But last week we heard very clearly—and this is arithmetic—he would—now this is just to pay for \$287 million worth of commitments. He hasn't yet addressed how he would pay for the additional \$300 million worth of commitments that he's previously made, so we know there's \$287 million worth of cuts that he's prepared to make. The other \$300 million, I'm not sure where they are coming from yet, Mr. Speaker.

But these are the things that he said, that he put on the record, that he'd put out in a release of what he would do. He would cut \$120 million across the board from this year's budget. Now he can claim that he would do that without doing anything that would hurt anyone, but here is the reality. When you look at what provincial expenditures are, they are concentrated in—really, truly concentrated in a few departments, and I have the privilege of being the minister of one of those departments. And those departments are human resource intense departments, Mr. Speaker: the departments of Health, the departments of Justice and the departments of Family Services and Education. The vast majority of those budgets go to pay for the wages of people who work hard every day and serve our families. They go to pay for teachers; they go to

pay for home-care workers and nurses; they go to pay for child welfare workers, social workers; they go to pay for child-care workers, people who work in women's shelters. That's what that money is for. So, when you take \$120 million out of the budget, that's who you affect.

And they can run away from that today, but I think that we have heard very clearly what their plan would be. Their plan would be to reduce the number of people who are working in hospitals, to reduce the number of people who are working to protect us in jails, to reduce funding for things like police officers and firefighters. That's their plan and they can run away from it as fast as they want, but that's what they put on the record. They very clearly said that they would take \$78 million out of the budgets for people who do things that are important to serve Manitobans. That is what they said. That is a thousand people—that is a thousand fewer people working on things like forecasting the flood. That's a thousand fewer people keeping us safe in our parks. That's a thousand fewer people working on things like protecting the public health. That's a thousand fewer people working with kids. That's a thousand fewer people working in the jails.

That's on top of the \$120 million that he would take across the board. So, now, Mr. Speaker, we're well up over 2,000 people in one year who would no longer be working in Manitoba as a result of the cuts put forward by the opposition. That's their plan and they can run away from it as fast and far as they want, but that is the truth that they put on the record last week and that they're ashamed to talk about this week.

Now, we have a different plan, that's true. We have a different plan. Our plan is to continue to invest in the things that are important to Manitobans, while looking to use that money as efficiently as possible. And I know the Minister for Finance and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) have spoken to some of those efficiency measures that we've taken. It's important to all of us to spend the money of Manitobans wisely. And, when you're in a challenging economic time, as we're in, you have the opportunity to take a look at what you're doing and make sure that you are delivering services that are of high quality and are efficient. And we're all in those discussions with our departments and with the organizations that we fund.

But it is possible to do that without hurting people, and so some of the things that we have

looked at doing, for example, is making more services available, more applications for services available to people online and making the criteria more clear online. Because we know if somebody applies for something online and they know what the criteria is and they can use a calculator to know if they're eligible, that cuts down on the amount of time that people have to spend looking through applications and deciding who's eligible. That doesn't hurt anybody; it doesn't diminish anybody's service. But it's a way of doing things more efficiently.

I believe that we have a great deal that we can learn in government from the manufacturing techniques, and I know the Minister of Health has spoken about some of those in the past, where we have been able to employ some of those techniques. In health care, for example, we've been able to do things like increase and get more efficiency out of the number of hip and knee surgeries that are performed, by changing the way that that process happens. In Family Services, we've been able to serve more kids with special needs by changing the way that those programs operate by—instead of giving everybody the exact same level of service, doing some assessment up front and being able to know that some kids are going to require more service than others. And, if we can make that assessment properly, we know that we're going to be able to serve more children overall.

* (16:10)

So there are ways to spend more smartly, to spend more wisely and to spend more efficiently. And we are exploring those ways, Mr. Speaker. That's a very important part of being a responsible government. But it isn't responsible to just indiscriminately cut across the board the things that Manitobans count on.

We have made a difficult choice; there's no doubt about that. I don't think any of us would put on our priority list wanting to increase the PST, but the options that have been laid out, the alternative that has been laid out clearly by the opposition is something that none of us committed to do to our constituents either. I didn't campaign on a plan to cut thousands of nurses and doctors and teachers. That's not what I campaigned on. It's not what they campaigned on either, Mr. Speaker, but that's the plan that they put forward last week.

So we can have a fruitful, I think, an honest debate about fiscal measures and what we would each do when we're confronted with difficult

choices, but I think history will show, for both the opposition when they have been in government and our time in government, that we've invested in Manitoba. We've built Manitoba. We've helped people who are vulnerable and who need our help, and at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, this is a more prosperous province in large part because of those investments and also because of the hard work of Manitobans. And that's the Manitoba that we're going to continue to build and continue to work together. We're not going back, Mr. Speaker, to the Manitoba—

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

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): It's indeed an honour for me to stand up and support this motion brought forward today by our member for the—for Steinbach, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), Mr. Speaker, and this is calling on this government to, in fact, reverse their decision and consider not raising the PST from 7 to 8 per cent. Of course, we all know that they campaigned on not raising taxes in the last election, and we now know that they brought forward a bill in front of this Legislature that calls for an increase in the PST. We know that actually breaks the law because, in order to bring forward a bill in this House, they are supposed to have—they should have, if they were going to do that, they had to go to the people in the way of a referendum because that's what the existing laws in this province say. But I know that at some point we will be having that debate in the way of a motion in this Chamber, and I know I look forward to having that discussion at a later date.

I do want to say, and I—to the member opposite who just finished her speech, Mr. Speaker, she said that they need to spend more wisely, and I guess I would just say that I would hope that the member opposite and her Cabinet team, you know, that's exactly what we're asking you to do and, unfortunately, they're not doing it. And that's why we're in the situation that we're in today.

So I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) went around the province in the way of his prebudget consultation meetings to Manitoba, and I have a copy of that here in front of me, Mr. Speaker, and I find it very strange that one of the most prominent things within this budget is, of course, the increase in the PST in this province. But not one of the 24 slides that is included in the prebudget consultation meeting presentation that the minister

presented around the province of Manitoba, not one of those slides mentioned an increase in the PST. And I know I asked in this House last week how many people at those meetings asked for an increase in the PST, and the minister refused to answer the question, which leads us to believe that really nobody asked for this.

Now we also know that—and I find it very strange that the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald) got up and spoke today, the member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) got up and spoke today, and not one of them spoke about the increase in the PST. I find it very interesting that they're refusing to comment on their increase in the PST. I wonder if it's because they are getting the same kinds of emails that we are getting on our side of the House and that's why they're afraid to address this issue in this House.

I find it interesting also, Mr. Speaker, that the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) has not gotten up today to speak on this issue, and I know we're almost out of time today. I find it interesting that the member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) didn't get up, the member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady), the member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson), the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), the member for St. James (Ms. Crothers). None of these members got up and spoke on this increase in the PST. I wonder if they're keeping those people in their seats because they know full well that they received many emails like we have on our side of the House, people in their own constituencies who are opposed to this PST hike.

Now I want to give my other colleagues a chance to speak today, Mr. Speaker, so I'm not going to speak for too much longer. But I do want to say to all of those members opposite, I encourage you all to talk to your constituents about this. Listen to them. Make sure that you do, because I will tell you right now, if you're not listening to them, we will, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): I welcome the opportunity to speak to this motion raised by members opposite, Mr. Speaker, and I have actually 10—I have 10 reasons why I think what the members are suggesting is phony, is selfish and is as far from the truth as you could possibly get.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite have thrown words and allegations across this floor now for the week, they've held up the business of the House, and

I—and they've talking—they talk about 'effectingness' of a government when they can't even run a caucus or a proper opposition as it goes along.

But my 10 reasons are: first, the best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour. And they have a history, Mr. Speaker, and they have a history of contrast to what they would do, and they've already stated what they would do in terms of cutting rather than providing for services.

The second reason is they have a terrible record, a deplorable record, perhaps the worst in the country on health care.

Third, they have learned nothing, Mr. Speaker; they have learned nothing the last 14 years.

Fourth, you have to do what you say and say what you do, Mr. Speaker, and that is exactly the opposite what members opposite have talked about.

Mr. Speaker, fifth, they don't like Winnipeg. They hate Winnipeg. They—the Leader of the Opposition joked about flooding Winnipeg. For heaven's sakes, I cannot believe the words that come out of their mouth.

Sixth, Mr. Speaker, they have not had—they have ideas—sixth, they have ideas that resemble—they resemble extremist views, the views of the Tea Party of the United States.

Seven, they do not have a vision for hydro, Mr. Speaker.

Eight, as Chief Justice Monnin said about the Conservative Party, in his report, on their election fixing, he has never seen so many liars in his life as in the Conservative Party.

Ninth, Mr. Speaker, the leadership on that party is getting worse. We thought Filmon was bad. Stuart Murray was all right. Then we had Hugh, who was, you know, we could get—but they're going downhill fast, really fast, you know.

And, finally, they have no vision, no hope, no future, nor do they offer it for anyone in this province, no child, no senior, Mr. Speaker, no working person, no one.

Now let me return to my reasons, Mr. Speaker. Best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. Hello, has anyone heard of Connie Curran? Remember what Connie Curran was going to do? She was going to take \$4 million-plus expenses, she was going to make nursing and health care more

efficient. How did you achieve that efficiency? You just fire 1,500 nurses.

What are members opposite suggesting now? Cut the budget. Cut civil servants. Where do you think the health-care money goes, Mr. Speaker? Eighty per cent goes to nurses, doctors, health-care providers.

Best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour, Mr. Speaker—privatization of home care. I was shopping last week. A woman came up to me, she said, thank you. Thank you for saving home care and stopping them from privatizing it. *[interjection]* Well, the members laugh. The members laugh, but they brought in—they wanted to do it. They tried to privatize home care.

In fact, it was the best home care system in the entire country, and they were going to wrap it up and sell it off to the private sector, just like they did with MTS. That's how they expect that they're going to make government more effective by getting rid of that, Mr. Speaker.

Second, their terrible record in health—I guess I've got to touch on that, Mr. Speaker. But, you know, they don't have a lot of credibility on the health-care issue. In fact, their credibility on the health-care issue is zero.

We're waiting for Mr. McCrae to come back now I hear on the rumour mill. Perhaps he'll give them some advice, but I'd say they better be very wary. They better be very wary on the advice they take on health care, because we went through a terrible situation in the 1990s.

I don't even want to repeat it, but you know, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) wanted to relive the '99 election. You know, they always want to go back to that '99 election like, how the heck did we lose. You know why you lost? Because you were out of touch, you didn't care, and Mr. Speaker, the public knew that.

* (16:20)

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, they've learned nothing over the past few years. In fact, they've gotten narrower and narrower in their interests. They're so narrow on that conservative extreme view that they don't reflect the views of Manitobans. We've been in session now for some time. All we've heard about is one issue, and it's a significant issue, I agree. But, you know, there's nothing about how we deal with the flood. There's nothing about how we deal with

health care. There's nothing about how we deal with education. All we've heard from members opposite is cuts, cuts, and more cuts. And the best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour.

Item No. 4, Mr. Speaker: Do what you say and say what you mean. That, I think, is quite interesting. The member for—my colleague, the House leader's speech, was very indicative of some of the spurious inaccuracies that have come on the House. You know, the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) talked about an 8 per cent increase in hydro when, in fact, the increase was 3.5. I'll borrow my glasses, if he wants; I'll provide him a copy of the publication bulletin. But you just can't make it up all the time.

Mr. Speaker, try to—at least they could try to stick to the facts. No. They can't even take the facts that are in front of them and propose them properly. It's basic arithmetic. Okay, so the 16—you have to earn a hundred and sixty—you have to spend a hundred and sixty thousand dollars on PST-related items in order to be 1,600—to pay \$1,600 in taxes. They said over and over and over again and again; I don't know many Manitobans that are in that tax bracket. As my House leader indicated, there might be certain people who live on Wellington Crescent that can spend that much money on PST-related items, but it's certainly not most of my constituents.

And, Mr. Speaker, clearly the members do not like Winnipeg. You know, we've seen that for a long time. I thought it was the heights of poor taste and poor judgment on the part of the Leader of the Opposition to even joke, if he was, about flooding the city of Winnipeg. Every single initiative that we've wanted to do in Winnipeg, be it the MTS Centre—you know what? If we go on long enough, members opposite will be saying they built the MTS Centre and they wanted to build it. You know, they just—they're redefining history—they're redefining history every single day in here. The truth not matters to them. They will bend any facts, any situation, and think just by stating it it'll come true.

Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot to rebuild downtown. We built a Hydro building; we moved Red River campus downtown; we built the MTS Centre. We're trying to build a core of the city—rebuild the core of the city. We're trying to rebuild the city and province.

Mr. Speaker, the sixth is I already touched on the fact they're very, very much like the Tea Party—reactionary and extremist, so I'm going to jump to No. 7: No vision for hydro.

You know, Mr. Speaker, hydro—the population in Manitoba has gone up in the last decade a hundred and ten thousand people. During the '90s it wasn't even half of that. Do you know how many more customers that means for Manitoba Hydro? Do you know that our hydro requirements are going up at least 80 megawatts a year, as is Saskatchewan, as is Ontario, commensurate in terms of population, even though ours is higher? It's going up. In 2022, on existing power, we will run out of power.

What do members opposite want to do? They want to stop hydro production. They want to stop one of the three best hydro companies in the provinces. We're a hydro province; we're not a fossil fuel province. Why don't we build on our advantage, which is a hydro advantage, which allows us to create dams that last a hundred years to provide power to Manitobans at the cheapest rate in the country and help other provinces and other states to deal with their greenhouse gas emissions. That's kind of called the big picture. That's like thinking more than a day ahead. That's like thinking more than a year ahead. That's like looking after generations. Did members opposite ever think that when we run out of power we'll have to import it from other places? They want to import coal; they want to import nuclear.

You know, Mr. Speaker, our capital plan of \$21 billion over the next 20 years is kind of similar to Saskatchewan, except ours is totally renewable. Saskatchewan's spending \$15 billion for coal and nuclear, and the member of St. Paul wants us to take that and not spend \$21 billion on hydro dams that last a hundred years that'll keep us at the lowest hydroelectric rates in the country.

That's building; that's having the vision, Mr. Speaker. That's thinking about the future. That's building infrastructure, even though it's time—trying economic times, but building hope for the future, building infrastructure for the future and helping generations that are coming forth and not just worrying about the selfish needs the members opposite are talking about today. They—the vision of members opposite is myopic.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The member's time has expired.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, as our children grew, we read to them a number of times in the evening. That was as we were getting them ready for bed. Reading was a very important part of their learning experience, and fairy

tales were something we spent quite a bit of time going over. And, obviously, that's what we heard here just now, a lot of fairy tales because the member seems to be talking about the truth, but he is far from acquainted with it. And I think he'd probably needs an introduction to the truth. So, just astounding, the things that can be said.

But, anyway, I guess the member opposite seemed to feel that the more, you know, as the government says, the more and more you repeat something, then they hope it becomes the truth. They—government repeats the lies, and, eventually, they hope they will become the truth, but they are far, far from it.

Anyway, we know that, you know, this government's run on a lot of different things over the years, and I do seem to recall getting rid of hallway medicine. They were going to stop hallway medicine. And has that stopped, Mr. Speaker? Well, apparently not, because they're still there. But we will—we'll count the beds in the hallway differently. You know, it's very disturbing when you're out there that you see your frail aunt waiting for open heart surgery, and she's waiting in the hallway, very dignified lady, but apparently we're not counting that, we're just ignoring that that might be a bed in the hallway.

So the things that this government talks about, we often can't trust, and we know that the government has lied to Manitobans several times, and the PST increase, indeed, is one of those lies. Manitobans, they wanted to believe the government that taxes would not be raised. They wanted to believe the government that they would not increase the PST rate from 7 per cent to 8 per cent to make us one of the highest tax areas in, certainly, in the country. And I understand now that we are—this is the biggest tax increase that we've seen in some 26 years or something of that nature. A previous NDP government, was it not, that was the last big tax increase. I do believe I was maybe in university at that time and had to pay some of those taxes as a university student. It certainly made it harder to pay my way through university.

But, you know, this government doesn't seem to care about students. They don't seem to care about the economy, and they will have excuse after excuse after excuse for why they believe this is necessary. They talked about infrastructure, and when you look at the budget, well, there's very little there.

They talked about, well—oh, the flood. That was the other thing: the flood that they keep talking about, the emergency here we're going to see. And, you know, we'll wait and see, but I think that they should listen to their forecasters a little bit more on that one.

There were some other excuses that came along. You know, they just kind of fade away because there is really no excuse for this type of an increase of taxes on Manitobans. Eventually, we're going to get to the point where, yes, we will see a stagnated economy, and it'll be driven that way by this government's tax increases. We won't have to blame it on the rest of the world like the minister does every day. He stands up and says: Well, you know, it's stagnating; last year it stagnated, the year before it's stagnating, all the way along, and we have to deal with those particular things.

So this ill eventually, in a tax increase of this nature, break down our economy, and we will be a stagnant economy because there is so much opportunity in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, that is just passing us by. We wait and we see if the government's going to pay some attention to the oil patch; we wait and see if the government's going to pay some attention to mining in Manitoba and create opportunities for Manitobans. But, apparently, that's not on their radar list. They just want to increase taxes on whoever might be left here.

And, you know, those bright lights in Saskatchewan, I guess, maybe the last one here will turn out the lights, and, you know—[interjection]—and move. Well, we don't want people to move away; we want them to stay here and help us grow Manitoba, but it's getting more and more difficult. And we're hearing from more and more people that are looking at opportunities elsewhere because of the tax rates, for one thing, the opportunities that are there and —

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

* (16:30)

The hour being 4:30 p.m., pursuant to rule 28(14), I must interrupt the debate to the put the question on the motion of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please signify by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Could you assemble the members for a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order, please. The question before the House is the motion brought forward by the honourable member for Steinbach.

Does the House wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, yes.

That—the motion is

THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to find savings and efficiencies within government rather than raise the

retail sales tax, known as the provincial sales tax, from 7 per cent to 8 per cent.

Division

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

Yeas

Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Helwer, Maguire, Mitchelson, Pallister, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Smook, Stefanson, Wishart.

Nays

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jha, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Rondeau, Saran, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 19, Nays 33.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: 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 1, 2013

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