

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	Ind.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
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PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
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STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 21, 2014

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills?

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no bills, we'll move on to petitions.

**Provincial Sales Tax Increase—
Effects on Manitoba Economy**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And to urge the provincial government to restore the right of Manitobans to reject or approve any increases to the PST through a referendum.

This petition is signed by A. Bramwell, N. De Kegel, C. Walder and many other fine Manitobans.

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

**Provincial Sales Tax Increase—
Reversal and Referendum Rights**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the PST increase.

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

This petition's signed by G. Bowley, B. Salmson, A. Klimack and many more concerned Manitobans.

Tabor Home—Construction Delays

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by L. Hemminger, B. Oakes, R. Kyle and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Reversal and Referendum Rights

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition is submitted on behalf of L. Pelletier, K. Campbell, S. Seardeley and many other fine Manitobans.

* (13:40)

Beausejour District Hospital— Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by C. Bender, A. Berry, J. Mellors and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase— Reversal and Referendum Rights

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the—to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition is signed by D. Fedore P. Palkhouski, A. Appleby and many more fine Manitobans.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I have a number of guests that I would like to introduce to honourable members.

First, we have seated in the public gallery from Beautiful Savior Lutheran School 20 grades 4 and 5 students under the direction of Ms. Teri Gonske, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister.

On behalf of honourable members, welcome to our students this afternoon.

And also seated in the public gallery, from Kelvin High School we have 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Ruben Carr. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

And also seated in the public gallery, we have from New Haven Colony school 10 grades 8 and 9 students under the direction of Helen Ladyka, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Development Investment Incentives

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government proceeded with its, you know, high-tax and high-subsidy strategy, if you can call it that, last week in announcing \$11-million subsidy for Price international at a press conference of some kind.

Now, the Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity, which is a think tank that's funded by the Ontario government, has done a report that looks specifically at the practice of luring investment with incentives such as the ones the government announced last week, and quoting from that report, it

says, research by academics shows that such incentives do not produce economic results that justify the expense.

So is that the strategy of the government, Mr. Speaker, to ignore academic research, to ignore their obligation to create a climate that is conducive to businesses creating growth and jobs in our province and instead to raise taxes, do photo ops and hand out subsidy cheques collected from Manitobans?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I can advise the Leader of the Opposition that our strategy is to have competitive taxes, to have a skilled workforce, to have affordable tuition, to have opportunities for Manitoba families to make sure that young people like the ones up in the gallery today stay here, raise their families and build their lives in Manitoba.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the Leader of the Opposition is aware that over the past five years, Manitoba's average annual economic growth was second best in Canada, second best only to Saskatchewan and, indeed, ahead of Alberta.

And, according to KPMG, not known as a left-leaning organization, Winnipeg is the most competitive city to conduct business in the entire midwest, finishing ahead of Saskatoon, Edmonton, Phoenix, Dallas-Fort Worth, Minneapolis, Denver and Chicago.

And, indeed, I'm very proud, just the other day, Price announced an expansion which will see 175 more jobs in Manitoba, 175 more Manitoba families being supported by the investments of this government.

Mr. Pallister: So this is the government which promised not to hike taxes and did, announced education funding at half the level it had guaranteed for those very same students and proceeded to take the so-called savings and use them to hand out a subsidy cheque to someone other than the children in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government with the worst job creation record in Canada, bar none, bottom of the barrel, and the Conference Board of Canada, which the government likes to cite periodically when it suits them, ranked them as tied for seventh among all the provinces in respect of competitiveness and building an economy that creates real jobs.

Now, the report goes on to say that the presence of incentives was statistically unrelated to actual job

growth. In fact, incentives only stimulated job announcements but not actually job creation.

Is this the government's policy, to do photo ops rather than create real jobs?

Mr. Swan: It's interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition talking about funding for education. That member sat on his hands as the Tories cut 700 teaching positions in the 1990s.

This government, unlike the Filmon government that the Leader of the Opposition says he's so proud of, our government continued to invest in the schools, and, indeed, the Tories let funding for public schools languish. They even made cuts back in the 1990s, which resulted in fewer opportunities, fewer teachers and more young people leaving the province of Manitoba.

I'm not sure if he's talking about post-secondary funding, because, Mr. Speaker, our investment in post-secondary universities and colleges, highest in the country last year, and it's unfortunate the members opposite chose once again to vote against Manitoba families, to vote against education, to vote against young people and vote against that budget.

Mr. Speaker, our investments have made a huge difference, and in my next question I'm sure I'll have an opportunity to say more about them.

Taxpayer Protection Act Manitobans' Right to Vote

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Appreciate that the member is preparing questions, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the reality is, of course, quite different from what the member portrays. This is a government that promised not to increase taxes and did. This is a government under whose mismanagement we see the largest loss of people, net loss of people, of any Canadian province to other provinces. And many of those people, of course, are young people who would prefer to live and work here if they had the appropriate job opportunities. This government suggests they'll get those job opportunities by the government getting credit for handing out subsidy cheques.

We believe the contrary. We believe that a proper, competitive tax climate might position us better for economic growth. We believe that if we have a government that keeps its word, we're better positioned than if we have one that breaks its promises.

This government did away with the taxpayer protection act. The taxpayer protection act provided the right for Manitobans to vote. This government took away the right for Manitobans to vote, something I'm sure that the young people in the gallery today treasure very much.

* (13:50)

Will the government continue to raise taxes and prohibit Manitobans from voting on their proposal to raise those taxes as well?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I can guarantee the Leader of the Opposition we'll continue to invest in skilled workers, we'll continue to invest in infrastructure and we'll continue to invest in innovation.

Mr. Speaker, we're focused on continuing to train skilled workers to attract well-paying jobs here in Manitoba, which is one of the reasons why Manitoba has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.

We know we need to invest in core infrastructure, something the opposition did—does not find important, and that's why we have a five-year, \$5.5-billion infrastructure plan to help send our goods to markets, to move Manitobans around this province and generate economic growth everywhere in this province.

And I'm not ashamed, Mr. Speaker, to say that we're continuing to invest in innovation to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses and create jobs here in Manitoba, and it's very interesting today, of course, with the prince and duchess around. They've been going to places like Stevenson aerospace, seeing how a partnership in—with the aerospace industry, Red River College and government are continuing to provide opportunities for young people. And, indeed, I believe Prince Charles, just today, was meeting with young entrepreneurs to see some of the ways that our programs are helping the best and the brightest build their futures right here in Manitoba.

Tax Increases Manitoba Economy

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, either there's been a Cabinet shuffle that we're not aware of or perhaps there's a leadership race. I'm not sure what's really going on over there.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent job numbers—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Thank you.

I'm sure all members notice the number of guests we have that have been introduced to us here this afternoon. I'm sure you'd want our guests to leave here and have a good impression of the Manitoba Legislature, so I'm asking for your co-operation to keep the level down a little bit so I can hear both the questions and the answers.

The honourable member for Tuxedo has the floor.

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and the most recent job numbers released by Statistics Canada show that the local economy here in Manitoba posted yet another net loss of 1,900 jobs, and that's also a net loss from March of 2,100 jobs and February of 1,700 jobs. This is a disturbing trend here in Manitoba.

Will the Minister for Jobs and the Economy just admit that her high-tax-and-spend policies are driving job numbers down, unemployment up, and this is not a good sign for the Manitoba economy?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I thank the member for the question.

I listened carefully to her question as well as the question posed by her leader, and I find it very interesting that, indeed, question No. 1 would be a series of comments complaining about government investing with a very important company in Manitoba to create 175 high-skilled, high-paying jobs. There were complaints all around about that. Question No. 2 is about why aren't we creating jobs. I think they ought to have a chat.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm glad that the minister has finally found her seat buckle, Mr. Speaker, and she's released it. That's very good.

Mr. Speaker, when asked about the—Manitoba's latest job and unemployment numbers, Mr. Michael Benarroch, the dean of the University of Manitoba's Asper School of Business, said, and I quote: I think it's not a good sign for Manitoba. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Jobs and the Economy just admit that her high-tax-and-spend policies are not good for the Manitoba economy?

Ms. Oswald: Well, further, Mr. Speaker, to go on about our investment in partnership with Price Industries, yes, we invested \$1.5 million to invest in the training for those highly skilled, high-paying

jobs, and those are going to be skills that will be transferable no matter where those Manitobans choose to work.

Further, Mr. Speaker, \$10 million of that investment of the MIOP loan is going to the company to help them put down roots here.

Members opposite in 1998 gave Price Industries a MIOP loan. Why would they do that if they think it's so academically dumb?

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Benarroch went on to say, and I quote: Together those tell you we've lost a little bit of steam in terms of our labour force growth and that's always a concern, he said. End quote.

He says it's a concern. Others are saying it's a concern. Why does the Minister for Jobs and the Economy not see that this is a concern?

Mr. Speaker, does she not recognize that her high-tax-and-spend policies are not good for the Manitoba economy?

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, when you partner with an important industry like Price Industries to create highly skilled, high-paying jobs, you grow the Manitoba economy.

I would say to the members opposite, however, that we learned that their MIOP program had a few problems. So when we came into office, we stopped the practice that the Leader of the Opposition had in place where he was approving forgivable loans, where taxpayers had to fund the whole ride. We stopped that practice. This is a fully repayable loan.

Further, Mr. Speaker, members opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, under MIOP, were giving loans that were lower than the interest rate available. We stopped that practice.

This is a fully secured, interest-bearing loan that will come back to the taxpayers of Manitoba in addition to creating 175 really good jobs.

Basic Personal Income Tax Rates Low-Income Manitobans

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked this Finance Minister why Manitobans pay more tax than in other provinces for wage earners of \$40,000, but Manitobans also pay way more tax in other income categories than other provinces.

Consider a median single-parent family earning \$33,000 a year. That same Ernst & Young online tax calculator shows that people in this category, these families, pay over \$1,400 more in tax to this NDP government than they would in BC or Ontario. As a matter of fact, they pay \$1,000 more than they would in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Finance Minister is this: Why is this NDP government doing so much less than other provinces to reduce the tax burden on families?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Acting Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that same family that is referenced in that question spends the least amount on hydro rates of any family in the country of Canada. That same family that the member opposite talks of has the best outcomes when it comes to a bundle of hydro rates, Autopac rates and home heating.

I'd suggest that the member opposite loses his myopic, narrow view and see the big picture for once.

Mr. Friesen: The member is just wrong. As a matter of fact, the Saskatchewan budget clearly shows comparison to Regina and Winnipeg, after all utilities factored in, the Winnipeg family's still further behind by \$1,500.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about Saskatchewan. Yesterday I asked this minister if she was aware, you know, how that same median parent family would receive an additional \$676 less in Manitoba after taxes than one living in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister admit today that her government's policies have made single-income families pay more and more in income tax than they would in Saskatchewan, that their low-wage, high-tax policies make our Manitoba families pay more?

Mr. Struthers: That member is incorrect again, Mr. Speaker. Year in and year out, the Province of Saskatchewan releases a budget that compares Manitoba as the best place in the country in which to live.

And there are reasons for that. I've mentioned the low hydro rates. I've mentioned the low Autopac rates. I've mentioned the low home heating costs.

In this year, in 2014, for seniors, starting this year, \$235 of real money will be put back into the pockets of seniors in this province, and members opposite belittle that. That is on top of the

\$1,100 already in real money that this government has provided for seniors in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have to take lessons from any other province, and we especially don't have to take lessons from members opposite who vote against these kinds of measures time—

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

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, once again this member has it all wrong. This is an intercity jurisdictional comparison. It shows everything—taxes in, housing in, utilities in—but Manitoba's further behind by \$1,500.

* (14:00)

When will this minister stop cherry-picking their numbers and actually indicate and clearly accept the fact that under this NDP government, Manitoba families continue to pay more and more: a PST of 8 per cent, hydro rates up, MPI rates up, new tax on haircuts and home insurance policies.

Mr. Speaker, the median single-income family pays \$1,400 more here than in BC and Ontario, more than Alberta, more than Saskatchewan.

Will this minister finally admit today that single-parent families bear the burden of this government's flawed tax-and-spend policies?

Mr. Struthers: This coming from a group of people that clawed back the national benefit for kids when they had their hands on the wheel.

Mr. Speaker, they have no room—no room whatsoever—to talk about single-parent families when they every year stand up and oppose a very reasonable increase to the minimum wage that this side of the government—this side of the House has brought forward every budget that we've been in power. They have no room to speak on those things.

When we bundle up hydro, Autopac and home heating, and we turn it over to a third party, a third party to validate, that's work that that third party does, and they say, unequivocally, that Manitobans live in the most affordable province in this country.

Manitoba Hydro Development Rate Increases

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, we've been calling for caution on hydro development since this government announced a \$30-billion hydro expansion plan that will double rates for Manitobans.

The NDP's hydro expansion, the Wuskwatim dam, is costing the NCN Cree Nation more than \$20 million a year in losses and will continue until at least 2023.

Will this minister commit to exercising the due diligence necessary before engaging in a \$30-billion expansion plan that will harm Manitoba ratepayers?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Mr. Speaker, he used the word caution? Are they backpedalling? Because in this House he had said they're going to stop. They're going to slam on the brakes.

Why the change over there? Is it because maybe they're starting to understand that you should sell into the export market to keep rates the lowest in the country like we have in Manitoba? Are they finally seeing the light? Are they coming around? I don't think so, because we've heard a lot of doublespeak from members opposite. We've seen them flip-flop all over.

We know exactly what their plan is. Their plan is to stop the projects and then privatize Hydro, plain and—

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

Mr. Eichler: The ultimate flip-flop is this government on its PST, when they went to every door and said they would not raise taxes. That's the flip-flop.

Mr. Speaker, on May the 1st, hydro rates went up for all Manitobans, and those rates will continue to go up if the NDP does not listen to the experts.

In testimony before NFAT, internationally renowned hydro consultant Philippe Dunsky stated, and I quote: My concern is that once a utility commits to new capital plans, reversing those plans become very difficult. End of quote.

Before the NDP doubles the rates of Manitobans, will the minister commit to listen to experts such as Mr. Dunsky?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, the expert that did talk to the NFAT is the chairman of ALLETE. ALLETE is a company that we have been doing business with. What did he say? He said this international project is the right project at the right time to promote a more balanced energy future. He said that in addition to the 250-megawatts power purchase agreement, he says the two utilities are also

finalizing an agreement outlining how Minnesota Power will purchase additional energy.

So we know the market is there. We know we've used sales into the market to keep our rates down. It's worked decade after decade after decade. It will work now and into the future. This is how you keep rates down.

You don't do it by taking on natural gas production like members opposite want us to do and leaving—

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

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, I'll table for the House an insert that all Manitoba ratepayers received in their most recent bill, informing them of a NDP latest tax-fee hike increase, a 2.75 per cent for all Hydro customers. This amounts to about \$50 for the average family. It's another tax-and-fee hike that Manitobans cannot afford.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Will he be commit to no further rate hikes for Manitobans who are already taxed below the—what they can afford?

Mr. Struthers: So what the member for Lakeside has just confirmed is that the members opposite think we should opt for natural gas over clean, green hydroelectricity.

What has that done for the people of Alberta? Let's see what that's done for the people of Alberta. This—what Alberta has come forward with is a 40 per cent rate increase this month. Combined with fee increases, the average home in Alberta is faced with a \$25-a-month increase, Mr. Speaker. That's an increase. This is on—it's now different in Ontario: 42 per cent increase in Ontario because of natural gas. BC hydro rates: 9 per cent increase this year and will increase by 6 per cent next year.

You can give any example you like right across the country. Our strategy, Manitoba Hydro's strategy, of creating jobs here in Manitoba and keeping our rates low is the best—

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

Mining Industry Government Policies

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Speaker, the government has declared this week as Mining Week here in Manitoba. I, too, would like to congratulate the more than 4,500 people who directly are

employed in the mining sector here in Manitoba. Clearly, they persevered through some very difficult times, some challenging market conditions and some poor government policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope—have hope that the NDP would've taken the opportunity of—during Mining Week to send a positive message to the industry here in Manitoba.

I'd like to ask the government why they have again refused to address the outstanding issues relative to government policy in this important sector.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Well, I'm very glad that the members opposite, for the first time, I think, this year, have actually recognized that mining goes on in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have right now just completed the largest mining construction in the history of the province, the Lalor mine.

In addition, we just recently heard from Vale, while several years ago they were contemplating closing, putting Birchtree on maintenance, that they're not; they're going to keep Birchtree open, and they're looking at expansion plans of the largest mine in Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that we have had good—despite low prices and despite market conditions, we've had some very good stories and that—in terms of mining, and there's more to come.

And I'm glad members opposite have finally recognized that mining's an important industry in this province.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's listen to what the mining sector has to say. In 2006, Manitoba was ranked the No. 1 jurisdiction in the world to conduct mining operations. Under this government, we have fallen to No. 26 in the world.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, the mining sector is looking for clear and transparent policy from this government. Manitoba's lacking that predictability in government policy and also lacking an effective regulatory process. As a result, companies will choose and have chosen to invest in other jurisdictions.

Why has this government not taken steps to turn around our downward movement in the world rankings?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, Mr. Speaker, that very prestigious right-wing group the Fraser Institute is who the member's referring to.

Having said that, that group that just loves private health care and sends out selective letters to mining companies to send back their comments, that same group, did mention that Manitoba was No. 1 in 2006 and '07, and that was because they discovered the Lalor mine, which is now in production, that we have the largest mine in the history of Manitoba in production.

They spent \$500 million. That's about how much members opposite wanted to cut out of the working budget for all of our programs.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to know members—what they could—what—if they are concerned about the fact that we've increased the mining exploration assistance plan this year by several million dollars. Our members who are—hate—against subsidies, are they against the fact that we've increased the subsidy for mining exploration, yes or no?

*(14:10)

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it's the left-wing NDP policies that are driving investment outside of the province. Investment in the miner—mining sector clearly follows positive government policy. As a result, we compete with each other—other jurisdictions for that investment money.

Mr. Speaker, exploration is the lifeblood of the mining sector. Thirteen years ago, Manitoba represented 5.6 per cent of the total exploration in the country; today, 2.4 per cent. Again the trend is heading in the wrong direction.

Why does this government continue to ignore the important mining sector here in Manitoba?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, I hate to contradict the Leader of the Opposition and the two people on either side of him, but we increased the subsidies to the mining industry this year, Mr. Speaker, because on the mining exploration assistance plan we found out that for every million dollars we put into exploration assistance we get \$10 million back in mining. And that program was started by none other than the Conservative Party, and we've kept it and we've expanded it.

Are they against the expansion of the mining exploration fund that found the Lalor mine,

Mr. Speaker, that started the largest mine in Manitoba history right now, that's keeping Vale open and expanding? Why are they against those subsidies? Why are they against mining, including mining that includes Aboriginal people, training for Aboriginal people, keeping people here in Manitoba where they continue to build the mining sector whether the Conservatives like it or not?

Farmland School Tax Rebate Rejected Claims

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Agriculture made changes to the farmland education tax rebate, he deliberately designed a flawed program. First of all, he delayed releasing the forms, then he imposed a strict deadline of March 31st.

So my question to the minister is: To date, how many claims has the minister rejected?

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question, and obviously my questions in the last couple of days have been repetitious.

And let me say again to the member opposite, education is very key in the province of Manitoba and we continue to work with schools in the rural areas and we know the importance of rural development education, and school locations are very key.

But I think one thing that I need to repeat to the member opposite, as I said earlier, they were at zero; we're at 80 per cent. What is the difference of difficulties of understanding the importance of the school tax rebate this government looked at? Where were they in the '90s when they had the opportunity to do the same? They chose not to.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, Mr. Speaker, when the Ag Minister redesigned the farmland education tax rebate, he deliberately designed a flawed program.

Not only will he not tell us how many claims have been rejected because of his imposing a March 31st deadline, he's now tied all family members together as a single farming unit in spite of separate ownership on land.

So, Mr. Speaker, another simple question for the minister: How many farm women landowners are now receiving zero for a rebate on their education tax rebate?

Mr. Kostyshyn: Obviously the member opposite is not choosing to put his hearing aid on, so let me be repetitious.

One of the things that is very key is we—as I said earlier, education is definitely key and we will maintain that regardless what the school population is thanks to our Education Minister has chosen to go that way, not like the members opposite chose to cut 700 teachers and get rid of 1,000 nurses. That, to me, is very important to this government on this side of the House. Rural development is key. Education is part of that infrastructure. We will continue to work in the rural development and we will continue.

Now, what did they chose not to support? The Canadian Wheat Board, and got rid of the people that were employed there and now be faced with producers sitting with grain in their bins and having millions of dollars—that's the problem issue where they're talking about lack of dollars. That's the money they could've used to pay the school tax.

That's what my opinion is, as far as the Agriculture Minister goes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, we are listening to the farm women landowners who are telling us that they are being rejected. We are listening to the farmers who have been rejected because their claims were not on time according to this government's new program. So it becomes very simple.

Why is this minister so adamant about cutting out farm women, individual farm owners, imposing strict deadlines, all to feed their own spending addiction? Why is it that this government absolutely dislikes the farming community so much that they'll impose these kind of restrictions on farm women, on individual farm landowners, in order to feed their spending addiction?

Mr. Kostyshyn: As I've said earlier, agriculture is key to rural development. This government believes that and we've invest in rural development. We've invested in livestock price insurance. We've invested in forage insurance programs. We actually brought in Excess Moisture Insurance, where the people were asking for it when they were in power and they chose none. It took this side of the House to bring in excess crop insurance to protect the producers. We believe in development of—let me just share some information with the members opposite.

The Province has provided education tax relief for Manitoba's—we provided \$336 million annually since 2000 and—since 2000 Manitoba has low—had

the lowest property tax increase in Canada. Manitoba was 9.2 per cent. This is a very modest compared to Saskatchewan was 27 per cent. And Alberta—

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

Diabetes Charter Manitoba Commitment

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, for more than 14 years this NDP government has continuously stalled when it comes to putting in place and actually implementing a comprehensive plan to address the diabetes epidemic in Manitoba. The epidemic was recognized provincially in 1996, and it continues today. It is the largest, longest and most severe epidemic in the history of our province.

Recently, the Canadian Diabetes Association has brought forward a diabetes charter which focuses on action to improve prevention and treatment of diabetes.

I ask the Minister of Health (Ms. Selby): Does she support the diabetes charter, and has she signed it?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question.

Yes, it was—I was here, actually, as were many other members of the Chamber, the day that the diabetes association was here. And, again, the partnership that we have with them and towards building healthy lifestyles and preventative measures is a comprehensive and holistic one. And I look forward to ongoing work with the association. It is something that, as we know, has a tremendous impact on the life and lifestyles of Manitobans. And I do believe that we have much more work that we can accomplish together.

And I, again, look forward to the ongoing partnerships because the work and the research that they bring forward is very valuable and contributes to the health and well-being of all Manitobans, those who are directly and indirectly impacted by the effects of diabetes.

Diabetes Reduction Prevention Plans

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the diabetes charter specifically calls on the

government for a comprehensive plan to prevent diabetes.

In 1998, a diabetes strategy was developed which could have been the start of such a comprehensive plan if it had been followed. But, sadly, in 14 years of NDP government, little of the strategy was followed. Indeed, the NDP may have rejected the strategy for partisan reasons. But the NDP fee pay—failed to put in place and implement their own comprehensive plan.

I ask the minister: When will a comprehensive plan be put in place to prevent diabetes, as called for in the diabetes charter? And, more importantly, when will it be implemented?

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): Again, diabetes and its complications, the—associated with it can often be prevented through access to healthy foods.

And in asking about a strategy, I can say that one of the strategies that we support that does this kind of work is the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative and the school nutrition program. By investing in these programs—and, in fact, Budget 2014 commits an additional \$450,000 for child nutrition programming for students in low-income schools and also supports a new pilot project to help make healthy foods, including milk, more accessible to northern Manitobans.

* (14:20)

So for those living with diabetes and other chronic conditions, we know that early detection and ongoing management by a primary-care team is the best way to avoid more serious complications, which is, again, why the commitment to the access to a family doctor and the creation of the My Health Team, again, a network of primary-care providers such as doctors, nurses, practitioners and dieticians, help people manage—

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

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, but no comprehensive plan.

In 2009, Manitoba had an epidemic of H1N1 flu; \$90 million was spent to implement a co-ordinated plan, but since 1996 Manitoba has had a provincially recognized epidemic of type 2 diabetes, the longest and most severe epidemic ever raged in the history of our province. The cumulative number of people affected since 1996 has been about 125,000, of

which more than 20,000 have died, numbers far higher than those severely affected and dying from H1N1 flu, and yet the government has never implemented a comprehensive plan to prevent diabetes.

I ask the minister: When will the government move to action and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent further diabetes in our province?

Ms. Blady: Mr. Speaker, well, again, in terms of a plan, we have a number of initiatives that are under way to support diabetes screening and management, which include: training health-care providers on diabetes education and support; the expansion of dialysis units which also offer education to people with diabetes to prevent kidney failure and the need for dialysis; the funding of pediatric insulin pumps as of 2012; retinal screening for people with diabetes in northern and remote communities at risk of vision loss; online diabetes risk assessment tools for the public; as well as using TeleCARE.

We're connecting patients by phone with registered nurses who help them manage their condition. TeleCARE saw an 80 per cent increase in the number of patients getting help to manage diabetes.

We also launched, again, the online two-minute diabetes risk test to help Manitobans identify and reduce their risk. The regional diabetes program promotes prevention, education, care and support services.

So more than 700 health-care—

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

Mining Week Celebrations Mine Rescue Program

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, in the great Flin Flon constituency, across all of northern Manitoba, in the land that the Golden Boy looks upon, mining is a very important source of good-paying, skilled jobs.

This week was a special week for the mining sector in Manitoba. In the North, every week is mining week.

Can the minister please inform the House of what this week means for mining in Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, twice in one day, a mining question.

You know, members—one of the things I'm particularly proud about is mine safety, and I'm very proud that the highlight of the week will be the provincial mine rescue program that'll take place on the 24th in Thompson, where five mine rescue teams—HudBay Flin Flon, HudBay Snow Lake, Vale, San Gold and Tanco—will compete in several categories including first aid, firefighting knowledge, obstacles, recovering, practical skills, and individuals will complete the technicians award given to the person who demonstrates the highest level of proficiency in preparing a breathing apparatus that personnel could use.

Mr. Speaker, in light of what we see around the world, I'm very proud of what our expanding mine industry has done regarding safety. I'm very proud there's an emphasis on safety, because one life lost is one too many—

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

Wellman Lake Cottages Water Service Fees

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, this past long weekend marked the annual ritual for many thousands of Manitobans opening up their cottages for the first time, a ritual many cottagers fear may be the last time with the 750 per cent fee increases they're facing under this NDP government.

On May 7th, Duck Mountain cottage association representatives met with Conservation officials to seek clarification on a number of discrepancies they found. The Wellman Lake group noted they are being charged \$14,000 annually for water services for a water treatment plant in the area that operates during the summer camping season. However, no cottage, Mr. Speaker, at Wellman has water service.

How does the Minister of Conservation justify imposing a \$14,000 annual cost on the Wellman Lake cottage association for services they do not use or access?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Mineral Resources—Municipal Government, pardon me.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Municipal Government): First of all, let me thank the member across the way for drawing a little attention to the Duck Mountains and some of the great, great lakes in the Duck Mountains that cottagers take advantage of every single winter and summer in our province,

Mr. Speaker. It's a very important part of the Parkland, so I thank him for bringing that forward.

Mr. Speaker, many of those cottagers have talked to me as an MLA from that area and they've said that they've been very glad that this government, that this Province stepped forward and enhanced—enhanced—the cottage experience in that part of the province. Our cottage lot draw in that area was well attended. It was something that Manitobans in our area want to invest in. It's part of being a Manitoban, pretty much, and this government on—

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: It's time for members' statements.

St. Vital Fire Hall

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, this May, the historic St. Vital Fire Hall is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The fire hall was built in 1914 at 600 St. Mary's Road and originally housed both the St. Vital police and fire departments.

Designed by Alexander and William Melville, the gorgeous two-and-a-half-storey structure is an artifact of the distinctive architecture that characterized early 20th century Manitoba. The red brick and limestone exterior recalls St. Vital's transformation from a rural to an urban community.

The fire hall was strategically situated near a hub of local commercial activity and at the junction of two major roadways. With the Red River located directly behind the property, the fire station could easily draw water for the pumper trucks.

When the fire hall began operations, it housed three horse-drawn carriages and six firefighters. At the rear were stables for horses until the station switched to pumper trucks in the 1930s. The fire hall bought its first truck in 1923, an REO Speed Wagon. In 1926, the building was expanded to house the St. Vital municipal offices and council chambers.

The fire station closed in 1972 and the police station closed in 1974. Today, the designated heritage building is home to the St. Vital Museum, whose volunteers worked tirelessly to restore and preserve the fire hall's original splendor.

A highlight of the anniversary will be the unveiling of the newly restored 1939 Fargo pumper

truck. Restorers Leon St. Onge and Dave Reimer will drive the truck through a ceremonial ribbon, accompanied by Murray Davidson, the last member of the St. Vital Fire Department to drive the truck to a fire.

Mr. Speaker, the St. Vital Fire Hall is an important part of our community's heritage, and I would like to thank the St. Vital Museum for conserving this precious landmark and all of its memories for generations to come.

Thank you.

Rusty Rutherford

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take the opportunity to recognize Rusty Rutherford. Rusty is a Portage la Prairie resident who has penned a book based on his life, covering a span of more than 70 years. The book, *A Steep Climb: From War Orphan to Queen's Medal*, is based on Rusty Rutherford's life from his time during World War II in England, the orphanages and the foster homes in Canada and the life—and life on his own from age 16.

Mr. Rutherford, now 75, has been telling stories for years to his family and friends who for years urged him to put pen to paper, and he inevitably began seeing the merit of having his stories recorded, even if just for his family.

Rusty enlisted the help of local writer Wanda Ryder who explained how to get started, and Rusty followed her advice, sat down and says the book just started to unfold.

War tends to be a popular genre, but Rutherford says his story is one aspect that is generally overlooked. The story of the children and the impact on them during the war is one of the least talked about things. The book has several other offerings as well as—as well, detailing Rutherford's 25 years with the Royal Canadian Air Force, his times spent travelling with the Snowbirds and a bit of subject matter that will interest pretty much everyone. He said it gives an overview of what it's like to grow up with no family, love or nurturing.

Rusty was surprised to be able to pen the book in his first place, having quit school at grade 9, though he did manage to complete high school as an adult. I've been very fortunate and, quote: I've been very fortunate because I've been able to do a lot of very interesting things, so it has just all came together in kind of a neat story.

* (14:30)

The Portage la Prairie Regional Library held a book launch in January of this year and it proved very successful.

I ask all members to congratulate Mr. Rutherford on his accomplishment.

Garden City Community Centre

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, sports can be an important tool to build self-confidence and stay healthy. Team sports have the extra bonus of helping us stay fit while also learning how to work together. That is why our government has invested in creating a city that supports team sport activities. Most recently, we are constructing a massive expansion at the Garden City Community Centre.

Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg has a long history with soccer. Our province has one of the oldest soccer traditions in North America. Today, our tie with the sport grows even stronger. For example, Winnipeg will host next year's FIFA Women's World Cup. Winnipeg soccer fans will once again have the pleasure of cheering on Canada's superstars. These women, including our own Desiree Scott and Captain Christine Sinclair, will compete within a year for the second time in our great city. They, too, started their inspirational careers indoors—fields such as the addition to the Garden City Community Centre.

I'm really excited about the expansion project. The expansion will include a 120,000-square-foot indoor field that can be split into four smaller fields. This new facility will add on to the existing indoor soccer facility at the Garden City Community Centre. Thousands of Winnipeg youth soccer players will now be able to play year-round on a full-sized indoor soccer field and so will be able to enjoy this fantastic sport year-round.

Also, there are two new indoor ice rinks that are under construction that will complement the new indoor soccer facility.

Mr. Speaker, by having safe communities, more recreational opportunities and sports teams that build young people's self-confidence, we empower young Manitobans to be the best they can be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Volunteer Services Awards

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Speaker, on April 30th, the RM of Macdonald held its annual Volunteer Services Awards in Oak Bluff. Six individuals and two groups were recognized for their work in the community and received a print by local artist Lorraine Powell.

Marc Arnal was recognized for over two decades of community work in Oak Bluff, serving as finance chair and recreation director of the Oak Bluff Recreation Club and the hockey association board. He coached sports, was a member of parent-school planning committee and is currently a member of the United Way of Winnipeg board.

Doug Pouteau was awarded for his work as an icemaker at the Sanford Arena and for seven years he spent on the Sanford recreation board, cooking and helping at Macdonald Services to Seniors in local Legion's annual barbecues.

Denise Vier was honoured for raising thousands of dollars for cancer research, Mr. Speaker, through her participation in the annual Run for the Cure event. She is active in ladies and junior curling leagues and is known for having encouraged hundreds of students to try curling. Denise volunteers with the Meridian Arts Festival, St. Paul's Catholic Church and Starbuck arena canteen.

Claude and Cynthia Bisson were recognized for their help with special events in Brunkild. They volunteer at the hall, the church and are known for their tree-planting activities. They also sat on the Brunkild's 100th anniversary committee.

Linda Hampton was honoured for her assistance with Macdonald Services for Seniors activities, the glimpse back project and for volunteering with her church and other local bonspiels.

The La Salle new facility committee of Brian Cornelson, Dave Brown, Gerry Gluska, James Pollard and Gary Romijn, as well as members of the La Salle new facility fundraising committee of Dean Bjamaron, Adam Murphy, Ray Klassen, Chris Randle and Martin McGarry, shared an award for their work on the new La Salle Credit Union Complex, which opened in February.

The work of these dedicated volunteers help keeps our communities strong, Mr. Speaker, and vibrant. I would like to congratulate all the recipients of the RM of Macdonald's Volunteer Service Awards.

Student Debt

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, throughout many, many discussions I've had with Manitoba post-secondary education students, the main concern that repeatedly comes up is student debt. Student debt is a big problem, and Manitoba's students have been pushing for action for many years.

Student debt poses many problems for students, but most particularly it increases the stress on students. Many students have a large debt burden when they're just beginning their careers, just when they don't need it. Students also are spending a lot of time working to reduce the debt, which means that they're not fully invested in their studies and are overworked.

We should ask the question: Why is student debt such a major problem under this NDP government in Manitoba today?

First, a careful look at what's happened in the last few years shows that the available funding through the provincial government for grants, bursaries and scholarships has decreased by more than \$16 million since 2008-2009, and as a result of funding reduction, the amount of student debt has risen immensely. The NDP's response to this is to blame the federal government for reducing the amount of money for scholarships. Even though the Conservative federal government has dramatically cut back on the amount of money provided to the provincial government for scholarships, the NDP's not blameless. In 14 and a half years, Manitoba could have done much better in providing funding for scholarships and bursaries for Manitoba students.

Although the Province did decide several years ago to have tuition rebates after graduation, this has not decreased the burden of student debt for students while they're going to school. Thus, it's not touched the heart of the issue. Reducing student debt while students are in school can make a huge difference in reducing student stress and can enable students to devote their efforts to learning as opposed to being overworked while attending school.

It's important that the failures of the NDP government be exposed with the respect to putting in place policies to reduce student debt while students are going to school. The NDP should be acting much more effectively to reduce student debt during the

time when students are studying in post-secondary education so that they can do well and have strong and healthy careers in their futures.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances? Seeing no grievances.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day, government business?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): On House business, in light of the royal visit and the historic Order of Manitoba event in the Chamber tonight, could you please canvass the House and see if there's agreement to call it 5 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

Prior to the adjournment of the House, I'd like to ask honourable members, as the Assembly Chamber will be in use this evening for the Order of Manitoba ceremony, I would like to ask all members to clean off the top of their desks and to ensure that no papers or other materials are stored on the bottom desk shelves. I thank all honourable members for their co-operation.

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 21, 2014

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