

Fourth 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
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon.	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Greg, Hon.	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	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	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	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Thomas, Hon.	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
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, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Gimli	—
<i>Vacant</i>	Southdale	—

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Save Our Seine

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, a small group of volunteers in St. Vital formed Save Our Seine to address the challenges affecting the quiet little river flowing through our community. Their hard work over the past two decades has transformed this river.

Save Our Seine started as a basic cleanup crew and morphed into a dedicated group of activists. They lobbied the City of Winnipeg to address issues of industrial waste dumping, protecting riverfront property and investing in green spaces around the river.

One of the most significant achievements was getting the City to stop dumping toxic sludge into the Seine, poisoning it for decades. Eventually officials undertook a comprehensive environmental study after almost 15 years of lobbying by Save Our Seine. The study confirmed extensive environmental damage. Now, with thousands of tons of contaminated soil hauled away and nutrient-rich earth to replace it, the river is slowly healing.

Save Our Seine was also instrumental in bringing the plight of the Seine's nearby forest to the attention of our government and the City of Winnipeg. Bois-des-esprits is a tranquil oak forest that is home to a diverse ecosystem and was in danger of being destroyed. Save Our Seine campaigned hard to raise donations, and paired with donations from the Province and the City, Bois-des-esprits is now properly protected.

Save Our Seine is always a big supporter of creating more green spaces in our area. They are instrumental in developing the ongoing Bishop Grandin Greenway project. This greenway is a secluded trail system that features community gardens, naturalized ponds and much more. It is part

of the community's effort inspired by Save Our Seine's progress to reclaim St. Vital's natural beauty.

At this quarter-century mark, the passionate members of Save Our Seine still have a long list of improvements to tackle next. They are fiercely committed to protecting the Seine and have become environmental leaders for St. Vital.

Mr. Speaker, today we have two Save Our Seine past presidents, Bob Tinker and Jean-Pierre Brunet, joining us in the House. I'd like to thank our guests and the entire Save Our Seine board for their dedication to protecting our natural beauty.

Congratulations on 25 years and good luck in your future progress.

Teamwork in the Workplace

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the importance of teamwork in the workplace. Our workplace is the Manitoba Legislature, and there are many individuals throughout various offices and departments that make up great teams. To best understand the role of strong teamwork in the workplace, let me provide a few sporting and educational analogies.

My love for multiple sports, which includes baseball, curling, hockey and football, has always been an important part of my life and carried over into my profession as a teacher and guidance counsellor and now into my political life. One thing that was common to be successful in sport, education and politics was to have an understanding of and an appreciation for teamwork.

In education, every position within the school, bus drivers, custodial staff, support staff, teachers and administration, had a particular skill and unique role in the overall development and success of its students at that school.

As you know, Canada's favourite baseball team, the Toronto Blue Jays, recently returned to the playoffs after a 22-year absence. Of importance is how the current team functioned this past season not only with great athleticism but great communication within the team along with solid interactions and harmony in team member relationships. In essence, Mr. Speaker, that is what great teamwork is about.

The red-hot Toronto Blue Jays had a successful season and finished the season by losing the 2015 American League Championship Series to the Kansas City Royals. Despite the loss, what the Toronto Blue Jays won was an increased source of national pride and community building.

As baseball great Babe Ruth once said, the way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play well together the team won't be worth a dime.

In closing, Progressive Conservative members on this side of the House fully embrace the concept of teamwork and unity. The importance of co-operating effectively with others play out for us daily. Whether it be with our colleagues, co-workers, constituents, friends or neighbours, our Progressive Conservative members remain unified and collegial and recognize that dysfunction, instability and distraction do not make for great teams.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Canoe and Kayak Club

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): At the recent Western Canada Summer Games in August, Team Manitoba made us all very proud. Led by chef de mission and Riverview icon Ted Bigelow, Team Manitoba won a record 144 medals.

Though all our athletes are outstanding, I want to pay particular tribute to our provincial paddlers who train out of the canoe and kayak club on Churchill Drive in Fort Garry-Riverview. The canoe and kayak club is a happening place most days and nights as canoe, kayak and dragon boat athletes gather to train, get fit and prepare for competitions across Canada and around the world.

Led by their coach Jerome Seremak, another Riverview legend, our Team Manitoba paddlers won at least two medals each at the summer games. Maddy Mitchell took home 12 gold medals, an incredible achievement.

Mr. Speaker, our paddlers are also having an impact internationally. Maddy's twin sister, Emma, recently represented Manitoba in Poland. Nadya Crossman-Serb was the first Manitoba woman to compete at the Canoe World Sprint Championships in Italy, a competition featuring Olympic-level athletes. James Lavallee finished 6th in the

kayak 200-metre at the junior world championships in Portugal.

Jerome Seremak is understandably very proud of his team, but I want to acknowledge his efforts as well. He not only produces extraordinary athletes but builds community while making a mark on the world stage.

I also want to pay special tribute to Ted Bigelow as he recently announced his retirement from Sport Manitoba after many years as chef de mission to numerous competitions. Thank you, Ted. You have been an extraordinary leader, role model and mentor to countless athletes while making an enormous contribution to our neighbourhood, our community and our province.

Bravo to all and congratulations to every member of the team.

Communities for Veterans—Ride Across Canada

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, this summer at the invitation of Dan Guetre from the Dawson Trail Dispatch newspaper, I had the opportunity to participate in the Manitoba portion of a cross-country ride in support of Canadian veterans.

The cross-country horseback ride which began in Victoria, British Columbia, on April 13th will benefit the Communities for Veterans Foundation and is led by Canadian veteran Paul Nichols. To date, it has tracked more than 8,000 kilometres as it raises awareness about the challenges that Canadian veterans and their families face when they return home as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder, operational stress and physical injuries.

I joined the ride together with my son Malachi along the Dawson Trail outside of Richer, Manitoba. My wife and I were honoured to attend a dinner that evening in Richer with Mr. Nichols and those that were joining him along the journey. We were struck by Mr. Nichols' humble nature and his heart for helping his fellow veterans.

Currently, the cross-country ride has reached the Maritimes, and along the way over 350 veterans ranging in age, rank and years of service have participated. Several horses have been used along the journey, but none more faithfully than Paul's horse Zoe. Paul's expecting to reach the conclusion of his ride on November 9th, just prior to Remembrance Day, in St. John's and plans to use the stories he's collected along the ride for the basis of a book.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. Nichols for allowing me to participate in part of his cross-country journey, and thank him and all of our veterans for their continued service to Canada as we prepare to pay tribute to each of our veterans who have served—and who have served in the past this Remembrance Day. Lest we forget.

Funding Support for Autism Treatment

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): In June 2013, I was joined by the colleagues on this side of the House to call for much needed funding for autism treatment options, including ABA therapy. I read petitions signed by hundreds of Manitobans and brought forward a resolution calling for the support for families with autism. This NDP government remained silent while families continued to struggle to find supports for their loved ones.

That June I also had the privilege of meeting a young girl named Hannah Loepky. Hannah was six years old when she was diagnosed with autism. Thankfully, her parents were able to work with Hannah's school and St. Amant to access ABA therapy.

* (13:40)

Her mother Angela said in her book, titled *Rain Girl*, that without ABA, Hannah's life would have been—who would have continued to be—to spiral downwards.

I was disappointed to find out that this NDP government is looking to reduce the number of years kids like Hannah can be enrolled in ABA services from six years to three within early-learning and school-age-learning ABA programs. This came after the NDP promised to eliminate the wait-list for ABA in 2011.

Hannah and Angela were unable to be here with us today, but like the many families in Manitoba affected by autism, they are waiting to hear what answers the government has for why they are cutting programs for these children in need. I feel—fully agree with Angela when she wrote in her memoir that putting the money into early and effective intervention programming was going to provide Hannah's life quality and the likelihood that she may not at any—may not need any—or less funding as an adult.

On behalf of Hannah and all of the other Manitobans with autism, I would like to ask this government to work harder to make sure that these

kids have the options that will work best for themselves and their families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes member statements.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I have a number of guests to introduce prior to the start of oral questions.

And I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members first to the gallery where we have with us today Mr. Chris Gunning, who is the consul of the USA in Winnipeg.

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

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today Maddy Mitchell, Emma Mitchell, James Lavallee, Wanda Lavallee, Nadya Crossman-Serb, Jerome Seremak, Ted Bigelow and Deb Clark, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Education.

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

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today from the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, we have 15 English-language students under the direction of Patricia Culleton-Koebel. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Advanced Learning (Mr. Allum).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us from Gordon Bell off-campus program, we have 30 grade 10 to 12 students under the direction of Mr. Mark Dewar. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

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

Mr. Speaker: And as our tradition in this House, I'd like to introduce one of our new pages who is joining us this session, Adam Gislason, who is a student at Oak Park High School.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here and wish you well in your Legislature career. Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Member for Seine River Recognition of Service

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): If I may, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge an announcement that was made this morning by the member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald).

I would like to say that we appreciate her years of service in this place. It's not an easy place some days, and she served the people of this province for 12 years in her role as a Cabinet minister for Gary Doer and for our Premier presently. I know that this may not have been the most easy time for her the last few months, and I know that her decision would be a difficult one, having had to make the decision myself to leave this place and go and pursue other interests in support of Manitoba, and I know she will do the same.

And I want to say to her I wish all the best to her and to her husband, and I know that also her son will appreciate perhaps a little bit more time with her than he may have had in the past. And so all the best to her, and we know the Premier would agree with that.

And I ask—I ask the Premier, I hope he feels the same way. I'll let him reply.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I do thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving up his first question to recognize the contribution of the member for the Seine River, for her contribution to public life over these last 12 years. It is not an easy decision to enter public life nor to leave it. You're highly visible. You're out there on the front end of all the issues that are coming along, and that sense of exposure makes you even more attentive to the needs of your constituents.

The member has served the constituents of Seine River with diligence and honour. Over several years as minister of Health, she has helped to reduce ER wait times, improve health comes—outcomes for patients and hire hundreds of doctors and nurses in this province, people sorely needed in our health-care system.

As Jobs and Economy minister, she worked to generate more employment opportunities for Manitobans, more opportunities for people to get proper training and, of course, worked on social assistance reform, which provided what we call the

Rent Assist benefit to a wide array of working Manitobans and people seeking work and training.

So as we go forward, I want to say to the MLA for Seine River, we appreciate your service and we look forward to you continuing to make a contribution to the people of Manitoba. And to you and your family, we wish you the very best.

NDP Severance Packages Compensation Disclosure

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, enough of that warm fuzzy stuff.

One of the consequences of the challenge to the Premier's leadership last year, or approximately a year ago, was, of course, that a number of staff chose sides. And some, in the Premier's view, chose wrong, and so he decided to let them go at great cost to Manitoba taxpayers.

And we know that the Premier undertook to disclose the amount of severance to Anna Rothney last spring. He said it would be in the Public Accounts, but it isn't there, Mr. Speaker.

And so I would ask the Premier if he would make public today, in the interest of transparency and full disclosure, what the amount taxpayers had to pay to Ms. Rothney to move on to Alberta actually was.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for the question.

Our commitment was to be fully accountable with the public sector disclosure act. We will do that, Mr. Speaker. We take advice from legal counsel on the best way to proceed with that.

I do point out that the member opposite waited 15 years before he disclosed the—any severance payments whatsoever that were offered to members of the government that he served in who were involved in the vote-rigging scandal, Mr. Speaker.

He also was on the record on May 26th of this year saying, "we haven't paid severance to any of our departing staff and have been totally transparent about that." Mr. Speaker, that was actually incorrect. Severance payment was paid out to staff members that he had on the payroll as early as this year.

So I want to offer him the opportunity to correct the record about his own shabby performance on transparency.

Mr. Pallister: Well, I see the Premier, rather than answer the question honestly as he had promised to do, chooses to go on the attack. That is shabby behaviour, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the Premier's running away from accountability. He undertook to disclose the full amount of the severance in the Public Accounts, and he has not done that, and so again I would ask him why not. It took him three years after chastising his own colleagues on not disclosing free Jets tickets to admit that he himself had taken them.

Is it going to take Manitobans three years to find out the truth of the amount of severance paid to Anna Rothney? It's not his money, Mr. Speaker; it's Manitobans' money, and I would ask him to answer the question honestly. And if he would, I think Manitobans would appreciate that effort on his part very much.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I say, again, the member has his classic double standard with how he treats these matters.

When it comes to his own severance payments, there was a wait of over 15 years. He would never disclose them at that point. We had to do the research on that.

We follow all the law required with respect to the public disclosure accountability act. We take advice from our lawyers on the requirements to do that, and we'll follow the letter of the law in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

But I do point out, even with his own severance payments, it wasn't disclosed. It had to be—go on the public record. It had to be discovered. It's a severance payment of over \$100,000 that he received from both federal and provincial governments.

And, Mr. Speaker, in 1998-1999 when seven former political staff were paid the equivalent of \$650,000 in today's terms, that was never disclosed until it was researched by the members of this side of the House.

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

Mr. Pallister: The Premier's standing on rather shallow ice, Mr. Speaker, thin ice.

He is the guy who covered up the Crocus debacle that cost Manitobans millions of dollars. He's the one who knew the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) actually tried to use non-partisan civil

servants as props in a protest rally and covered it up for a full year.

* (13:50)

He's the one who filed a phony election return. He's the one who told Manitobans in the last election campaign that he was not going to raise the PST and then, weeks later, did it.

And each of these things he knew about and hid. Now will he hide again? He's hiding in a little hidey-hole, Mr. Speaker, today.

Will he go out the west door today and will he answer questions that he's promised to answer some months ago? Will he finally come clean and tell Manitobans how much severance Anna Rothney actually received?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we again see the continuation of the double standard of the Leader of the Opposition. He has one set of rules for everybody else and a differ set for himself.

As a matter of fact, he's on the record as saying all severance payments aren't the same, of course; they're different. That's what he says. So the severance payments that are not disclosed when he was in government are different than severance payments that we are following according to the public disclosure and accountability act.

And I can tell you the door we go through for the future of Manitoba: a door which allows everybody in this province to be part of this province. We don't make distinctions. We don't vote against antibullying legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And I have to say the following. We're the government that brought in a ban on corporate and union donations so that the people of this Legislature are accountable to the citizens of Manitoba and nobody else. Who voted against that, Mr. Speaker? The members of the opposition. They did not vote for a ban on corporate and union donations. They are beholden to special interests today, they have been holden to special interests in the past, and we know they're going to be beholden to special interests in the future.

Tiger Dam System Tendering Process

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier who actually brought in a special staff member to work with him during the leadership race, when there was

no one in that position before the leadership race and no one after it, and asked taxpayers to pay for it. Now, this is the kind of behaviour that is puzzling to Manitobans, and he continues with this untendered issue, not shopping around.

So I'll ask him a question about the Tiger Dams debacle. He claims that he ordered a tender for the Tiger Dams a half a year after they were promised by the Deputy Premier and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Half a year after an order was placed, an invoice was delivered.

Then we asked through the freedom of information request for some information about the correspondence and we get back six pages all blacked out—all blacked out—no information whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, and here he goes again.

Now, I'm going to ask him: What is he hiding?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): This is a Leader of the Opposition where when it came to health-care critical incidents, it was covered up entirely. We brought in a system of critical incident reporting which allows these things to be looked into and the results to be made available so that these things don't happen again. We've extended that to the child-welfare system. We've improved our disclosure when it comes to freedom of information legislation, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to find ways to be more transparent.

The last question we had for the member opposite, which he says was redacted, we provided this much data to the members of the opposition, and I table three copies of it today. The amount of data that we have provided here on one question exceeds what they provided to the public during the entire 11 years they were in office.

Mr. Pallister: I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that Manitobans will be excited to receive a stack of blacked-out documents.

The fact of the matter is that the Premier claimed in this spring session—thank you very much—the Premier claimed in this spring session that he was interested in shopping when he had no intentions. He let Manitobans believe that he was actually concerned about getting value for money on a \$5-million Tiger Dam purchase when he had previously, from a political pal, purchased \$9 million worth of Tiger Dams without tendering a single time.

But this data wasn't made available as is required by law. No, it was not made available on the

computer terminal in the Leg. library as required by law. It was covered up for six years, five years, four years, covered up by this Premier.

Now, his unwillingness to be upfront and transparent is what caused this rebellion opposite in the first place. And I'm giving him another chance.

Gary Doer used to say, don't increase beer prices and don't increase the PST, and he was right about both, I think, Mr. Speaker. But we could add a third thing: stop covering up information on spending Manitobans' money that is not your own. It belongs to hard-working Manitoba families. Make it available.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition's time on this question has elapsed.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, this question and line of reasoning is coming from the member of the government that did the largest vote-rigging scandal in the history of Manitoba, and then they did severance payments to people involved in that scandal and never disclosed those severance payments over the 15 years they had an opportunity to do that. That is a classic example of a double standard: one set of rules where there's no accountability for himself and his colleagues, another set of rules for everybody else. That level of hypocrisy is unacceptable in this Legislature.

So when the member opposite wants to stand up and ask for transparency, I provided information today on one question which exceeds what they have provided over the many years they were in government, Mr. Speaker. And we look for more ways to increase transparency: no corporate and union donations in Manitoba, something they opposed.

And when it comes to the specifics of Tiger Dams, we did it with a full tendered process the last time around, and what the member fails to understand, that only resources given were from the federal government, which are currently under investigation for how that tendering procedure was done. We were fully transparent and the Ombudsman decided not to pursue—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time on this answer has elapsed.

Investors Group Field Provincial Loan for Repairs

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Coming from a Premier who said, and I quote, I don't think you risk

anything if you tell the truth to people, Mr. Speaker, what is he hiding? Why is he refusing to tell the truth now?

Mr. Speaker, a recent order-in-council recommended by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar) provided for a loan guarantee of up to \$35.3 million to triple B stadium to cover cost overruns associated with repairs to the brand new stadium. Allegations suggest that the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and his NDP government cut corners in order to fast-track the completion of the stadium for their own political gains just prior to the last election.

In the interest of transparency, Mr. Speaker, will the minister indicate the list of repairs that are needed for the stadium, and will he indicate why Manitobans are being left to foot the bill?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, it's nonsense, and secondly, in the interest of transparency, let's be clear: The opposition voted against the MTS Centre downtown. Now we have the Jets; we have the Moose. They're very proud of the fact how they opposed that infrastructure project downtown to revitalize downtown and they opposed the football stadium. Every day, they're here cheering for Saskatchewan Roughriders, wearing a watermelon on their head and so proud to stand up behind Saskatchewan and not backing the Winnipeg Blue Bombers or the Bisons, who play in that great stadium. It's one of the best stadiums in Canada.

Yes, we're not happy with some and very pleased with what has taken place with regard to some of the changes and construction that needs to take place, Mr. Speaker, but given that, the opposition—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's on this question has elapsed.

Mrs. Stefanson: I've heard that nonsense before; I'm not sure where, Mr. Speaker.

But the stadium's original budget back when it was first announced was \$115 million. Then it skyrocketed to \$190 million. Then it rose to \$210 million. And now the Minister of Finance has authorized a loan guarantee of \$35.3 million for a potential cost now of more than \$245 million, more than double the original cost.

Mr. Speaker, \$35.3 million is a specific number. I am simply asking the minister if he will provide a

list of those repairs and what they are, how much they will cost and why Manitobans are being left to foot the bill for them.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a loan guarantee to get the job done and to proceed with making the changes that need to be done.

Secondly, since the member opposite likes to talk about dollars, let's talk about Manitoba saw \$12.9 million in economic benefits and a 57 per cent increase in tourism because of the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup games held in that stadium. Also, the construction of the stadium created an estimated 2,400 jobs and \$19.6-million provincial revenues, and according to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, the Grey Cup will create well over \$100 million in economic impact for the province of Manitoba.

That's dollars and cents, and that's putting the clear message on the record of exactly what that stadium means to the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, we aren't getting any answers from this minister, and this is exactly why we've asked the Auditor General to investigate this matter.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, allegations suggest that the Premier fast-tracked the project in order to get 'er done just prior to the last election, and now Manitoba taxpayers are being left to foot the bill.

The Minister of Finance has, through an order-in-council, provided for a loan guarantee of up to \$35.3 million, yet he refuses to indicate how he arrived at that number.

Mr. Speaker, exactly how much more is this stadium going to cost the taxpayers of Manitoba as a result of cost overruns for repairs of a brand new stadium?

Mr. Lemieux: No, it's not going to cost the taxpayers of Manitoba anything, Mr. Speaker. There's insurance that—coverage that is in place. And not only that, I can't comment about the case that's before the courts, and the courts will determine who's at fault, but insurance is going to cover it. So Manitobans will not be on the hook with regard to the costs related to this.

But, again, let me conclude, they're the party of do nothing, build nothing: no hydro dams, no MTS. We wouldn't have the Jets here. We wouldn't have

the Moose here, Mr. Speaker. We wouldn't have those opportunities for our amateur sport to be in the MTS Centre. We wouldn't have the Bisons playing in a brand new stadium. We wouldn't have the Bombers in the new stadium. We wouldn't have AC/DC concerts there. We wouldn't have Paul McCartney there.

Mr. Speaker, we would have zero, nothing, zilch under their leadership.

Investors Group Field Construction Costs

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, on April 2nd of 2009, former Premier Gary Doer made an announcement about a new stadium, and during that announcement, Premier Doer said that taxpayers would be on the hook for \$20 million. In fact, he said that that's the most that he could justify the taxpayers would be paying for.

But, of course, Mr. Doer left, and we got a new Premier (Mr. Selinger), and that amount went from \$20 million to \$100 million to \$120 million to \$200 million and \$210 million, and who knows where it's going to stop?

Mr. Speaker, if Premier Doer said that the maximum we should be paying, that the taxpayers should be paying, are \$20 million, why does this Premier think that the cost should be endless for the taxpayers?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): Well, first of all, it's very interesting to hear them speaking so highly of Premier Doer. They used to attack him on every single move. And when Premier Doer was one of the people who went to the minister of Finance of the day to ask whether or not we should invest in the True North centre, this current Premier, the minister of Finance of the day, and Premier Doer agreed to support the Chipman family and others to invest in downtown Winnipeg.

And the opposition, it's all they did was attack the minister of Finance and the premier of the day of making that investment. The Chipmans know it. Manitobans know it. They build nothing, zero. MTS would never be there, and the Jets would never be there, nor the Moose.

Non-Disclosure Agreement

Mr. Goertzen: I knew Mr. Doer, and this Premier is no Gary Doer, Mr. Speaker.

Six years ago, actually, Gary Doer said that, and he said it at the old Canad Inns Stadium, that the Canad Inns Stadium was in need of \$40 million of repair because the roof was leaking and the cement was cracking. Now, today, under the new stadium, it needs about \$35 million of repair because the roof is leaking and the cement is cracking.

Every step of the way, this government has tried to hide information, whether it was regarding construction delays, whether it was regarding problems with reconstructions or the cost.

Is this government going to continue the pattern and try to settle the case with a non-disclosure agreement so that information on the court case and the settlement will not be revealed?

Mr. Lemieux: Well, Mr. Speaker, we can't speak to what's before the courts now, and the courts will determine, certainly, who's at blame.

And the member from Steinbach is also no Chris Goertzen, the mayor of Steinbach, either, a Goertzen who did support the Winnipeg Jets and does support the Winnipeg Jets.

Mr. Goertzen: All Goertzens are good Goertzens, Mr. Speaker.

After 147 years, the Prime Minister's house needs \$10 million of repairs, but after two years, the stadium needs \$35 million of repairs.

But, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this government continue to mislead. They misled on the construction timeline. They misled on the cost. And now they're misleading on the problems.

That's one of the reasons why we asked that the Auditor General come in and do a fulsome review, because ultimately this isn't my money, it's not the government's money, it's the money of the taxpayers of Manitoba.

I want an assurance from this government that they're not going to move to a settlement and a non-disclosure agreement so once again they can hide from taxpayers of Manitoba how much money they're going to be stuck paying for this boondoggle that they've created.

Mr. Lemieux: Now, there's some transparency, finally, from their caucus, calling a beautiful stadium, the best outdoor stadium in the country, a boondoggle. And the Bombers will remember that.

Now, to be clear, I should put on the record, I do like Goertzens. One is my deputy minister and I like

him very much. But having said that, I'm no Mario Lemieux either. So just to be fair.

So, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are very proud of the investments that taken place in this province, yes. Are we happy with some of the challenges around Investors? I won't use the language that I've used previously, but no.

So I know the members opposite would agree that any investment in the province of Manitoba is surely important, and we're very, very pleased to invest not only in hydro and infrastructure in the province but also in sports.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Credit Rating Announcement Finance Minister's Response

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, Moody's downgraded Manitoba's credit rating on July the 10th, the first downgrade in 30 years. Finance Minister said he was on the job, but he was not on the Finance job, the Cabinet portfolio for which he is receiving a large salary. Instead, his July 10th calendar shows no appointments following the Moody's announcement, yet he got his photo taken in front of the Good Ship Rusting Hull.

The Selkirk Journal quoted the Finance Minister at the rusting-hull photo op as saying, and I quote: "It's a sad ending, but . . . Rather than argue about who's responsibility it is, our government has decided to take action." End quote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, does the Finance Minister appreciate the irony, his promising to take action to address a sinking ship on the same day he refuses to take action as Finance Minister to take responsibility, show up and assure lenders?

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I want to, again—I do want to thank the member for once again drawing attention to the fact, Mr. Speaker, that it's our government that take—that's taking action to decommission the Lord Selkirk, to remove it from the Selkirk slough. This boat has been there for many years. It is a public safety issue. It's a hazard. It's an eyesore. It's also—it was polluting the environment. I was pleased to join the Minister of Conservation. I was pleased to join the mayor of Selkirk. The only one missing was the federal government; the Stephen Harper government was not there to support us.

But, again, I want to thank the member for raising this. It was a great day for Selkirk.

Mr. Friesen: You know, with all this member's references to rusting hull, sinking ships harming young people and causing pollution, it might be a good idea to invite a clarification about whether he is referencing the MS Selkirk or his NDP Finance record.

The Minister for Conservation was also present at the rusting-hull photo op and he, too, made comments to the media. He said this, and I quote: It's unfortunate that the owners refused to step up. I understand that the onus is technically on them, but they are nowhere to be seen. End quote. Mr. Speaker, the member for the Interlake could have been just as well speaking of his colleague the Finance Minister: refused to step up, the onus is on him, nowhere to be found.

Mr. Finance Minister, how do you respond to the charges of your own colleague?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

As I've cautioned the House in the past about directing their comments through the Chair, both questions and answers, I'm going to ask for the co-operation, the honourable member from Morden-Winkler, in placing his comments through the Chair, please.

Now, the honourable Minister of Finance, to answer the question that was posed.

Mr. Dewar: Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. I want to thank my friend the member for the Interlake, the Minister of Conservation, that joined me at this very important announcement.

You know, we didn't ignore this issue, Mr. Speaker. We responded in the appropriate way. We decided that after years of having this vessel virtually decay that becoming—it was becoming a hazard. It was an eyesore. It was an embarrassment. It was decided that, without any help from the federal government—we asked our federal government to be a partner; our MP decided not to be a partner in this.

But, again, our government recognized that we had to take action, and we did. We are decommissioning this ship. I invite all members to come out and watch it disappear.

* (14:10)

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, on a day when it meant tens of millions of dollars in additional debt

servicing costs to Manitobans, he is saying he's at a photo op and he's happy with that.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't all rusty-hull photo ops for the minister, though, because he said he was in Toronto and New York. And he said that—he reports that debt rating agencies have full confidence.

But I ask him: Was it in Toronto or New York that Moody's commented on the NDP's loss of fiscal discipline leading to debt and debt service ratios? Was it in Toronto or New York that DBRS stated the Manitoba government continues to disappoint? Those statements, by international bond rating agencies, demonstrate a loss of confidence.

Does the Finance Minister acknowledge that he had a duty to the people of Manitoba to be on the job, that he was not on the job and his failure to do so means—it invites further nervousness by those who rate our credit and the result of which could be millions more each year for the people of Manitoba in debt servicing costs?

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, we were Aa3 ranking. We're Aa2 ranking. I'll remind the member that is, in fact, higher than it was when his leader of the—was in government. When we came into office, we were spending 13 cents on the dollar; last year, 5.7; at this point, 5.6 cents on the dollar to service our debt. We are investing in infrastructure. We're investing in health care. We're investing in education.

I was in the member's own constituency a few weeks ago for a public consultation meeting. Had he showed up, he would have found out that that's what his constituents agree with as well. His constituents want us to build at Tabor Home. We are. His constituents want us to invest in roads and education in that area. We're doing it. And, again, had he showed up, he would have heard the same message.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Aging Out of Program

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): This NDP government broke a 2011 commitment to support families with children with the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as ABA.

We know that the wait-lists for early-learning treatment is at its highest level ever, with 68 children waiting. Every year, more and more children age out

of being able to receive this treatment. Twenty-five children with significant needs recently aged out, and 30 more are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, why is this minister rejecting the efforts of these 68 families who so desperately are waiting for her help?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): This government is committed to supporting the children and the families dealing with the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder.

This government has worked with many community partners and professionals to design a program or programs that address the issues on a continuum, providing autism outreach programs. ABA is one of those programs that we provide. We're the only jurisdiction that will be providing ABA services to the age of 21 within this province. That is significant.

We have increased the funding for ABA by 800 per cent. We are continuing to provide the support within the school setting, within the clinical setting and, most importantly, within the home setting. There are services that are provided across this province for children and families.

Mrs. Rowat: In 2011, the NDP promised to 'eliminate'—eliminate autism wait-lists. Since then, hundreds of families have seen their children age out of the critical early intervention services.

To date, 19 families waiting for program assistance will soon age out forever, without ever receiving ABA services. Mr. Speaker, families are suffering because this minister and her government continue to do nothing.

And it is a simple question I have for the minister: Will this minister commit today that the 19 families currently on the school-age wait-list for ABA services will not age out, yes or no?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I've stated previously, this government is committed to providing a continuum of services and supports for families and children diagnosed with ASD.

We are walking with them along this journey, providing them supports within the family, with the autism outreach workers, with ABA support, with family respite. We're going within—into the school system and providing comprehensive and focused supports throughout the school system. We are

working with these young people 'til they're 21 years old. We are providing these supports.

We've also gone beyond that by providing an innovative program at Red River College called Transforming Futures. We're making these commitments; we're going to continue to make these commitments.

I ask the member opposite, what will she cut with a \$550-million reduction that her leader is promising?

Mrs. Rowat: This minister is walking past these families who are in desperate need of helping their vulnerable children.

Mr. Speaker, what is especially cruel is that this government's policy statement on autism services notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism is critical, yet this government refuses—refuses—to respond to the supports that these families need and their vulnerable children need. Families say that their children are locked up by autism and that ABA therapy is their only hope.

Mr. Speaker, does this minister not agree that wait-lists and denials of treatment for these vulnerable children is totally unacceptable?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We continue to support early intervention. We continue to provide the support within the school system and within the family and within the community. We are investing \$22 million to support families and \$23 million within the school system to support over 1,500 students. We will continue to do that.

We have the partnerships within the community. There are many, many programs that are being offered; ABA is one of those programs, but there is also Floortime. There's the Autism Outreach and also the other supports that are provided with the funding that we provide through Children's Therapy Initiative such as speech and language, occupational and physiotherapy. Those are all very significant.

We have supported the families. We will continue to work with them. We will make those investments. We will not be reckless and acknowledge that we are going to make cuts to their services. We are going to continue to invest and support all—

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

Eating Disorders Youth Psychological Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, eating disorders are among the most distressing conditions for young people and for families.

Even though psychological services are very useful and effective for helping children with eating disorders, long wait-lists for psychological outpatient services persist in Manitoba.

Why has the NDP paid so little attention to psychological services for our children that wait times are so long for these urgently needed services?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I thank the member for a question on a subject that's close to many people in this Legislature.

We know that eating disorders are among many of the psychological stresses that young people face these days. There is a special clinic that deals with that that has been put in place through support from this government. The members opposite voted against it and, quite frankly, the member from River Heights voted against those budgets as well when we put those resources in place.

So we do believe that there has to be support. We do believe that there has to be support for young people going through this and that includes psychological support, and the members opposite that protest that need to actually align their voting record with what they ask for. They consistently vote for cutbacks in services. They demand cutbacks in services and then they advocate for more services.

We have actually continued to support services during difficult times while we've created good jobs.

But psychological services are important, particularly for young people in Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks about the importance of this psychological services for people with eating disorders, children.

But most parents and families simply can't afford the only alternative of paying for private psychologist treatment for a child with an eating disorder, and they are left to wait and watch as their—too often, their loved one suffer, physically weakens and withers under this oppressive condition.

Manitoba Liberals will end this two-tier system that still fails to see mental health as part of health care by providing coverage for these psychological services under medicare.

What is the Premier offering these parents who have to wait and watch their children suffer?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I again remind the member from River Heights he was part of the federal government that downloaded 37 per cent cuts to health and social services all across this country, and the provinces have been working for over a decade to put that right.

* (14:20)

In 2009 we put forward a special service to deal with eating disorders, a prevention option, as well as a community treatment option, through the Women's Health Clinic, and over 271 people have benefited from that. We have additional money that we put in the '12-13 budget and we also have identified 19 people that will begin the program in the next two months, Mr. Speaker. It is important that we have support, both in-hospital support and out-hospital support, so there's support in the community as well.

And I note again that this budget, this very budget that we still haven't finalized the budget implementation act on, which has been stalled by all the members opposite, has a \$2-million program to expand mental health services in Manitoba, and those \$2 million for mental health services are something we've never heard a word on from the members opposite, and we know they will vote against it.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the NDP's 16-year-long piecemeal approach has failed to meet the needs of a very serious problem.

The Child and Adolescent Eating Disorders Service can accommodate only six participants at a time in day treatment and their current wait time is up to six months. Eating disorders can be life-threatening. Parents desperate to access psychological treatment for their suffering child are very aware of this fact.

Why have the NDP failed to enhance access to life-saving psychological services for children as Manitoba Liberals will do?

Mr. Selinger: Again, Mr. Speaker, we put the resources in place in 2009. We've expanded those resources since, and those resources are both in hospital—they are both in-hospital patient services and there—as well as out-patient services in the community. And we know this is a serious issue for many young people, which is why we do prevention

programming as well to help people be comfortable with who they are.

The members opposite have voted against antibullying legislation. One of the reasons young people have psychological disorders with respect to body image issues and eating disorders is because of bullying, and what do the members opposite do? When we put a program in place to deal with anti-bullying, they vote against it. That's their approach. They leave people out.

We find a way for helping people to belong regardless of who they are, regardless of the issues they are dealing with. We want them all to have a great sense of belonging in Manitoba, and if we have to provide psychological services to do that, we will do that, both within the community and in the hospitals as well.

Break the Silence on Violence against Women Winnipeg Blue Bombers Partnership

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, violence against women is never okay, and it's everybody's business to fight against it. That's why I attended an announcement today that was so important, because not only will it create public awareness but will also educate young people on how they can help end violence against women.

It's not surprising the opposition isn't interested in this important issue, because they know—they think maintenance importance—enforcement is nothing but red tape, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Minister of Family Services please tell us how the Bombers' break the silence against violence against women initiative will help all Manitobans recognize the importance of promoting a safe, inclusive society for women and positive roles that men can play in building this environment?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): Today we were joined by Wade Miller, the coaching staff and players of the Blue Bombers where we announced \$150,000 investment around breaking the silence and making sure that people are aware of domestic violence and stand up for gender inequality.

We are very excited about there'll be public service announcements that the Blue Bombers will be doing that will be shared throughout this province, as well as going within the school system and talking to students, to coaches, to football players and community leaders about the importance of eradicating

domestic violence and ensuring that we're providing support to all individuals and break that silence.

I know that this will make a difference for the women and the girls within our community, but more importantly, will build the awareness of the men and boys within the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: It is now time for petitions.

Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Every day, hundreds of Manitoba children walk to school in Oakbank and must cross PTH 206 at the intersection with Cedar Avenue.

(2) There have been many dangerous incidents where drivers use the right shoulder to pass vehicles that have stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left at this intersection.

(3) Law enforcement officials have identified this intersection as a hot spot of concern for the safety of schoolchildren, drivers and emergency responders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government improve the safety at the pedestrian corridor at the intersection of PTH 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank by considering such steps as highlighting pavement markings to better indicate the location of the shoulders and crosswalk, as well as installing a lighted crosswalk structure.

This is signed by G. Mulvihill, P. Busam, C. Hoyt and many, 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.

Proposed Lac du Bonnet Marina—Request for Research into Benefits and Costs

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Lac du Bonnet is a recreational area with great natural beauty.

(2) The Winnipeg River is one of the greatest distinguishing cultural and recreational resources in that area.

(3) Manitoba marinas increase recreational access and increase the desirability of properties in their host communities.

(4) The people of Lac du Bonnet overwhelmingly support a public harbourfront marina in Lac du Bonnet.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider collaborating with other levels of government to research the economic benefits and construction costs of a marina in Lac du Bonnet.

This petition is signed by K. MacNeish, G. Sarapu, D. DeBaets and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Minnesota-Manitoba Transmission Line Route—Information Request

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line is a 500-kilovolt alternating-current transmission line set to be located in southeastern Manitoba that will cross into the US south of Piney, Manitoba.

(2) The line has an in-service date of 2020 and will run approximately 150 kilometres with tower heights expected to reach between 40 and 60 metres and be located every four to five hundred metres.

(3) The preferred route designated for the line will see hydro towers come in close proximity to the community of La Broquerie and many other communities in Manitoba's southeast rather than an alternate route that was also considered.

(4) The alternate route would have seen the line run further east, avoid densely populated areas and eventually terminate at the same spot at the US border.

(5) Progressive Conservative caucus has repeatedly asked for information about the routing of

the line and its proximity to densely populated areas and has yet to receive any response.

(6) Landowners across Manitoba are concerned about the impact hydro line routing could have on land values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro to immediately provide a written explanation to all members of the Legislative Assembly regarding what criteria were used and the reasons for selecting the preferred routing for the Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line, including whether or not this routing represented the least intrusive option to residents of Taché, Springfield, Ste. Anne, Stuartburn, Piney and La Broquerie.

This petition is signed by S. O'Donovan, D.A. Nickel and S. Strickland and many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes petitions.

We will now move on to grievances.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, orders of the day, government business.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I've just a couple of announcements before I go to orders of the day.

Firstly, I believe that—well, we are going into Committee of Supply on Thursday and I want to indicate to members of the House that we will not be sitting in Committee of Supply on Friday.

I'd also like to announce—Mr. Speaker, pursuant to bill 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin). The title of the resolution is Provincial Government Support for Northerners' Health.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 31(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one brought forward by the honourable member for The Pas, and

the title of the resolution is Provincial Government Support for Northerners' Health.

* (14:30)

For the information—and that there will be no Estimates on Friday.

Mr. Speaker: Now, honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to call for third reading the following bills: Bill 4, 32, 13, 15, 18, 23, 28, Bill 30 and Bill 70. After that, Mr. Speaker, we would like to call for second reading of Bill 33.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that we will be calling bills in the following order, starting with concurrence and third readings of Bill 4, Bill 32, Bill 13, Bill 15, Bill 18, Bill 23, Bill 28, Bill 30, Bill 70, and then we'll be proceeding to second readings of Bill 33.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 4—The Farm and Food Awareness Act

Mr. Speaker: So we'll start first by calling for concurrence and third reading, Bill 4, The Farm and Food Awareness Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 4, The Farm and Food Awareness Act; Loi sur la promotion du secteur agroalimentaire, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): It is a privilege to stand on behalf of the agriculture industry in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we're quite familiar with agriculture, and food industry are significant contributors to the lives of Manitobans. They provide 34,000 direct jobs to our local communities, and it resonates to an 8 per cent of provincial GDP, making it one of our largest industries in the province.

This bill is to deliver the government's commitment in Manitoba's 2014 budget to address and to establish new initiatives to promote Manitoba

producers and Manitoba-grown food. Food processing is the largest component of Manitoba's manufacturing sector. The act will increase the awareness of agriculture and food industries in the province of Manitoba. It will formally declare Farm and Food Awareness Week the third week of September of each year to encourage activities that promote Manitoba farms, food and other ag products made in the province of Manitoba.

The act will also declare ag awareness day on the third Tuesday of March to promote the greatest-greater awareness of the contribution agriculture industry plays as a key driver of the Manitoba economy. This formalizes that all-party resolution that was created, Agriculture Awareness Day. The act will bring awareness to Manitoba farm families who produce safe food, are stewards of the land and contribute to the health, productivity and the quality of the province's soil and water resources for the benefit, Mr. Speaker, of all Manitoba.

The act will strengthen the connections between the rural and urban Manitoba, raising public awareness about accessing Manitoba food and farming products. Bill 4 enables legislation that not only recognizes the contribution of agriculture and the food industry, but it also allows goals to be established that are intended to help strengthen Manitoba's agriculture and food industry, increase awareness of the role of Manitoba farms and the economy and the increase of accessibility to ability of Manitoba food and other products from Manitoba farms.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): It's my pleasure to put a few words on record regarding Bill 4. Certainly, there is a need, particularly for this government, to rebuild a relationship with the farm industry, one that they have worked very hard to damage over the years. Certainly, we don't have to think too far back to using some sectors of the industry as scapegoats on some issues, which certainly damaged their relationship with the ag industry, not only that sector, but the whole industry. And the level of trust between the agricultural industry and this government is probably at an all-time low. So anything they can do to strengthen that would—their relationship with the ag industry—would be a step in the right direction.

It is a—particularly important, however, that we actually get a relationship between the ag industry and the consumers, and that is something that needs

probably the most amount of work out there because that is actually the ultimate end goal. We need to have a good relationship not only that—so that consumers are comfortable, but they are receiving good food from—well produced in a safe manner, in an environmentally sensitive way and with respect to animal rights, which is certainly very descriptive of many sectors of all sectors of our agricultural industry who have shown long periods of leadership in the issue of not only environmental issues, but animal rights and food safety issues.

And, in fact, we don't have to look too far back at this government to see how well they handled some of the emerging issues with the direct sales from farm to consumers, which is an emerging trend. That's something that I think actually does strengthen quite a bit the work, the relationship between the consumer and the producer to see that there has been some issues regarding how off-farm sales were handled. It isn't just about promoting the farmers markets; it's about promoting relationships, and this government has a lot of work to do when it comes to promoting relationships between themselves and the agricultural industry.

You know, there was a time when the ag industry was—certainly had a great relationship with Manitoba Agriculture as it was known at that time. I am afraid to say that that relationship has been eroded badly by the time, and I certainly don't get the impression that many of our active farmers in the community are using the services provided by MAFRI, or MAFRD as it's known now. So, certainly, there's room for vast improvement in regards to that.

Agricultural industry is a really significant contributor to this economy here in Manitoba at 8 per cent, and many, many jobs, over 34,000 direct and indirects. And then the food processing industry, a large amount on top of that and, of course, would that even be here without the primary agricultural industry. It's very doubtful.

I certainly am privileged to represent a constituency that has many food processors in it as well as many primary producers, and also a very significant portion of direct sales, in particular through Peak of the Market, the vegetable industry which Portage is renowned for; we're significant players, not only here in Manitoba, but across western Canada. You find Peak of the Market brands all the way from here to BC and well into the United States depending on the year.

In fact, this year you're going to find Peak of the Market pumpkins through virtually every US state because we had a great crop here in Manitoba of pumpkins and the US actually had a very poor year. So with Halloween pending, Manitoba pumpkins are busy leaving the province at a very rapid rate right now and I expect will get put to good use in many US states. It's too bad they don't have our label for Manitoba or even Peak of the Market on it by the time they get to marketplace. And I know that many places down there, they'll probably be passed off as local production, but they're actually Manitoba production.

So certainly a great opportunity for this government to improve their relationship with the ag industry. I am really trying to suppress the laugh when I think back to agricultural appreciation day because I was actually involved with Keystone Ag Producers when they brought that in the very first time. It wasn't—it was—we actually ran with that for four years before we got the all-party resolution out of the Legislature here to support it, and I'm glad to see that we came on board. But it was actually Keystone Ag Producers that recognized the need for recognition of the farm industry and recognize the need to begin building the relationship between farmers and consumers that to this day certainly needs an awful lot of work.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to say a few words. I suspect that some of my colleagues may want to have a—make a few comments as well regarding this, so I will provide them with the opportunity.

But it is a move in the right direction. It's just very, very sad that they had to let the relationship get as bad as it is before they tried to make improvements.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this legislation and to support it. I think we are at a historic time for agriculture in Manitoba and the future potential is enormous. It is important for us, for farmers, for our economy. It's also important for our health and the future not only of our health but our children's health and the future of people all over Manitoba.

* (14:40)

The contribution of agriculture, when one considers food processing, when one considers its contribution to the health of Manitobans, is very large. And, often times, it is not fully understood or

recognized because people separate out the contribution from the farm alone or the contribution from food processing alone, and we forget the expenditures that are related, in one way or another, to agriculture from our manufacturing sector, which deals with the agricultural equipment, from the retail sector, which deals with the wholesaling and retailing of food and food products, and it is a very large contribution and it often isn't fully recognized.

There are a number of reasons why the contribution from agriculture is likely to increase significantly in the next two decades in particular. Agriculture is one of the areas where it has been put forward that, because of climate change, we are likely to see a much greater potential here in Manitoba. We are likely to see the agricultural area of Manitoba extended further north as climate change studies have suggested.

We are likely to see—provided that we look after water management well; we have to do that much better than this current government is doing—we are likely to see increased production, increased yields per acre on an ongoing basis, but we need to clearly look after a lot of things well, including, as I mentioned, in terms of water management so that we have much less problems with flooding as we've had, and we are able to adapt to the possibility that we may have some significant droughts by providing much more provision for storage of water than we have at the moment.

The importance of agriculture to health was underscored in a recent dinner that I attended where Dr. Grant Pierce was speaking, and he has been involved for about 30 years in research at the Department of Physiology at the University of Manitoba and at the St. Boniface research centre. And one of the areas where he's been very involved is the application of flax and the fatty acids and lignins and other compounds that are found in flax which have significant properties to lower blood pressure, to decrease heart disease, and, possibly, with the lignins, to decrease cancers and—*[interjection]*—yes, and to decrease cholesterol.

But, you know, the—this is an agricultural product from our province. It's an agricultural product which looks like it may have some extraordinary potential because what he was reporting was that flax—about 30 grams a day, as I recall—was sufficient to lower blood pressure in people with high blood pressure as much as drugs. So flax treatment, dietary treatment, was effective

in this study as pharmaceutical treatment with anti-hypertensive drugs. And, clearly, this area needs a lot more work, but it is a lot of potential, and the potential for incorporating flax into food products and having a positive impact on blood pressure in this province would make enormous difference to the health of Manitobans, let alone through exports to health around the world.

So this is another reason why agriculture is going to be of increasing importance in Manitoba, and, rightfully, we are celebrating the importance of agriculture today. And having a leader who grew up on a farm and who knows the importance of the family farm, you know, Manitoba Liberals continue to be very, very concerned about agriculture and making sure that it has the requisite attention, the requisite future-thinking approaches that are needed if we're going to have a healthy agriculture in this province.

So I'm pleased to support this bill. I look forward to it going forward.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): On Bill 4, The Farm and Food Awareness Act, and it always great to recognize agriculture and the importance of agriculture, and the connection that has been lost over the years between primary agriculture and the food on our plate that consumers purchase whether it's in the store or directly from producers. So it's always good to recognize that.

This bill sets out to do that. There are a couple of concerns within the bill, and I've expressed them before and I'll express them again as it—it's this government oversight on everything. This NDP government has this idea that they must control everything and it—within the bill it's sets out to—the provincial government has the ability to set, impose and enforce agricultural directives to any public sector entities in Manitoba. Now, public sector entities, you know, the government, municipalities, school divisions, personal-care homes, regional health authorities, so it's—it is a caution I think that all Manitobans should be aware of, is what government has intentions of imposing. And when the government purse such as these public entities has to pay for these, it's what the cost is.

And, unfortunately, what this government says and what they do are two different things, because the local food and—producers—the producers who are selling direct to consumers continue to express frustration about the lack of clear, consistent and common-sense legislation regulations for selling

their product directly off their farm to the consumer. And that is—safety is—food safety is always a primary objective, and that is the primary objective of the producers who are choosing to—both to sell locally and those consumers that wish to buy directly from a farm. So there is no doubt that food safety is utmost in everyone's mind.

The local food strategy of Buy Manitoba is—seems to be somewhat at odds with the current policies and practices of this government. As I said, with their—on one hand endorsing a product at a trade show, the Agriculture Minister sampling the product, and then the next—very next week he turns around and confiscates the product. And so there's—there is some warranted confusion about what the government's real intentions are here, and so that's—you know, while this government is making the attempt to make an awareness of our local food produced and our local agriculture and the importance of it, they could do much more.

And we'll wait to see how the regulations turn out from this bill and how it's actually implemented to see whether they can actually achieve some real good here in understanding the importance and making the importance of agriculture and food produced in this province aware to the general public.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on this matter, Bill 4?

House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Farm and Food Awareness Act.

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

Bill 32—The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We will now move on to call under concurrence and third readings Bill 13, The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas)—*[interjection]* Oh, pardon me. Bill 32, The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 32, The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act, reported from Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development,

be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (14:50)

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development): It is a pleasure to stand up and ask for support on the third reading of the noxious weed—continue to be a threat to agriculture and the economy and the natural environment. And there are some are even hazardous to human health. Bill 32 modernizes the way the noxious weeds can be controlled. This bill strengthens the ability to control noxious weeds. Rather than have a one-size-fits-all approach, this bill will establish a tiered approach. There will be a differentiations between noxious weeds.

Presently, The Noxious Weeds Act can only regulate a weed listed in the act. The act will be responsive to the needs of farmers and the province in the future. The act will not have to be amended whenever a new weed threatens Manitoba, as these changes will now be able to be addressed through regulations.

A regional approach will be possible, addressing the different risks and the differences in the presence of weeds in Manitoba. This bill will enhance the biosecurity. Previously, the act only protected against farm machining spreading the noxious weeds. This protections are being expanded to include all motorized machines and equipment.

The government will continue to work and look forward to developing regulations of these weeds in collaboration with the Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association and the AMM. To protect against very real threats that the noxious weeds pose, I ask that Bill 32 be read for the third time and passed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): There is a need to upgrade The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act—or The Noxious Weeds Act by this amendment, and there are some positive steps in here, and it certainly allows for some flexibility as new weeds continue to spread across our area of Manitoba, and it's not just agriculture; it's all areas, recreational and forest land and et cetera. So there is a need for that.

I guess the ironic part of this bill is that while they talk about cleaning of equipment and noxious weeds, we've got a NDP-driven Manitoba Hydro that has expropriated farmland and—for their ill-fated

west-side wasteland—west-side waste line. And so when they—as there are—have already sent out notices that they're going to begin construction on the S1 and S2, which is the southern lines, this winter. They—there is no guarantee that Manitoba Hydro will apply this biosecurity as they move. It's an Alberta company that they've hired to actually build this line, again, jobs going out of Manitoba from companies in Manitoba. But there is no guarantee that they will ensure proper biosecurity.

Meeting with one of the pipeline companies last week, they understand the importance of working with landowners. They've developed a protocol for biosecurity and for cleaning of equipment as they're doing a pipeline project. Manitoba Hydro has not agreed to that same biosecurity agreement that the pipeline companies have worked out with the landowners. They've brought in a very much watered down biosecurity protocol that they're saying that they will use, but there is no guarantee that—Manitoba Hydro just doesn't seem to understand the degree of danger of bringing in and spreading noxious weeds. We've got clubroot in canola right now, which is, unfortunately, spreading across the west. It's been in Alberta. There are pockets of it in Manitoba, and we have no idea of how Manitoba Hydro plans to deal with something like this.

And so, even though you pass a new bill to recognize how to deal with noxious weeds, this bill does not at all address the concerns that the landowners across southern Manitoba have and the implications of—the financial implications this will have on landowners.

So, you know, we continue to try to bring Manitoba Hydro at least sit down with landowners, but the NDP government has ordered them not to talk. There's a cease-and-desist—desist order by the NDP in terms of talking with landowners. They're not allowed to do that, and that's very unfortunate. The only communications that this government allows Manitoba Hydro to do is to say that it's either our way or no way, and expropriation is the end result of that. And that's very unfortunate that a company that actually is owned by Manitobans and not the NDP is continuing to be really abused by this government.

And so while there is—in this bill there is some good points about how to address different noxious weeds in terms of rating them in tiers and in terms of recognizing new species, this government is again saying one thing and doing something else. In terms

of actually real prevention of spreading of noxious weeds they could end up being the ones who are ultimately responsible for spreading clubroot across southern Manitoba, and that will come at a huge cost to landowners and to the Manitoba economy.

And so we urge this government to lift the order from Manitoba Hydro, allow them to sit down and work out a workable biosecurity agreement for their west-side waste line, and that—so that farmers' incomes and farmers' land can be protected from the spread of noxious weeds.

And so with this—this bill does not protect landowners. It's unfortunate that this government takes that type of position where they continue to ignore farmers' concerns on this, and we'll look to see how this will play out over the coming year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to stand up and put a few words on the record.

The—as my colleague pointed out, there may be a couple of good points in this bill, but, actually, the bill, I don't think, was necessary to begin with. Agriculture has always addressed the issues that were in front of it, and it could have done this with education. But what we've found from this government is that their heavy hand of government has to try and control everything. It seems like everything that they look at or touch at they've got to control, control, control. But they don't have the expertise to do that.

And just to give you an example, Mr. Speaker, we talk about their control. The pesticide ban, for example; what has that done? That—what the pesticide ban has done in other jurisdictions, we have seen, it's clear. It has turned many, many areas into a yellow, yellow field with no control. Also mixed in that is a lot of noxious weeds that no one is able to pay any attention to because they can't see past the yellow that's out there. That's the neglect and the lack of expertise that's been used by this government in the past.

As my colleague pointed out, in the new waste line on the west side of the province that Manitoba Hydro is wasting our money building, they have neglected—they have neglected—when they were doing the surveys to use proper control of what way—we're taking out there, what they were putting out there. They ignored the best management practices, and Manitoba Hydro wouldn't sit down and even talk

about them. They didn't know. They did not know what kind of procedures that agriculture needs to go through.

When we see our equipment come back from doing custom work in the United States, the protocol that it goes through that it does not bring any noxious weeds back from the United States into Canada, and yet Manitoba Hydro would haul them from one field to another. They don't know what best management practices are and nor were they interested.

* (15:00)

And, when the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Robinson)—it was brought to his attention—and the Minister of Agriculture wouldn't meet with the landowners. He wouldn't meet with them; he ran and hid. That is not—that is not—representation. That is not co-operation. But then, we've seen that they weren't interested in co-operating when they went into expropriation mode, Mr. Speaker.

We also have to keep in mind that there are weeds that become resistant. Noxious weeds become resistant to different chemicals, and, quite frankly, if it's—can be done by regulation, and it doesn't have to be in the brochure that goes out there or covered by this legislation, it can only be done in regulation, then why are we bringing in a bill? We could have done this in the past. We could have done this with education rather than the heavy hand of people that have no idea—they have no idea—what they're working with in agriculture whatsoever.

So, Mr. Speaker, it would appear that this is just another way of the NDP government trying to control—trying to control every movement of all Manitobans for no justifiable reason.

So, with those few words, I will just sit down if you don't mind, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I, too, would like to put a few words on the record regarding The Noxious Weeds Act. It's certainly a very old bill, right back there, I think, into the 1920s. It predates a lot of the technology in pesticide that we use now—pesticides that are in use now. And the concept of intensive pesticide management certainly would be something that I would like to have seen added into this bill, but they didn't do that.

It's actually just a rewrite at a very superficial level. And one of the big driving factors, frankly, was their desire to bring in a pesticide ban, because some of the weeds that were listed as primary

noxious, which they are obliged under law at that point in time to deal with, whether they were in city or in—are in rural areas included dandelions and many other lawn weeds, which can be serious problems in rural areas, but are particularly a problem when you have a pesticide ban in the city. You will start seeing an increase in that, and that's been what—not what we've seen here yet, but what we've seen in other jurisdictions that have brought in these pesticide bans.

And I can't help but recount a story that a gentleman from my constituency brought back to me. He was down in Ontario where they've had the pesticide ban for a while. And he was down there to visit his son and to watch his grandson. And his grandson was out playing soccer in a—with a local group, a young league because I think he was only six or seven at the time. And the field there was, as many fields are, natural grass that had not been controlled or sprayed and was basically, he said, more than half dandelions at this point in time. It certainly deteriorated.

And many of you may know that when you get a heavy concentration of dandelions like that, especially when they're in their flowering stage, the field actually gets pretty slimy. They run across it, they break it down, it becomes very slippery, and it's very difficult for them to stop or move around easily out there. And his son—his grandson actually broke his leg in the—one of those spots, ran into another player because he couldn't stop. He slid and broke his leg and ended up, of course, having to go to emergency and get the cast and all that.

And he came back to me and said, you know, we can't let this happen in Manitoba because this will increase their risk. And we stayed in touch, and, of course, we made our opinion well known on the pesticide ban, that it was unnecessary and probably not healthy in many ways in terms of safety.

You can think what you like about health, but all of these pesticides are licensed and approved by Health Canada, so if you have evidence to the otherwise, it is not—certainly not good enough for the Government of Canada, which—you seem to like the Government of Canada today, so we'll leave it at that.

But, certainly, he said what followed down there was, once they lost their stands of grass, because they couldn't keep them pure enough, then they had to go around fundraise in the community, and they put in artificial grass.

Now, really, Mr. Speaker, how is that environmentally friendly? It may be safer for the kids, but real grass has got an awful lot of recommendations over artificial grass, not the least of which is its ability to perform photosynthesis and actually keep things healthy out there so that we have air that breathes and deal with carbon monoxide issues and absorb and become an environment that everything actually thrives in.

Well, and then, secondary problems started developing once they had artificial turf out there because artificial turf tends to harbour some of—a different bacteria, of course, than natural turf, one of which is staphylococcus, which leads to a lot of skin infections, in particular, when there's abrasion. And, well, what better definition to play soccer or a sport like that on that kind of a surface and you're going to get some abrasions and you're going to get a lot of skin infection.

So he said that that was actually the ultimate end problem on it. So it is often that—an issue of cause and effect, and are we headed down that road here? Have we made a change to The Noxious Weeds Act simply so we can bring in a pesticide ban which, in the future, will lead to more problems, more safety issues with our kids? I'm not sure that we haven't opened the proverbial Pandora's box in this situation.

The issue—the need, certainly, to deal with resistant weeds is something that could be addressed in this change to the act but wasn't. Invasive species, which have long been a problem for Manitobans going back actually for centuries, because many of the weeds that we associate with agriculture in western Canada, things like Canada thistle, isn't actually native. It's an introduced weed species. There are a number of others out there and, of course, they—we continue to get new ones all the time. There's certainly red bartsia, which has been the bane of the alfalfa seed industry here in Manitoba because it's impossible to separate from it. There's a number of other weed species that have come into Manitoba that have created a great deal of difficulties.

And, you think that you would want to introduce legislation that would make that easier to control, that we would be focused on that. But we see that, actually, this government can't even do a decent job of biosecurity.

In all reality, the pipeline industry, which has a number of lines across Manitoba, especially in the rural area, has done a pretty decent job of keeping

farmers happy and dealing with the biosecurity issue. Biosecurity is more than just weeds because, actually, they're quite capable of spreading the equipment that is used both in the pipeline and the hydro line industry, is quite capable of spreading more than just weed seeds and more than just live plants, it can spread bacteria, it can spread funguses, it can spread viruses, it can spread nematodes. The Alberta seed potato industry was devastated by the introduction of a nematode into one of the farms there, and the suspicion, actually, when they did the investigation, was that it came in on a piece of equipment.

Boy, doesn't that make your eyes light up? Can it happen like that here in Manitoba—and can be spread from field to field and could literally destroy one of our biggest food processing industries and production industries in Manitoba. If you don't do it, you pay the price. Look at what happened with zebra mussels, Mr. Speaker. In one year we have gone from some small level of infestation to possibly it's crossed the province. If it's found in Cedar Lake, it's in another river system and Saskatchewan will thank us by the end of next year for introducing it to them.

I suspect that that may well be the case because no jurisdiction has had any real success in ultimately stopping it. But every jurisdiction but ours has had greater success in slowing it down. We've certainly seen ours be, probably, the poorest performance of any government when it came to dealing with the issue of—and the two are very similar in terms of biosecurity protocol and dealing with zebra mussels. And so now the horse has escaped from the barn on zebra mussels. How many horses will have to escape from the farm—from the barn on biosecurity before they wake up and smell that coffee?

An Honourable Member: What about clubroot?

Mr. Wishart: Clubroot is absolutely—and my colleague mentions that. I mean, it's a problem within—already a problem in a few isolated places in Manitoba, one of which, actually, is right in the route proposed for bipole in western Manitoba.

*(15:10)

So I'm certainly hoping that that does—and, for those of you who don't know, clubroot is a parasitic fungi for canola, Manitoba's biggest crop, something that we really should be worried about. And so, certainly, if we manage to spread that across all of southern Manitoba on the bipole line, think of the liability, especially if they can prove it, my goodness.

Wouldn't Manitoba Hydro be paying for that for the rest of their natural days, because it never disappears, Mr. Speaker. Once it's brought into the ground, the best you can hope for is you extend your rotation, and you plant resistant varieties, but the yield potential of those resistant varieties is quite a bit less in some of the higher yielding and hybrid varieties that are available out there.

So, Mr. Speaker—

An Honourable Member: Ron wants to know how come that happened. The Agriculture Minister wants to know why—

Mr. Wishart: I'll take the agricultural minister aside and explain how the mechanisms of this works a little later; perhaps he'll get it then.

But, you know, biosecurity is not something to be taken lightly. Just use the example of zebra mussels. We didn't do a good job on that. We did not do anything to prevent the spread of that, and we could be very much in the same situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that if—though it's good that they actually updated this piece of legislation but they did it for their own reasons. They didn't do it because they're worried about the noxious weeds, and dealing with that, they had great opportunity in this bill to actually add some clauses that might have made it much more effective. They passed on that.

So I think we can see that the motivation here was a little less than the benefit of the agricultural industry and a little more focused on putting a ban in place on pesticides inside the city limits. And if the city people choose not to use pesticides, more power to them. It is their choice; they have to deal with the consequences, and certainly the public spaces certainly already in the city leave you to wonder whether we're not going to have a long-term problem. And they—I know the former Conservation minister used to like to say, well, there's other alternatives out there. And I went, took the time actually to go and look at the toxicology data on the alternatives and compare it to the pesticide alternatives. Frankly, based on toxicology, I think I'd much rather have pesticides than the natural alternatives, which are very toxic. So, but that's okay because we don't actually know what they do, so unknown is safe in regards to that.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Certainly, when we talk about agriculture, it's interesting how many people want to speak to agriculture and certainly in this case about weed control.

Mr. Speaker, this particular issue is near and dear to my heart. I did spend quite a few years in the weed control business, a number of years as weed supervisor, and certainly got to know a lot of the weed supervisors across the province. And it was always a good education when we got together and we could compare notes and get an understanding of what various weeds were impacting various areas of the province. And it was a really good group and a good organization to monitor new infestations and new weeds that are coming in from other jurisdictions, and it really is quite important.

And, obviously, early legislators here in Manitoba recognized the importance of weed control because The Noxious Weeds Act was one of the original pieces of legislation passed in the Legislature. And I know there has been considerable discussion in the industry about when revisions were going to be made to this particular act, and it certainly is good to see the government is moving forward and making some changes to this act.

I was encouraged by the minister talking about the Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association, again, a good bunch of qualified people around the province that have a really good understanding of weeds and certainly their impact to Manitobans and certainly the economic impacts that weeds and noxious weeds have across the province. So I was encouraged that the minister did actually take time to listen to the weed supervisors from across the province. It's something that the government hasn't done in the past. They're not—don't have a very good reputation of listening to experts in the field when they do bring legislation forward, and we've seen it time and time again, when the government passes legislation for political means rather than passing legislation based on what experts in the field are recommending or what scientists in the field are recommending.

Mr. Speaker, we can just look back not too long ago to the pesticide ban that the NDP brought forward. Clearly, the experts in the area were saying a pesticide ban is not necessary. These products are all approved by Health Canada, so they go through very rigorous testing both for in terms of their effectiveness and in terms of their health to users and to the environment.

So, clearly, it's a legislation that was brought in for political purposes and, again, not based on sound science, not based on what experts in the field were recommending. But it is reassuring that the government has taken the opportunity to listen to some of the experts in the field. Of course, when legislation is passed, we're always curious how it's going to work in the future, and I see the government has left this particular piece of legislation open into the future where it is going to be coming into force on a day proclaimed by the government. So, you know, we—that's something else that we have to monitor too once legislation is passed here, when is the government actually going to take the necessary steps, proclaim the legislation and bring it into effect. So that's certainly, from our perspective, that's something that we will be watching into the future, Mr. Speaker.

I know my colleagues talked about the importance of invasive species. We've certainly have seen the zebra mussels and how fast they have moved across the province. Mr. Speaker, I was at a conference actually just this summer where we had some experts talking about zebra mussels from a BC Alberta and the—northern—northwest states' perspective where they don't—do not have zebra mussels at this point in time. So they were certainly undertaking a very comprehensive approach to monitoring zebra mussels and doing the education as well, and that's something where we see the government here has maybe missed the opportunity to provide education on certain elements.

And I refer back to the pesticide ban. I think if the government was interested in doing the right thing they could've educated the public at large in terms of how pesticides can be used effectively and certainly from a health perspective. But they have chosen instead to bring in a ban, which is something they seem to like to do.

Anyway, it was quite impressive to see the undertaking in BC and Alberta in terms of their approach to monitoring and educating about invasive species such as the zebra mussels, and they have been very effective to date in that particular area of North America, in fact, in terms of protecting the water resources. Clearly, we've missed that opportunity. Once the gate is open and these species are in, it's almost impossible to eradicate them.

And something else that I do want to mention too, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too many years ago we had a fairly robust weed control section within the

Department of Agriculture, and over the years that particular section has been substantially declined in numbers is—I think is the polite way to put it—so that there's very few actual weed specialists in that particular department. So it will be interesting to see how that goes forward as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is—it's clear the legislation doesn't change the fundamental parameters whereby the local municipalities have the onus to look after and enforce this particular path, and that's very important. Unfortunately, this government has not helped foster a positive relationship with a lot of municipalities so I see they're going to try to encourage the buy in from municipalities to enforce this act as well and we'll certainly look forward to see how effective that is going forward.

The other important thing, and I hope the minister realizes in this particular legislation, the Crown is also bound by this particular act, now that means, Mr. Speaker, that the government of Manitoba also has a responsibility to control noxious weeds on their property, and I think that's something that the government has overlooked over the years. So I hope the minister will take notice if he goes back and looks at the original legislation, it's very clear that the Crown is bound by the act.

I notice, Mr. Speaker, in reading this legislation, that particular segment of the legislation was not taken out, so my interpretation would be the Crown, then, is still bound by the rules under this particular legislation, and as a result the Crown and the government of Manitoba has a responsibility on their own property to control noxious weeds, and that's something that we have seen in a lot of instances has not occurred.

* (15:20)

Mr. Speaker, for an example, if you take a drive down a lot of the provincial highways, again, that is the jurisdiction and responsibility of the provincial government, this particular government is also bound to control noxious weeds on those right-of-ways, and we know the budget for that has been certainly decreased over the years, so it's something that the government should have a look at, a serious look at.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to this particular legislation passing. We look forward to keeping an eye on it in terms of how it is being undertaken, how it's being addressed by municipalities, by the weed supervisors. And we certainly will be looking forward to hearing feedback from

both the weed supervisors and the municipalities on this particular legislation whenever the government decides to proclaim it.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just a few brief comments. I think it's clearly time that this act was updated. I think this could have been done in a little more forward-thinking way. I think the—one of the things which the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen) has pointed out is that the government in the areas along the provincial highways has a responsibility to make sure that there is control of noxious weeds. And I would hope that the government will produce a report telling us the extent of problems in noxious weeds along our provincial highways because the provincial Minister of Agriculture didn't even mention this in his speech. So I hope he will take some responsibility for being on top of this and provide a report to this House on what the situation is and how well he's doing, and I look forward to that report in the near future.

Thank you.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I don't want to—put a few words on the record in regards to this and in the role of Manitoba Hydro. And, in 2008, I brought forward into this House, and the current First Minister was the minister of Finance, and I asked a question about the leases on Bipole I and II. And, at that point, the government decided to rent the land back for Bipole I and Bipole II, holding those farmers responsible for noxious weeds that would be occurred on that property which belongs to Manitoba Hydro.

At that point, the First Minister decided that that was a bad decision. I give him full credit for stepping forward and making sure that those leases, in fact, were not charged. Fast forward six months; once he became the leader of the New Democratic Party, those leases then went forward and those farmers are now renting that land under Bipole I and Bipole II. They did this under the assumption that they would not have to put up with the weeds if they leased the land. However, Manitoba Hydro has a right to go onto that land. They can carry weeds from one field to a next. And we know when—and the member from Midland brought forward in this House, and I've asked questions, and other members, about clubroot. We know how important it is to protect our farmland, and as the member from Portage la Prairie pointed out in regards to mussels and the spread, weeds can travel just as fast. And, whenever we look

at unmaintained fields and roadsides, hydro-line passages as well, this is a serious concern for us and our farming community.

We need to pay attention to what's going on when we look at all these issues, and if we don't, then we'll pay for the bill later on, and it may be too late. So I just want to ensure all members of this House that we will be paying attention, and I agree with the member from River Heights. We do look forward to a report from this government in regards to updates as we go forward, but we also want to make sure we do our checks and balances as we proceed with this bill. And as the member from Spruce Woods pointed out, it's all about getting it enacted, as well. Now, we've seen from time to time legislation that was passed but never enacted, so with that, we'll look forward to passage of this bill and other controls.

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

House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 32, The Noxious Weeds Amendment Act.

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

Bill 13—The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas)

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call under concurrence and third readings Bill 13, The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas).

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Government (Mr. Caldwell), that Bill 13, The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any debate on this matter?

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Municipal Government): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to put a few words on the record on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the department has worked very diligently on this piece of legislation and is delivering on our government's 2014 Throne Speech commitment to introduce legislation that establishes

a special planning area to support expansion, trade and growth at CentrePort Canada. This legislation will speed up development approvals, help attract new private investment and create jobs while ensuring local landowners and residents continue to participate in a public review process for planning and development.

The Planning Amendment Act will create an inland port special planning authority for the CentrePort lands in Rosser municipality. It will hold public hearings and provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Government on planning bylaws, amendments, subdivision applications and other development within the special planning authority. The new planning authority would also hear and make decisions on any appeals to variance orders or conditional use applications.

Under the bill, the existing local planning authorities, Rosser council and South Interlake Planning District board will be replaced by a multi-stakeholder planning authority with representatives from Rosser municipality, the City of Winnipeg, CentrePort Canada, the Winnipeg Airports Authority and the Province of Manitoba. The proposed special planning authority will be chaired by a representative from the RM of Rosser. Rosser council will also have continued input on development of these lands. Responsibility for development agreements, billing permits and oversight of construction activities will remain with the local planning authority.

The creation of a special planning area is a key part of the Province of Manitoba's strategy to support the ongoing development of CentrePort Canada. Other important provincial investments included in the construction of CentrePort Canada Way and its planned extension to bypass Headingley, the extension of sewer services from the City of Winnipeg, an extension of water services—CentrePort lands and co-operation with several Manitoba municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, the department has held consultations with key stakeholders on the proposed legislation; I am happy to report there is support amongst all proposed members of the special planning authority for this framework. This multi-stakeholder approach will ensure a co-ordinated and consistent planning approach across the CentrePort Canada area in the RM of Rosser.

I am pleased to recommend this bill to the House for consideration and I look forward to the debate on

and passage of this important piece of legislation that will serve the economic imperatives and economic aspirations of the Province of Manitoba for decades into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Under the NDP government Manitobans are paying more and getting less. And less is just limited not to the individuals but municipalities in the province are paying more and getting less as well.

Bill 13 replaces provisions by The Planning Act that deal with special planning areas. In the RM of Rosser 'pecifics', it establishes the inland port special planning area for a portion of the inland part found within the rural municipality of Rosser. It enables other special planning areas to establish by regulation.

The bill provides for land use within the special planning area which will be controlled by a development plan and zoning bylaws made by ministerial regulation. The minister may also make regulations for secondary plans.

Establishing a special planning area does not affect the development permit process for building standards bylaws. The planning district, or municipalities, will remain responsible for those matters in special planning area. The process for making, amending, reviewing or appealing develop plans or zoning bylaws for a 'pecific' planning area will be established by regulation. It's worth noting that we are always concerned when too much legislation is done by regulation, as a process lacks the legislative review component for involved in law making.

* (15:30)

Something we're always pleased about is the public input, and I'm pleased to see this legislation includes provisions for the public hearings and planning matters in a special planning area which are to be held by a special planning authority. On this side of the House we're always pleased with consultation, and this legislation creates an inland port special planning authority. For the inland port special planning area, the Inland Port Special Planning Authority was established and consists of representatives from Rosser, Winnipeg, CentrePort, Winnipeg Airport Authority and the Province. The special planning authority for any other special planning are established as a result of this legislation is required to have at least three members.

Now, during the committee, Mr. Speaker, we heard from the reeve of the RM of Rosser, one of the legislation council. I was a bit taken aback. I was told that there was ample consultation made with the RM of Rosser and I took them at their word. But since then I have been back in touch with the municipality. I'm pleased to put on the record, this is from the reeve: Currently, we, the RM of Rosser, continue to maintain our position with respect to our right to govern CentrePort lands within our boundaries. The Province is listening to our concerns and there is a view to further meetings to address the jurisdictional issues and achieve a balance that is appropriate for all levels of government. Council is satisfied with the current course of action and will so not need your assistance at this time. We thank you for your continuing interest in our community, always support your—always appreciate your support.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know that CentrePort has had its struggles. We hope that this will increase the development of CentrePort. It's a large portion of my riding whereby we continue to want to see growth. We are in—been full support of CentrePort all along. In fact, it was this side of the House that brought forward the idea that we put that into a trade-free zone, and we're very pleased about that. We want to see it grow and prosper.

Of course, with that, we also know that Churchill will grow as a result of this as well. Whenever we look at opportunities for Manitoba to create jobs, to create new business and move forward in a sustainable way where we do have that consultation, then it's that much better for all Manitobans. So we on this side of the House look forward to passage of this bill as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this legislation. I think the CentrePort concept has been an excellent one. It has been slow to move forward to date. Progress, though, does continue, and we hope with this new legislation and the fact that the RM of Rosser is apparently now more on board, that this will move forward and we will see an accelerated development of the CentrePort.

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

The House is ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question for the House is concurrence and third readings of Bill 13, The Planning Amendment Act (Special Planning Areas).

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

Bill 15—The Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to, calling under concurrence and third readings, Bill 15, The Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Amendment Act.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, that Bill 15, The Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any debate on this matter?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I just wanted to put a few comments on the record with regard to this bill. I am pleased to present this bill to the House for third reading, and Bill 15 streamlines the borrowing of artworks, of cultural objects from foreign countries by a government of Manitoba or any cultural or educational institution for temporary exhibition in Manitoba. It will guarantee protection from seizure and the return to the lender.

We have so many premier cultural institutions in Manitoba bringing in world-class travelling exhibits, like the Magna Carta exhibit on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, part of the trouble associated with these exhibits, however, is that some of the cultural objects bring—brought into the province, sorry—must be protected through an order-in-council.

Currently, protection is provided through the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. The object is protected if it is determined that the work or object is of cultural significance, that the temporary exhibition or display is in the interest of the people of Manitoba. This bill will prohibit any proceeding or action in any court of Manitoba and prohibit enforcement of any judgment order against the object while it is in Manitoba.

By amending the act, we have created a clearer, simpler process for our cultural institutions to acquire such objects for temporary exhibit by changing requirement of an order-in-council. Instead, the minister responsible for the act rather than the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council will determine that a work of—*is* of cultural significance and the exhibition is in the interest of the people of Manitoba. This change will be beneficial for both government and for the application—or applicant organizations. By moving the determination to the minister, we eliminate the need for the order-in-council, we streamline and expedite the process for applicant organizations, we reduce legal costs for the department and we still ensure fair notice for potential claimants of the artifact's existence and currents provenance.

These changes are clearly beneficial for both the government and for our cultural institutions as it will streamline and expedite the process for applicant organizations, reduce legal costs for the department while still ensuring fair notice for potential claimants of the artifact's existence and currents—current provenance.

It's clear that Bill 15 truly highlights the amazing things happening for our cultural institutions across the province. We're seeing incredible world-class exhibits, and we want to guarantee that our museums and galleries can feel comfortable and protected bringing in such incredible objects or artifacts.

There are not many places that offer what Manitoba does. We're a growing, diverse and dynamic centre of arts, culture and sports. This is where Canada's heart beats. There is a remarkable resistance—I'm sorry, renaissance that is quickly transforming the face of our province. There is lots happening in Manitoba to be excited about. Travel Manitoba's inspiring Manitoba: Canada's Heart Beats campaign is winning international awards in showing the world what a great place this is.

We are bringing in even more visitors to Manitoba from across Canada and around the world. Arts, culture and tourism industries support good jobs and steady growth in a dynamic way that tells our story to the world. Every dollar we spend in tourism results in \$167 earned, and Manitoba boasts more than 2,000 companies work in the arts and cultural sector, creating economic activity of more than \$1.5 billion a year, Mr. Speaker.

So, with that, I'd just want to thank the House for allowing me to put a few comments on the record

with regard to The Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Amendment Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I want to add a few words about this Bill 15, for foreign or cultural objects immunity from seizure act.

Introduction, Mr. Speaker, it's very simple. A bill aims to streamline the process of which the culture and educational institutions of Manitoba can import foreign objects without fear of seizure. This bill will also assist the many great cultural and educational institutions as they continue to import fascinating and educational cultural objects. This also eliminates red tape. At this essential, this bill was about to reduce red tape in exceptions to cultural and educational organizations in Manitoba who import foreign objects for use of exhibits.

On this side of the House, we have been calling for many years for the NDP to begin reducing government barriers to people and organizations who seek to provide meaningful service and opportunities to Manitoba. We might see this simple amendment as a small step in that direction, but it's still much more that can be done and to support our arts and culture industry as endeavours to provide the best possible experiences to their audiences.

Mr. Speaker, it's been an honour to be part of the—a critic for the PC party with—it comes to arts and culture. I was—been able—I was blessed to go to many different museums in the last year to tour, to actually meet with some of the COs and organizations who—we want to know more and more about the arts and cultures in Winnipeg—in Manitoba.

* (15:40)

And I went to Manitoba Museum, which was amazing. I think it was many, many years ago since I was there. I was a student from our—where our high school actually did a tour of the place. And, having a tour this time, the improvements that the Manitoba Museum has done in the last many decades has been a great improvement and it's fascinating.

I've been to many museums with my children, to New York City. We went—there was one week we went to—around Central Park. There's about five different museums, and it was so honoured to take the children to these museums. But we still have—in Manitoba we have just state of the world's—the standard that New York City has and other parts of

Europe. We went to—my wife and I were able to travel in 1999 to Europe and toured many museums in Italy and Switzerland and Germany and Denmark and, again, we have world-class museums here.

And to have some of those exhibits coming from all the parts of the world, it's important that we streamline it so that these exhibits can be processed and quickly transported here to make sure that, you know, the exhibits stay relevant. And it's—they don't, you know, if they're here too long, these organizations start losing attendance.

But it's important that, you know, for especially our youth and our—and to educate our youth to go to these facilities, and if there's some great exhibits from around the world here, it'll encourage our culture to grow and foster in this province of Manitoba.

And, again, this will allow this—this bill will allow—actually allow this—these organizations to attract the young, the tourists who have come into the—our province on a regular basis. Now that we have the museum of human rights, it's brought a lot of people into the province in the last year, and it's so important that human rights is exhibits that can be brought round the world, especially when it came to Europe with all the different conflicts and wars that we've had a—experienced over the many—World War I and World War II conflicts, and just some of the different groups who have been persecuted and exterminated in certain areas of the world. And it's important that these exhibits come to this province and educate our youth, our individuals or residents and keep in everything relevant.

And while many of these organizations specialize in local and Canadian art, a focus is surely in support so that the opportunity to import foreign works is unique in—unique experiences. Certainly the most notable recent examples is the Olympus exhibit on the Winnipeg Art Gallery. This exhibit imports inspiring historic works of National Museum from Berlin in one of the two North American galleries to which such an opportunity. Olympus features 160 pieces of 'geco' Roman history dating back to the 7th century in—7th century BC. Including the collection are vases, statues, jewellery and most which is over 2,000 years old. It's truly amazing to see. For many Manitobans, this is one of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, and we should recognize the great work that everyone at the WAG, including their many volunteers, who make the exhibit possible.

The amendments put forward to this bill to facilitate the WAG and other who wishes to provide similar unique experiences of foreign culture in Manitoba, giving them a clear point of contact when it comes to protection of those items. This process will be benefit to the Canadian museum of human rights, an institution which Manitobans can take great pride. It also encourages to see some of support of these hard-working institutions to provide Manitobans, as well as many visitors, the unique cultural and education experiences.

Importance of international education, importing foreign cultural objects in the exciting ways that Manitobans to engage in international communities from here at home, the opportunity for experience foreign cultural objects can be hugely benefit for young Manitobans and many who go to study, work and volunteer and travel across different parts of the world.

In recent decades, we've been seeing the rise in prominence of global citizens and increasing Manitobans who are taking advantage of opportunity and living and working globally. The exposure of this exhibit focuses on foreign cultures to often—that sparks interest in young people and consider living and travelling globally. And the steps of encouraging 'facitate' the cultural and the education institutions to provide such exposure and are worthy.

Mr. Speaker, it's—again, if we can streamline red tape, there's a lot of different other parts that we can also look at too. Eliminating red tape, especially when it comes to small business and tourism, you know, that 'lowding'—you know, eliminating the holdback when it comes to the red tape when it comes to keeping the economy going. If we continue with red tape, this is going to reduce the growth of our possibility of our economy, and by having elimination of red tape, it would continue our economy to prosper and going forward here.

We have a beautiful country here, a beautiful province, and many towns and cities within the province. We have opportunities to really bring in the tourism. And right now, unfortunately, this province, this government of—NDP government spends half as much as other provinces, say, Saskatchewan, with the same population—for bringing people into the community. We do have a lot of culture opportunities here when it comes to arts and culture, and, again, we spend less than Saskatchewan, about half as much, and Maritimes, for instance, their tourism, they've more than tripled

our amount per capita than we do here in this province. And look at the opportunity that the Maritimes have of bringing people into the area. Manitoba has a great culture, a lively culture, a great film industry, and, again, we need to continue promoting our culture here in Manitoba, and, like, again, we have the best opportunity anywhere, and we should be really focusing on that opportunity.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to give a few words on this bill, and I would like to pass it on to one of my colleagues.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just going to put a few words on the record with respect to this bill. First of all, I want to praise our museums and art galleries that we have in this province. We have a fabulous Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Manitoba Museum, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and, of course, around the province, many, many additional museums and galleries which bring great credit to this province. And it's important that we enable or facilitate museums and galleries to be able to show works from around the world, and this hopefully will be one step in making that journey for people at museums and galleries a little bit smoother. In that context, Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation and look forward to it getting passed and receiving royal assent and being proclaimed. Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third readings of Bill 15, The Foreign Cultural Objects Immunity from Seizure Amendment Act.

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

Bill 18—The Certified Occupations Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Certified Occupations Act.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross), that Bill 18, The Certified Occupations Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Allum: It's my pleasure to stand in the Chamber today to speak on Bill 18, The Certified Occupations Act. This new act will provide an opportunity for training and certification for select occupations that are not recognized under the current apprenticeship act. This act, while broad in scope, provides the flexibility for the creation of standards based on the unique needs of each occupation and by working in consultation with industry. It will also, in addition to providing more flexibility, allow for resources to be allocated to new occupations, create a clear pathway for training for occupations that may not have had a standard of training beforehand, engage new employers that have not been traditionally involved in the apprenticeship system and provide employees with the opportunity to be recognized for their hard work and training.

*(15:50)

We understand how well the apprenticeship system has worked in Manitoba, with over 11,000 active apprentices today. This new legislation will build on the experience and success of this system that has existed for 71 years but also recognize that not all occupations fit the stricter requirements of the apprenticeship model. Occupations will be administered separately from the existing apprenticeship and certification system, but many aspects will be similar, including industry-led standards development, competency-based training models, and both classroom and on-the-job training.

As we continue to move forward, we know that consultation is key, and we will continue to work with our industry partners. The new board will be made up of industry members and other knowledgeable stakeholders. Standards—standards will be developed through consultation with industry stakeholders such as the Apprenticeship and Certification Board and labour leaders, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, and the Manitoba Trucking Association.

We are only better off through the engagement of many. We're very excited to have announced truck driver as one of our first occupations that will be certified under this new act. This has the potential to add up to 300 new, recognized skilled workers in Manitoba.

As I mentioned before, we are starting with truck driver as our first occupation, and I would like to thank Terry Shaw from the Manitoba Trucking Association for his leadership on this initiative. We

hope to continue to build on this anticipated success, and other industries may include ICT or manufacturing technician.

We are incredibly proud of the success of the apprenticeship model in Manitoba, which includes almost 11,000 active apprentices in 55 designated trades, and we want to mirror this success with a new Certified Occupations Act so more Manitobans—more Manitobans have access to good training and great jobs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I'm pleased to rise today and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 18, The Certified Occupations Act.

I want to thank the minister for his comments on this bill. Of course, we've had several meetings and consultations of our own with respect to this bill, and I think what we're hearing, certainly, from industry is that a certified occupations act is a good thing for the province of Manitoba, as there are those occupations that do not—are not currently recognized under the current apprenticeship act and this is an appropriate place for those to be recognized.

But I will just say and caution members opposite that, when doing this, if proper consultation had taken place in the first place, some of the amendments that I, in fact, brought forward, probably would not have been—we would not have had to bring them forward, Mr. Speaker. And I think that that's a common theme when it comes to this NDP government. Consultation is lacking when it comes to various pieces of legislation and various policies that they stand by.

So what's unfortunate is that—and I want to commend Terry Shaw from the Manitoba Trucking Association. He and I have had a dialogue on this. He agrees with the amendments, and I know that members opposite—it's unfortunate that, while they do recognize Mr. Shaw, it would be great if they would listen to him a little bit more and, maybe, some of the areas to make this bill, in fact, even better. And that's what we're trying to do here as legislators in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to make legislation better so that it works the best that it possibly can for those that need it. And those people would be those various occupations that would fall under The Certified Occupations Act.

So, again, these amendments were—that I brought forward were based on consultation from various stakeholders in the community, as well as the

presentations that were made at committee hearings that took place. The Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development met on June 24th, at 6 p.m., in the Manitoba Legislature, and that's where we heard from stakeholders in the community. And we heard, loud and clear, that there are some amendments that should have been brought forward. And, certainly, I have outlined that specifically, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the first area in section 7(2) where it states that members must be knowledgeable and what we just said, of course, members must be knowledgeable, but also must be representative of employers in the community and of industry. It's very important that industry is consulted and included in this decision-making process, and that's where that amendment would be—would've been very good if members opposite had supported that because it would've offered that kind of consultation.

We believe that industry employers must be appropriately represented on the board in order to have that consultation with members in the industry, Mr. Speaker, but it was unfortunate that members opposite saw fit not to support that amendment.

Another area was section 12(1) of the act, Mr. Speaker, and of the bill. And in this area we recognize the important role of the director, but we recognize that not all decisions should require board approval. We believe that the board approval should be required in these two areas; these two areas being setting program standards as well as the eligibility requirements for people who seek to obtain a certificate in a certified occupation for the employers. We believe those are areas that should be discussed and more appropriately discussed around a board table, and come up with those kinds of rules that govern those areas. It should not be decided by just one director by themselves.

So, again, we saw that that would be an area that would strengthen this bill and we see, unfortunately, that members opposite did not want to support that.

Another amendment that we brought forward, again, based on consultation with those in the community, had to do with amending clause 14 by replacing what was existing there, which was subject to the approval of the minister. The board may make regulations and it had a whole litany of areas that were listed in terms of where the approval of the minister and board may make regulations, Mr. Speaker. We wanted to replace that with, if the board is satisfied that employer stakeholders of any

occupation affected by the regulation are in favour of it, the board may, subject to the approval of the minister, make regulations. And, of course, we believe that that amendment ensures that appropriate consultation takes place with industry representatives, and that particular amendment would require that.

And, again, it's unfortunate that members opposite did not support that amendment. But we know, of course, anything that requires more consultation with this NDP government, they refuse to support that kind of consultation, Mr. Speaker, but it's unfortunate.

Another amendment that we brought forward, again, based on our consultations, Mr. Speaker, has to do with striking out clause 14(f) which states that the—subject to the approval of a minister and the board may make regulations respecting the rate of wages for persons engaged in certified programs. We believe that the rate of wages should be decided by industry on the basis of supply and demand and, of course, ensuring that minimum-wage laws are adhered to, but we don't believe that the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief) or the board should make any kind of regulations with respect to wages.

So those are some of the amendments that we brought forward with respect to this piece of legislation. It's unfortunate. I think it could've been a lot better than it is, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that members opposite—after this bill, I assume they're going to support it and they do have the majority, so after it does come into effect on royal assent, I hope that they look at these areas and really listen to people in the communities who we have consulted, and I hope that they will further consult those people within those communities to ensure that the issues that we brought forward will be respected by those in the industry.

So, with those few words, I thank you for being able to have the opportunity to put a few words on the record with respect to The Certified Occupations Act. Thank you.

* (16:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this bill at this third reading stage.

While I see significant merit in this bill and am ready to support it, I think the government could have looked—listened a little better to the employer

side. After all, entrepreneurs are pretty important if we're going to have a society which works. But, that being said, I look forward to this moving forward and becoming law in due course. Thank you.

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

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Certified Occupations Act.

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

Bill 23—The Boxing Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed to call for concurrence and third reading, Bill 23, The Boxing Amendment Act.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar), that Bill 23, The Boxing Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la boxe, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection): I am pleased to present Bill 23, The Boxing Amendment Act, for third reading as Minister of Sport. This legislation modernizing—modernizes The Boxing Act with language that is in sync with the federal Criminal Code, section 83 on prizefights.

The Boxing Act is the legislation that controls and regulates professional prizefighting in Manitoba. These changes will not change the current function of the commission or the professional sports it regulates but ensures that it speaks the same jurisdictional language. The Boxing Act provides legislation for the establishment of the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission, formerly known as the Manitoba Boxing Commission. The purpose of the three-person commission is to regulate professional combative sport matches in the province of Manitoba in accordance with regulations set out in The Boxing Act. The commission regulates all contests or exhibitions of boxing and mixed martial— or mixed martial arts, including the licensing and supervision of ring officials, contestants and

promoters. It is in the MCSC responsibility to recruit, evaluate, develop and assign judges, referees, timekeepers, doctors and other officials.

Governments have been working since 1999 to modernize section 83 of the Criminal Code which has not been amended since 1934. The amended Criminal Code regarding prizefights came into effect in June 2013. The Criminal Code saw updates of the definition of a prizefight or prizefighting to include an encounter with fists, hands or feet. It should be noted that this Bill 23 is only applicable to the regulating of professional fighting contests. Amateur 'combatative' sports are regulated by individually recognized provincial sports bodies which see competitors compete with different sets of rules, regulations and safety equipment.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes all Manitobans have the right to participate and excel in whatever sports they choose. That's why we're committed to high-quality, accessible sports and recreation opportunities for all Manitobans. From Jonathan Toews to Clara Hughes, Manitoba builds world-class athletes. But every athlete needs to—needs help to be the best they can be, which is why our government is proud to support initiatives that help our local athletes succeed. We created the Sport and Recreation Opportunities Fund to help community organizations provide high-quality and accessible sport and recreation programming. We've continued our support for the high-performance athletes fund, which helps Manitoba's 'beth' athletes compete across Canada and around the world, provide Sport Manitoba with more than \$11 million in annual funding so Manitobans of all ages can participate in sports they love.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes importantly regulatory changes that will help modernize and streamline our 'combatative' sports legislation. Thank you.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Well, Mr. Speaker, always a good thing when you have the opportunity to speak to legislation. As I travel through my constituency and across the province, I point out to individuals it's important to have good legislators because we need good legislation in our province, and it's amazing what a government can do insofar as legislation, as far as bad legislation or good legislation. There has been both of that over the years that I've been here. This is one of those areas that we've had quite a bit of discussion with and had an opportunity to have a discussion with the minister

involved. The minister responsible had me in his office, and we had a very fulsome discussion about this legislation.

For those of us who've either been involved in sports or have children in sports, and no big secret that I've spent a lot of time—

An Honourable Member: Athletic supporters.

Mr. Schuler: Oh, and those of us who've been athletic supporters. My colleague is rightfully calling me to task, because there are different categories of those that participate and there are those that watch, and I would say, by looking across this Chamber, there are probably a lot more of those who watch than those who participate. But I digress on my speaking here, Mr. Speaker.

And, having had the opportunity to have three children involved in sports, one of the things that was always a concern for us as parents was to make sure that our children were engaged in a sport that would be safe. We chose to put my son in soccer along with the two girls. In fact, I even coached soccer. We felt it was a little bit more of a toned down sport. Other sports tend to get a little bit more aggressive. In fact, I was at a basketball game that got so out of hand I don't think the referee was even able to control what was going on on the court, and these things happen.

The legislation in front of us, of course, deals with a sport that's far more engaging, far more involved and far more, in some instances, violent, and there was once a time when there would be boxing matches, which was done with very big boxing gloves and there wasn't the same kind of ferocity and the same kind of violence involved. It then moved on to martial arts, and then it moved on to mixed martial arts, and then it got into ultimate fighting, and then, each step of the way, it gets far more, some would argue, exciting, and others would earmark that it's far more violent.

And we know for a fact that even those who are spectators, often you go to hockey games and football games and the like and the more violent it gets it seems to be the more fired up the fans get. It's—this isn't just about the fans or the players; it's also the fans seem to like this kind of thing. But there is a point in time when it can get out of hand. In fact, in the discussion with the minister, I brought to his attention that there is a new sport and it's called TFC, and it's called Team Fighting Championship, and I went online—I've actually seen it on YouTube, and,

for those of you who have never heard of Team Fighting Championship, I would suggest you go and you look at it one time, and that's probably the last time you'll look at TFC fighting. It is probably one of the most vicious, the most unbelievable thing you've ever seen. In fact, I pulled off some newspaper articles, and I'll read a few of the headlines and I want to talk a little bit about it.

UFC is for wimps. Is the Russian team fighting the most brutal sport on earth?

The other one says: Team Fighting Championship—a barroom brawl without the bottles coming to pay-per-view. These are different articles, and there's another one: Team Fighting Championship too brutal for the United States—for now. And I will talk a little bit about it.

Mr. Speaker, an article written for IB Times, a newspaper out of the United States, mentions concerns are being raised about a brutal new team-fighting sport in which two teams of five engage in a brutal battle using fists and feet until only one is left standing. TFC started in Russia and has now spread to other countries, including the US, Poland, and Latvia. A typical bout lasts just a couple of minutes but is so brutal that many competitors are left bleeding or unconscious.

Although there are rules involved in TFC and five referees inside the ring to ensure that they are followed, it is considered acceptable to keep clubbing a man in the face when he is on his back, kicking him when he is down, and for two or more to team up on an unlucky component.

* (16:10)

In fact, one of the other articles writes, and this is for VICE.com, another newspaper article, in which it says: Imagine a team combat sport where 10 men climb into a ring and beat the living tar out of each other for as long as it takes until only one of them is left standing. The fighters consist of two teams of five and can use virtually any manner of martial art to dispatch their opponents. A five-on-one beat-down, complete with face stomps, soccer kicks to the head, is a somewhat inevitable outcome of each match.

And it tells you where this entire sport has drifted towards, and that's why from time to time we need to bring legislation in and curtail this kind of action because it just simply gets too violent, it gets too dangerous. And I asked in the briefing if this kind of sport would be covered, and I was assured by

the public servants that this kind of fighting would be covered off with the legislation in question, that it would not be allowed, because, as we know, that kind of thing is just far too dangerous and there are some who believe a blood sport is, as long as they're willing participants is, should be allowed and is something that's acceptable. Mr. Speaker, I for one, I don't feel it is. We have a publicly funded health-care system, and the aftermath of a fight like that would be a lot of cost to the health-care system.

We also know that head injuries, or as we call it when an individual has a blackout, that there are long-term consequences for it. We know right from early ages on that the concussions are very, very dangerous for athletes. In fact, often I was, I would bump into some of my kids' friends and ask what they were doing and they'd say, well, actually no sports, because they had a concussion that was so severe they were told by their doctor that that was over, that they should probably pick up a new sport called either checkers or chess or something like that because they could actually kill themselves if they continued in the sport.

And we've heard that, and we also know that now there's a lot more focus on head injuries and the ramifications. We've also heard that even from the CFL there's a lot of discussion about what kind of helmets and safety gear there should be, they should be wearing, because of afterwards there's a lot of brain trauma, brain injury, early onset of Alzheimer's and all kinds of different effects. So in the briefing we asked about those kinds of things, if that was part of what would be covered off and we were assured it was.

And these kinds of bills, as much as we as legislators don't really want to get that involved in sports, there does, however, come a time when legislation has to be brought forward to prevent the kinds of injuries, to prevent the kind of long-term consequences, not just to the individual but the individual's family, their loved ones and to the health-care system because these injuries are very expensive. So it is important that proper equipment be provided, that the individuals get proper training, and that if it's deemed far too violent that it be curtailed or not allowed.

And, as we've known over the years, there have been pieces of legislation that haven't been changed in hundred years, as society moves on, values change, and we realize that legislation has to be changed to reflect the new reality.

I know, I was at a soccer game for one of my kids, and my son was, his team was a 17- and 18-year-old team were playing a men's team to toughen the boys up. They felt that it would be good for these young guys to play with older players and, you know, make them tougher, make them stronger. And I noticed that my son at—on the backfield went up to header a ball, and all of a sudden there was a player on the ground and they were huddling around the player. And so they got the individual to sit up and then they slowly walked that player off the field and it was the 30-year-old, the man, who was walked off the field.

And I asked my son afterwards, I said, so what took place? And he said, well, went up for the header and we both went for the ball and I hit the guy in the back of the head and I knocked him out. And I said, well, you know, did that not hurt? And he said, well, you know, my forehead seems to be a little sore, and he got a welt of half the size of a golf ball, and he played for the rest of the game. But the individual whose head he hit then was actually not supposed to play for six weeks, anywhere from six to eight weeks.

And I think it's more of an honour system, but the team, when somebody has been knocked out with a head injury on the field, the team is supposed to assure, I think it's through Sport Manitoba, that the player then would sit out between six and eight weeks. And that's rightfully so. It's protecting the player because that individual had received—especially if you're knocked out cold from being hit in the head, there is a certain point in time when you have to take some time away from a sport and allow your head to recuperate and probably go see a physician to make sure that you can play the sport again. And this individual evidently did sit out six weeks and did not play any sports to allow the concussion to heal itself.

So, with the kind of legislation that's in front of us, we're looking at those kinds of issues when we have the ultimate kind of sports coming in and as a, you know, as I mentioned to the Legislature, the team-fighting championship kind of approach where anything goes. Probably that kind of stuff should be regulated and there should be legislation covering that off.

And I know that in Manitoba we love our sports and we've got some fantastic teams who, some of them aren't doing as well as others, but we still want to get out and cheer for them. I know the

member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who is a big fan of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and has his season tickets, and we always see him at games on his Facebook. I—there's—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Schuler: There's—just for anybody reading this, there is a complete gasp of shock on the other side from the NDP benches because the member actually has to pay for his own tickets. And there's a real shock over there because—and I understand the member for Steinbach also goes to hockey games and he actually pays for those tickets. So, you know, I'm—we're just pointing that out to members of the NDP.

In fact, and we know that with all of these sports, with all the professional sports, there is now a real focus on head injuries and the kinds of things that happen to an athlete if they get a severe concussion. And we've seen that with our own Mr. Toews, who's just a fantastic hockey player, and he was out for a considerable amount of time because of 'henjuries' and did the right thing, you know, sat it out, and I believe he came back for one game and then sat out a couple of more, if I remember correctly. And that's the way to do it.

And, when we look at legislation, we want to protect those who play sports and even with our Winnipeg Blue Bombers, and we certainly have been cheering for them and wishing them all the best. And, you know, we would want to send a message that, although their stadium's falling apart, doesn't mean that they have to. You know, we know there's a lot of work that's got to go on on the brand new stadium; that doesn't mean that they should be following suit. They should stand tall and keep putting on good entertainment. That's—it's fun to go to those games and a little pricey at times.

I did have an opportunity; I bought my own tickets to the FIFA World Cup, and we, member for Steinbach and I, went, and we had a just a wonderful time. In fact, we sat and we watched the United States play Australia, I believe. And it was just fantastic. We were the consummate Canadian hosts. Every time the Americans would score, we would cheer for the American team and congratulate them, and every time Australia would score, we would cheer and congratulate the Australian fans that their team had—that had scored, and we were—I think we were very good diplomats at that game. Was a very good thing for this province and all of those that were involved in bringing it here should compliment

themselves, and they did a great job. They're—some things probably could've been improved a little bit. I think they ran out of food by the beginning of the second game, and there were some food—*[interjection]*—and there was just, you know—there were some things that you just couldn't get anymore. And I think they were running out of soft drinks, which is probably not a bad thing; people had brought a lot of empty water bottles, were filling them up at the drinking fountains.

* (16:20)

But, again, a very good sport, and good entertainment and clean fun, and that's what we want. We want whatever sport is coming here, that not just that the fans be safe but also those that are playing the sport, that we clearly have entertainment that people come and pay for, that afterwards there aren't long-term consequences for the athlete and for the families afterwards. Because, as we all know, there does come a time—yes, even in politics—when you have to say goodbye, and you take your retirement and you move on; so it is with sports. In fact, it's shocking when you see a 32-year-old athlete talking about how they're done in sports, and it's over for them and they're—in soccer, if you're 34 years old, they talk about the old guy on the team, and there just comes a time. And you want them to go back to their families. You want them to go back to their loved ones and not carry long-term serious consequences. And the same thing goes for the mixed martial arts, the ultimate fighting, the team fighting championship kind of a style, which I suspect won't make it here, that individuals are not going to pay for it in the long term.

And we want to make it very clear to those that are playing sports that they protect themselves. One of the things that has to change is the culture within youth sport, that when there's an injury, that it's not, you know, suck it up and get back out on the field or, you know, if every time I quit when I had a headache, I wouldn't be where I am today. Those kinds of things have to stop. When a player has a head injury or it could be a concussion, that that be taken seriously, that medical attention be sought, that the athlete not be told to go out onto the field and just continue to play as if it was business as usual.

I know in the case of my children, my son injured his foot twice. One time, he hit the ball, which hit another player, and played the rest of the game. He played another 60 minutes, and, on the way home, he said, man, you know, my foot's really

sore. And, by the next morning, we had him in emergency and he had broken his toe. And the next time, he played an entire game, almost 90 minutes, with a broken ankle. And he didn't feel it. But, if we would have known that he had injured himself, we would have pulled him off the field immediately. And, in this case, he's that kind of a guy who, the adrenaline is such that he didn't feel the pain and—until afterwards. And then afterwards, it was very painful, and, when you sit with him in emergency and the physician looks up the file and says, wow, you're a frequent flyer, you know; yes, that is the case, but, again, we would rather he would have not have played—continued to play with an injury. But it's even more serious when it's a head injury, when it's something involving the face that you're not too sure what it's about.

So, again, we had a good opportunity to sit down with the department, and the minister facilitated a meeting where we could ask a lot of questions, and we wanted to ask also how this impacted youth sport, and we got all our questions answered. And I think this is going to bring some clarity to some individuals, and I think that's very important to have as new sports come onto the scene, and I did mention the TFC new sport. And, probably, there's going to be other sports. I can't conceive that I would ever go and watch where 10 men get into a cage and fight to the last man. I watched—*[interjection]* And I—the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) was trying to relay a message to me, but he's waving it off.

And there's going to be other sports that are going to be forthcoming, and I would like to commend the public service who put this legislation together, that they have now put in place a mechanism by which that if something else comes up and—you know, we wouldn't want to see something like Thunderdome or go back to even as far back as in Roman days when they used to feed Christians to the lions. I mean, we have no idea where some of this stuff goes, and I would suggest if you want to see how crazy things can get, go have a good look at TFC on YouTube, and you'd be appalled at where sports is going towards.

And this legislation curtails that; it won't allow that kind of thing. Whatever might be coming forward, it's legislation that would cover that up. It would stop that kind of sport, because we want to be careful, again, that we don't allow things in that are harmful to the individual, perhaps even harmful to the spectators, and have long-term consequences.

So I'd like to thank the public service and the bureaucrats, the civil servants who were in the meeting. They were very, very professional, and I hope that the minister, I know, who is paying attention to the debate right now, that he will pass this on to his department. I would ask him that he would—if he would do that, that would be most appreciated, and we were allowed to come in with staff and we had a really good discussion on this.

And, Mr. Speaker, for whatever sport might be coming forward, I think we're far more sensitive, and there's also, if you go back 100 years, you go to Lower Fort Garry or Upper Fort Garry, either of them, you can see that we as human beings have gotten taller, we've gotten stronger, we've gotten faster. We know how to make our athletes faster. We know how to make them bigger and stronger, and we have to keep up, not just with the equipment that is worn—if you go back and you look at the equipment that was worn by a football player when the CFL started, the helmet was actually a leather cap more than it was a helmet as compared to today when you have mouth guards and all kinds of guards. They have a spinal guard that goes down the back. I mean, they have very good safety equipment, and that's in every sport.

But also the cleats that are being used and the kinds of outfits that are being used and everything, it does help to make the athlete stronger and faster and better, and that's why we have to be careful, too. I mean, what boxing used to be compared to where it's going today is a completely different world because of the kinds of advances that we've had, and, again, we are very mindful of the kinds of injuries that can happen to an individual.

So this legislation does cover off whatever might be coming towards us, and we want to be on top of those kinds of things. In fact, when I had the opportunity to meet with the minister responsible, I mentioned TFC to him and the department—they hadn't even heard of it, and there's probably new things that will be coming up that we haven't even heard of yet.

So we know that this bill speaks, if not directly to a particular sport, Bill 23 allows for a minister and the department to address whatever might be coming at them, and that's important.

And we always want to be very supportive of our athletes, our young athletes who get involved, whether at four years old or six years old, and they move up and there's just a great variety of sports

which we're so excited about. We've got great facilities and great athletes coming up, whether it's the run club at elementary school or track and field in high school, whether it's the whole volleyball program, basketball—there's great, great alternatives there—whether it's hockey or soccer or any of the other field sports, which are just fantastic. If you ever have a bit of time, go watch some of the 16-, 17-, 18-year-olds playing, whether it's hockey or soccer or field hockey, and they're really exciting. You go to some of these high school volleyball tournaments, it is just amazing—amazing the kinds of sports and enthusiasm. In fact, I was at one game; it was between two high schools that have a rivalry, and at the door they actually took away most of the instruments that were going to be brought in to make noise. They just thought it would be better if, you know, a wooden club and the garbage can lid, you know, probably better if that wasn't brought inside, and they confiscated everything, but it was just outstanding sports.

*(16:30)

And I would encourage each and every member, if you have a bit of time, go into one of these schools and watch. In fact, I was at a school—it would be in the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan)—his constituency, and has a very large Filipino community in the school, and the enthusiasm for basketball was unsurpassed—never seen anything like it, and the name of the school escapes me. I've been to way too many of these schools. I think I've been to almost every school in the city for either volleyball, soccer, basketball or some kind of a music or dance or whatever, so forgive me if I don't quite remember the name of the school.

But what an amazing program they put on. And all the kids came out. And they cheered for both teams. It was—I don't even think you could get that kind of volume at the arena. That's how much cheering they did. And it was absolutely inspiring to see these kids so involved, so engaged—so exciting.

And I think it's important that we have legislation that protects our athletes, that encourages them. I know that in this House I have stood, as have many of my colleagues have stood, and talked about one team or the other and their great victory in the championship.

You know, I've often said to my kids, you'll probably go for a job interview and you'll mention that you were on a provincial team of some kind and probably the rest of the interview will be about the

kinds of sports, things you went to, and where you travelled and that kind of stuff. And it speaks to the individual; it speaks to the character. It's good to be competitive; it's good to be involved; it's good to be a good sportsperson.

And what we want to do as a Manitoba Legislature, because there's a lot of power in legislatures to do good and sometimes to do not so good, and in this case we want to put forward legislation that is good, that protects our athletes, that protects young people; that, you know, as parents sit around, and it actually is initially the parents who decide the sport for the kids, and then there comes a time when the kids decide what sport they want to be involved in. And it's good that parents look at sports and they view it as a positive thing.

And not just sports—I know one of our clerks has a fantastic band called The Lemons, and we happened to be at the concert and he had the next generation performing. I don't know if I'm allowed to say the clerk's name, but he had—Mr. Yarish had the next generation of Yarishes and the rest of the band; their children performed. I know the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) was there as well. And we got to hear the next generation perform. And what a concert. I was absolutely impressed by that concert. And it shows a diversity of what we can get involved with.

This bill helps to protect young people and families that want to view sport as one of those venues—whether it's music or others, we certainly cover that off with other legislation—but this bill, I think, protects athletes when they get on to more serious sports. And, when parents are deciding what sport their children are going to get involved in, they know that there are protections all the way through and they don't have to fear what might be facing their children, because, in the end, athletes do go home and someday, hopefully, become spouses and parents and become contributors to society, and they want to protect their health when they are participating in that sport, so as they go through life that they don't carry with them injuries that could have been prevented.

So, with that, I would like to give some opportunity for others to put comments on the record. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this time.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this legislation, The Boxing Amendment Act, an act which will make sure that mixed martial arts are included and will provide a

number of provisions to update the situation of the regulation of boxing and of mixed martial arts and, of course, renaming the act the combative sports act.

It's interesting that the mixed martial arts probably goes back to more than 2,000 years to the ancient Greeks and the Olympics at that time, when they had a sport which was similar to what we have mixed martial arts today. And so it's fitting that 2,000 years later we're putting in legislation some rules to guide the conduct of this sport.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this moving forward.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few words on the public record regarding this particular bill, and I know it's worth talking about commissions and sports commissions.

This one in particular made some news. A couple of years ago it was, when Robert Tapper, who was involved with the Boxing Commission, was removed by the NDP government. He was quite adamant, at the time, that it was a petty move—I'm quoting him now, Mr. Speaker, these are not my own words—a petty move and a vindictive move, because in his day job, as a lawyer—and the people who were on the Boxing Commission don't get paid an awful lot of money; they do it because they have a passion. And I believe that Mr. Tapper had actually been one of the founders of the Boxing Commission, and he had a great love for the—has a great for the sport.

But, in his day job as a lawyer, one of the pieces of work that he picked up was to fight in court the PST hike, Mr. Speaker, and to contest it and to whether—*[interjection]*—well, I mean I hear the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) say that it didn't go so well. I guess it depends what you define as going so well.

I think that when you stand up for the public and when you stand up for people that that actually goes very well, and, regardless of the result, I always say that when you spend time defending people's rights and when you spend time defending Manitobans that, regardless of the outcome, because we're not always in control of the outcome, regardless of the outcome, you've done fine work. And I sleep well at night knowing that we did our best to ensure that Manitobans' voices were heard on that issue even though the government did everything they could to shut it down.

But returning to the issue of the Boxing Commission, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Tapper was removed

from the Boxing Commission. He publicly said that the NDP were petty and vindictive for the move. He indicated that Gary Doer would never have done such a thing and that the current Premier (Mr. Selinger) is no Gary Doer. Well, we've heard that already today, but he went on to say that this is just simply part of what lawyers do; they take cases and they advocate on behalf of their clients. And to take a move that was petty and vindictive and remove him from the 'bocking'—the Boxing Commission is troubling.

And so I have some concerns when the government deals with commissions and knowing how they dealt with this. And, you know, the member for Kildonan and a lawyer himself by trade, he would understand that. The current Attorney General would understand as well, that lawyers take on positions for their clients not because they always hold that personal position themselves. They might; it doesn't mean that they can't hold that particular position that they're advocating for, Mr. Speaker.

But, quite often, of course, they take on a position simply as an advocate for a client, and that's what makes the legal system work well, is that you have people on both sides of an issue, and you have representatives on both sides of the issue, and lawyers are really fulfilling that function of ensuring that everybody gets a fair hearing.

And for the government to react in such a negative way, to remove somebody who not only was a part, I believe, of founding the commission but who had such a great interest and such a great love and certainly wasn't doing it for the money simply because he took on a case.

My hope is, and I guess I might never know, but my hope is that the member for Kildonan and maybe the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) behind closed doors would've advocated against that move and would've said to whoever was responsible for spearheading that, whether it was the Premier or somebody else in Cabinet, that this isn't the right thing to do. And maybe they lost that argument in caucus or in Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, but I certainly hope that they took that argument up at the time, because I believe that the member for Kildonan in his heart of hearts knows that removing somebody from a boxing commission simply because they took on a case that may not have been in the political interest of the NDP is not something that any respectable government should do.

You know, there are other commissions in Manitoba, speaking of commissions, as it relates to this bill, Mr. Speaker. I think of the Horse Racing Commission, and, you know, the very, very difficult time that the Assiniboia Downs, for example, has gone through over the last three years, and not a—you know, there are often in sports or in business there are highs and lows in terms of how things go in a particular business, but what the Assiniboia Downs went through was foisted upon them because of this government—was foisted upon them because of the actions specifically of ministers within this government.

* (16:40)

Now, just to refresh the memory of this House, Mr. Speaker, during that time, the then-minister of Finance went to the Horse Racing Commission, went to the Assiniboia Downs, I should say, and said to them that, you know, they were going to be removing funding from them, the promised 'fundering', contractually obligated funding, from them, and—if they didn't go and join another organization. They were essentially trying to put them out of business, a business that has been around for many, many years in Manitoba, one that has a long history, of course, in the province. And yet here we had the government going, I think the exact terminology, the former minister of Finance, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), said that he was willing to take this case to the public, willing to take the case to the public because he believed that he was fighting for hospitals over horses. Now, they ended up in court, and I asked them—member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) how well that went.

But they ended up in court, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, ultimately, the government backed off their position. They had to because they were in a legal bind because they were trying to break a legally signed and valid contract. But how to treat a business like that, to treat a sporting business like that, and to treat one that has such respect, I think, in the province of Manitoba, was indicative, maybe, of—maybe how much this government actually cares.

You know, there's been some discussion, of course, about the stadium, Mr. Speaker, and the issues around the stadium and, really, the very, very poorly handled—I can't think of how the situation could've been handled any more poorly by this government, whether it was the timeline for the construction of the stadium or whether it was the financing. Now, of course, when Mr. Doer originally

introduced the—and made an announcement about a new stadium, that all sounded pretty good. He talked about how there was going to be \$20 million put into the new stadium to replace Canad Inns. In fact, at the time, he said the \$19 million, that that would be recouped just because of the construction and what comes back to the Province. And so, ultimately, Mr. Doer was saying that the stadium would only cost \$1 million. Well, boy, have we gone to a whole different place since then, going from \$1 million, sort of net outlay, to what we have now, regarding the stadium. And it's too bad because, as has already been mentioned, I do enjoy going to Bomber games, and I enjoy cheering on the Bombers. And I know the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) has really enjoyed some Bomber games, none more so than the last one, even though there was a loss. But he had a—the Bombers lost, but he won, so congratulations to him.

But I know, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, the stadium itself—the stadium itself—should be a source of great pride for Manitobans. And yet, when you talk to people, I mean, they are very concerned about what's happening, what's happening with the repairs, what's happening with the damage, how much more money is this actually going to cost. And my bet is—I'm not a betting man, but if I were to bet, I would suggest that the government is moving to a negotiated agreement where they're going to have a non-disclosure clause and they're going to try to cover all this up. Now, I mean, that's sort of their pattern when it comes to these sorts of things, and I think that that's unfortunate because many Manitobans would be wondering exactly what is happening with something that really should be a great source of pride.

I, you know, I've heard earlier on, I think it was the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), you know, indicating about Saskatchewan. I mean, I'll tell you very clearly I don't have Saskatchewan envy for many things, certainly not when it comes to football. We proudly cheer for the Bombers over the Roughriders all the time. But I did note, in looking online, that their stadium, which is under construction, they indicated their stadium is on time and on budget, and the financial arrangements for their stadium are interesting as well. And so, I mean, I look at the comparatives and look at other provinces in terms of how they build things. I have some concerns about the fact that what happened with the stadium for the Blue Bombers and for other events has put the Blue Bombers in a difficult position.

The original agreement that Mr. Doer came up with was that there were supposed to be \$20 million that would be the public investment, and then there would be private investment for the rest. But how that's turned around now is that the Bombers are, in fact—have been—are owing \$80 million. Now, I believe that there was a delay on the first payment, that they were forgiven the first payment of 4 and a half million dollars. I think they made the second payment, Mr. Speaker, and then the next payment there was money, I believe, taken out of reserves to ensure that the payment was made.

But I have great concerns about an \$80-million loan being put upon a Canadian Football League team, a community-owned Canadian Football League team and the ability to make those payments going forward, ability to make those payments in 20, 30 or 40 years. And I suspect that if the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lemieux), in his heart of hearts, he would probably say the same thing, that it's a difficult thing for a community-owned football team to be able to make those sorts of payments over the long term. And we've expressed those concerns over the past. And I understand what the government was doing in terms of the financing of the project. They ended up in a situation where they promised that the project would be about \$120 million or so, and then, of course, the costs escalated closer to \$200 million. And, ultimately, the balance was made up by the Blue Bombers having to take on that particular commitment so that the government could insist or say that there was some sort of other private entity.

Now, that money is all guaranteed, of course, by the Province, and, ultimately, the Province will be responsible if the money can't be paid back. But it's a challenge, a very difficult challenge, I'd say, Mr. Speaker, for a community-owned football team over the course of 20 or 30 or 40 years, in years that it's, perhaps, not hosting a Grey Cup, in years when things aren't as positive as they once were, to be able to make those payments. So those concerns exist, and I think that those are concerns that are going to be exasperated in the future and we'll have to have those discussions again.

So there's a lot of different concerns that we have, of course, related to how we can deal with issues of supporting those who are involved in sports in the province of Manitoba, not just on the professional side, Mr. Speaker. I mean, there's an element of that always, and we saw the contributions that were made within the MTS Centre. We've seen contributions that were made now with the Bombers'

stadium, and certainly, some turned out much better than the others. And we have growing concerns about where things are going to go ultimately with the stadium and how it's going to be paid for.

But I would, again, re-emphasize what I said earlier today. I hope that government is not moving to a situation where they're going to have a non-disclosure agreement, Mr. Speaker, and towards a settlement where they don't tell the public, ultimately, how much is going to be paid, because it is public dollars. It is money that's being paid for by us as individuals. And we need to know what the final cost of that stadium is going to be and what the final accounting is going to be. And a non-disclosure agreement coming through a settlement of a lawsuit, I don't think, will leave a very good taste in the public's mouth on a stadium and a project that really should be a source of pride for the province of Manitoba and, ultimately, we hope will be a source of pride going forward.

On issues related back to the Boxing Commission, Mr. Speaker, my colleague from St. Paul talked a little bit about the issue of concussions and how difficult it is for those who are dealing with concussions. And I do think that when we look at the overall impact of head injuries in sports, there's been a number of different studies done. Of course, for professional sports, we know that the NFL has taken a lead, I think, in some of these issues. We think that there's a film, I think, or a movie that's going to be coming out about the concussions that happen in the NFL and perhaps how that wasn't disclosed as fully and as properly as it should have been earlier on in the history of the National Football League. But it's not just the NFL, of course, because concussions can impact individuals in a lot of different ways and in a lot of different sports, whether that's boxing as it relates to this bill, whether that's hockey, whether that's football, soccer. Practically any sport that you can play where there's an element of contact, certainly we know that concussions can be a factor.

I think there's been great progress, Mr. Speaker. I know that in professional sports, there's now a concussion protocol that gets worked through. If individuals are—seem to be symptomatic of concussions, there are certain protocols that have to be met before somebody can go back onto the field, and I think that is something that is important. We know that in amateur sports that there's much more awareness of concussions. And, as my friend from St. Paul said, that not only the medical aspect of it

has changed, but the mentality around concussions have changed so that we don't have the same mentality, I think, within sports where it's sort of a suck-it-up mentality, go ahead, get back out onto the field, you know, shake it off, whatever you're dealing with. I think there's more of an understanding that this isn't an issue of toughness for an individual who is dealing with a possible concussion, that it can be much more serious than that, and the old mentality of saying, well, just go back out there and you can deal with that injury, I think, has faded away. And I think that that's a good thing.

*(16:50)

I do note, Mr. Speaker, that the kinds of combative sports that we're dealing with in society generally have changed. In my day, and, when I say in my day, I mean when I was a bit younger than I am today, than standing here, I used to watch what was called AWA wrestling. It was—I can't remember what the acronym exactly stood for. I think it may have been American Wrestling Association or something along that, or maybe All-Star Wrestling association. But, you know, that was sort of for sport and entertainment, and I didn't know it as a kid, of course, but it was more entertainment than it was sport, and many of the things were choreographed and staged. It doesn't mean that there weren't injuries involved with them, but it was a different sort of risk that those who are involved with mixed martial arts and much more combative sports deal with.

And, if I could, because I just have the floor and, just for a second, I want to note that my good friend and the former MLA for St. Norbert, Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, has joined us here in the loge today and we should all welcome him, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to see him here today. But, on this particular bill, I think that, you know, there are cautions that each of us have to have when we're engaged in different sorts of sporting activities and to have a commission that's involved regarding one that is combative and one that is potentially particularly dangerous, I think, is valuable.

Those that get appointed, of course, to the commission, will have to look at what comes in the future, and I, for one, like when I was younger watching the wrestling that happened back in my day, Mr. Speaker, both live and on TV, I could never have imagined the kind of combative sports that would happen that I see on TV today. And I'm not a fan of the mixed martial arts or the other combative sports that we have today. I don't watch them, and I

don't follow them at all other than what I hear in the news and what I hear, sort of, through other individuals. I'm more familiar with boxing and, sort of, the boxing that happened back in the last 10 or 20 years.

I know there's been a bit of a falling out in terms of boxing and its popularity in North America. You know, it was probably more popular in the '80s and in the '90s during when there were certain stars that resonated around the boxing, Mr. Speaker. But now we have different stars that are involved in mixed martial arts, and they're involved in these sort of combative sports, and there needs to be a regulation round it. And I'm glad that there are people who are willing to serve on a commission, who are looking to deal with these sort of things and make sure that the different challenges that come with these new sports are dealt with, because we do need people who are there for oversight.

You know, I still remember hearing different stories back about boxing in the different states, Mr. Speaker, where boxers—and I've seen documentaries on this, where boxers were cleared to fight after only having fought perhaps days or weeks prior, and, you know, that's certainly something that may have added to the risk of concussion. But just the—and it was more of a money thing, and boxers, of course, wanted to get back into the ring, and so they would participate in having themselves cleared sooner so that they can be involved in another boxing match.

Those sort of commissions, I hope, are long in our history, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope that there is no longer the case that that is going to happen and that the commissions that we deal with will see all of the challenges and all of the problems that are involved in combative sports these days and take them quite seriously.

So, for those who are appointed to the commission, I think that they've got an important job, not one that they do necessarily for the money, Mr. Speaker, but one that's an important thing for them to take on and to regulate our industry. So this bill, I think, has been welcomed, I think, by those who are involved. I think that those in government who helped to draft the bill, I think it's an important initiative and we look forward to seeing it move into reality through the bill.

But, of course, we also know that there's a likelihood that it's the kind of thing that could have to be revised again, because there are many different

ways that sports can impact us in the province, and there are many different sorts of sports that we can't even contemplate right now that will have to be dealt with, Mr. Speaker, and there will be many different checks that will have to come into a legislation like this as well. But that's the case for many pieces of legislation. Often we talk about the unintended consequences of legislation where we bring forward legislation and then it has some sort of an impact on a particular industry or a particular sport or sometimes even individuals that we never could have contemplated, that we didn't foresee, and that's referred to as the unintended consequences of legislation.

And that doesn't happen with any sort of malice, Mr. Speaker. I think that all governments have been in—caught into that scenario, where they brought forward legislation where it didn't work exactly the way they intended it to work. I remember a bill, not that long ago, it was regarding armoured red vehicles, and it was brought forward by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), the former Attorney General, I believe, where it was to outlaw individuals having armoured vehicles. You had to have a particular licence or registration for armoured vehicles.

And I had a constituent of mine come to me not long after the bill was introduced, and he talked about a collector's vehicle he had. He has a tank. He has an old World War I or II tank, Mr. Speaker, that they use in parades and they use during Remembrance Day ceremonies. And he would have been caught under that legislation.

And now I'm getting that sort of strange look from you, Mr. Speaker. He didn't use it to pick up groceries or anything like that. It was simply, I think, for parade purposes and for Remembrance Day and special ceremonies. But he would have been caught under that legislation. So I brought that to the Attorney General, the minister of Justice, and said I don't think the law is intended to capture him.

It was intended, of course, to capture gang members, for—as an example, or those who are in the criminal element who might be fortifying their vehicles as a way to protect themselves from the law or other things, Mr. Speaker. So, I mean, that would be an unintended consequence of legislation.

And so, to the minister's credit, to the former minister's credit, we were able to, I think, to work through some of that and ensure that there was a reasonable accommodation for individuals who have

armoured vehicles who aren't necessarily trying to use them in a nefarious way or in a criminal way.

So, when I look at this particular piece of legislation, there is always the chance—it's not my expectation, Mr. Speaker—but it's always the chance that there could be unintended consequences, and at that point, this legislation would come back and would come back for review, and I think that that would be appropriate.

As we look to the future, Mr. Speaker, of sports in Manitoba, I think there's good reason to be optimistic. Many of the new Canadians, new Manitobans who are coming to our province bring with them a history of sport that's different than ours. We often talk about Canada having a strong history in hockey, of course. It's often referred to as our passion. It's not officially our national sport, but it's probably the sport we're most recognized for. But, as we have new Canadians come to our province, or to our country, they bring forward with them their own sort of history in sports. And I think that that's very—that that's good as well.

And so we've seen the growth of basketball in the province of Manitoba. We've seen the growth of soccer in the province of Manitoba. And I think, actually, over the last 10 years, soccer has been the fastest growing sport, in terms of participation, in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And so I think that that's something that's a positive thing, as we look at different sports. And at some point you have different bodies that regulate these sports. You have different groups that regulate the operation of these sports. And it's all for the betterment of our province.

We—and my colleague from St. Paul has been a great advocate in encouraging youth sports, not just for a health perspective, although that is certainly a benefit, Mr. Speaker, but really, as we look to engage youth in activities that are positive, that are team building, that are good for them in the future, I think that we—all that we can do to get young people involved in sports and athletics, it only benefits them. And, ultimately, it benefits us in the future.

So we hope that bills like this, and not this one in particular, as it relates to soccer or other sports such as basketball, but bills like this will encourage more participation in sporting activities, will encourage more young people to look at this as an alternative to some of the other things, Mr. Speaker, that they might be confronted with in their daily lives.

I do think that when we look to regulate things, Mr. Speaker, that we need to do it in a fair and a balanced way. Any intervention by government should be done with that in mind. And I think that this particular bill and other bills that deal with commissions and that deal with regulation can do that, can be a balance, can be something that's positive but ultimately make it that it's the right thing for the province of Manitoba as well.

So we are glad to support this bill, Mr. Speaker. And we know that it's gone to committee and it's had its full vetting here in the Legislature. And we're glad to see that it's come to this stage and look forward to it passing third reading momentarily.

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

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third readings of Bill 23, The Boxing Amendment Act.

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

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10–or 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

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