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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice, Hon.	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg, Hon.	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James, Hon.	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morden-Winkler	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 27, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask Mr. Deputy Speaker to please take the chair.

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

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Deputy Speaker. Would you call for this morning from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Bill 211, The Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Amendment Act, and from 10:30 to 11 a.m., Bill 219, The Consumer Protection Amendment and Farm Machinery and Equipment Amendment Act (Right to Repair—Vehicles and Other Equipment) for second reading debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Opposition House Leader that from 10 o'clock to 10:30, the House will consider Bill 211, The Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Amendment Act. At 10:30, I will interrupt proceedings to go—

to move to Bill 219, The Consumer Protection Amendment and Farm Machinery and Equipment Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 211—The Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Amendment Act

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), that Bill 211, The Reciprocal Enforcement of Judgments Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Fontaine: I'm pleased and excited to put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 211 this morning, The Reciprocal Enforcements of Judgments Amendment Act. This bill derived itself very soon after the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade just this past summer.

I remember I—when we learned of the news that the US Supreme Court was potentially going to overturn Roe v. Wade, I remember there was such a shock in many respects and a disbelief and just disheartening among those of us that do this reproductive justice work, that the US Supreme Court could turn back the rights of women and gender-diverse folks to a time when some women couldn't even open their own bank account without the permission of their husbands or their partners, or couldn't even vote or couldn't travel by themselves.

And so, that precipitated this work and reaching out to legal counsel, because one of the things that a lot of US states that have effectively banned abortion, what they've done in their legislation is that they've embedded a legislative framework that allows states to sue and prosecute abortion providers that provide abortions in their states.

And I think it's important to reflect on some of the states that currently have effectively banned abortion. As of April 25th, 2023, abortion has been banned with no exceptions in 10 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, South Dakota, Tennessee, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin.

Abortion is banned with exceptions, such as being allowed before a certain number of weeks in a

further nine states: Idaho; Mississippi; just last week, North Dakota, which is why this bill is so timely and required right now; West Virginia; Georgia; Arizona; Florida; Utah; and North Carolina.

And then some five more states have enacted abortion bans which have been blocked by judges: Indiana, Iowa, Montana, Iowa and Wyoming.

Anybody can see that the US has been moving towards this for many, many years, and is continuing that assault on citizens' bodily autonomy to choose the right to access abortion.

But now, last week, North Dakota pretty much effectively banned abortion. You cannot receive an abortion after six weeks, and for anybody that is aware on the way that reproduction works, often you don't even know that you're pregnant at six weeks pregnant. And so, that's why North Dakota has effectively legislated an abortion ban.

In July of 2022, the Canadian Medical Protective Association sent a letter to the federal government asking for legal protections—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

If members need to have conversations, there are places for them to do so. If we could respect the person who has the floor, and all members will have that opportunity in due time.

MLA Fontaine: Thank you for that.

So, the Canadian Medical Protective Association sent a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, looking for additional legislative protections for abortion providers here in Canada and across our provinces and territories.

* (10:10)

So far nothing has been forthcoming, but I do want to read into the record some of what they said: We are asking—we are writing to ask, and I quote, we are writing to ask the federal government work with provincial and territorial governments to ensure liability protection is available to Canadian physicians who may be subject to legal proceedings in the US for providing abortion services to US patients here in Canada.

Being able to reassure health-care providers, particularly physicians, that they will have liability protection for legal actions brought in the US against physicians providing abortion services to US citizens would go a long way in facilitating efforts to support US patients in these difficult circumstances. End quote.

And just one final quote of this letter: The CMPA is aware that some American states are contemplating legislation that would potentially allow for criminal charges and civil legal actions to be brought against health-care providers who provide abortions to residents out of the state, even where the care is delivered outside that state.

So, Deputy Speaker, having seen this letter and doing some more research, I reached out to legal counsel for the development of what is Bill 211, and basically Bill 211 offers that protection to Manitoba abortion providers. And so, the ban, the effect of the abortion ban that just came into effect last week, we will see folks from North Dakota travel to Manitoba to access abortion services.

And so, in this case, this law would only apply within Manitoba, and so here is a scenario, Deputy Speaker. A Manitoba doctor does something in Manitoba or another jurisdiction. A civil action against that Manitoba doctor is brought within another jurisdiction, and there is a judgment issued in that jurisdiction against this Manitoba doctor.

Bill 211 provides that that judgment is not enforceable against the doctor in Manitoba under this act. And so, it is in small—some small measure here in Manitoba in our province providing those legal protections to our abortion providers. And I think it's an important bill, and I would imagine that everybody in the Chamber would want to see legal protections for Manitobans for any judgments that were brought outside of Manitoba or outside of Canada.

I would imagine that the folks elected in this Chamber would want to protect Manitoba physicians and abortion providers from any civil or crime—criminal proceedings. And so, my hope is that members opposite will support Bill 211 today.

You know, I want to say this, as well, is that we already know that abortion providers in Manitoba deal with a myriad of different things that they have to deal with, including having anti-choice protestors protest right in front of their work of employment, with, as I've said many, many times, assaulting and intimidating imagery which is not accurate; it's not based on any medical expertise or, you know, medical accuracy in any way, shape or form.

So—and I know that members opposite have, you know, have no desire to allow that bill to come into law in Manitoba, but here is an opportunity for members opposite to redeem themselves in some small measure, to ensure that abortion providers here are granted and have those legislative protections

against any proceedings that might be brought against them.

I do know, as well, that there's some concern for abortion providers who are travelling outside of Manitoba, outside of Canada, once they go into the US, and whether or not they have any legal protections once they go into the US. I think that's something further to explore, but at this point, I think Bill 211 at least gives us a little bit of a framework and a little bit of a foundation upon which to build those protections for Manitoba abortion providers.

Finally, let me just say this, and I've said many, many times: abortion is health care. Abortion is absolutely normal. It is not a bad word. It's not a bad procedure—procedure. You're not going to hell if you have abortion. You are welcome to have as many abortions as you want. It is health care.

And I would hope that, in 2023, that we can all agree here in the House that Manitobans should be able to access the health care that they need, when they need it, how they need it, and that nobody would stand in their way. And certainly, that we would not have another country like these archaic backward states pose any type of threat to our right to access abortion, and certainly the right of providers to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

I did note that the member quoted from a letter. And I just wanted to ask if that was a private letter, and if it was a private letter, if that could be tabled. And if it was letter that's publicly available, that's not necessary.

MLA Fontaine: It is a public letter. It's everywhere, but I will table it. It's fine, yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I want to thank my colleague for bringing in 211 for discussion this morning. I listened intently to the member's comments. The member commented about a legislative framework that a number of states have been enacted

to sue health-care providers here in Manitoba. I know the member did table the letter from the CMA to the Prime Minister.

I'm wondering if for our own information and education whether or not the member has a copy of a legislative framework to table with this House as part of the record and part of the Legislature's to understand the implications of what these states are trying to do in terms of criminalizing the activities of health-care professionals here in Manitoba providing this service.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): To be clear, I don't think I, in my statement, in any way, shape or form said that the US has a legislative framework to specifically bring criminal proceedings or sue Manitoba abortion providers. What I said is that many of these pieces of archaic legislation from US states have imbedded in it the ability to prosecute and sue abortion providers within their state and any abortion provider outside their state.

And so, one could deduce from that that the US—these particular states—could bring forward criminal charges or civil suits against Manitoba abortion—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I want to thank my colleague, the MLA for St. Johns, for bringing this very important piece of legislation forward. We all see what's happening across the United States right now, and it's pretty terrifying. And so I commend her for bringing forward something that would protect providers here in Manitoba who are providing essential health care.

I'm wondering if the MLA for St. Johns can advise how many times she's brought this piece of legislation forward in the House.

MLA Fontaine: This is the first time that I've brought Bill 211 to the House.

I have, Deputy Speaker, as most members in the House will know, I have brought forward The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act six times to the House in an attempt to create a buffer zone for anti-choice protesters and those in hospitals and community health agencies that are providing those abortion services, in order to protect those abortion providers and Manitobans who are seeking health care.

So, I have introduced that about six times, to no avail yet.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I just wanted to give the member the opportunity to speak a little more to why this legislation is important for those working in health care here in Manitoba.

* (10:20)

MLA Fontaine: I appreciate the question and I would imagine—and again, as I said earlier: all of us are elected to serve Manitobans. And those Manitobans that provide those abortion services should be protected from archaic laws that are taking place in a different country.

We have to, that's what we're elected to do here. And so, it is an opportunity to get on the right side of history to ensure that abortion providers here in Manitoba have that extra protection, legislatively, that they cannot be sued and they cannot be forced to deal with criminal charges from an archaic state in the US.

Mrs. Cathy Cox (Kildonan-River East): I would like to thank the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) for her opening comments and elaborating on the contents of the bill that she's bringing forward.

I just want to ask, as well, you talked about the federal government, but are any other jurisdictions across Canada looking at introducing a legislation similar to this?

MLA Fontaine: That's actually a really good question. Last time I checked there wasn't, but as everybody in this House knows, the way that legal counsel works is often one-on-one, or with your caucus staff, so there could be legislation that is getting looked at right now across other provinces and territories. They certainly did call on provinces and territories to put in that legislative framework to protect abortion providers within their own jurisdictions.

At this point, I don't know if any other are, but certainly Manitoba could take a lead across the country and be the first one out of the gate with this legislation.

MLA Asagwara: I thank our colleague for—her remarks so far to the questions are very thorough, and I think they reflect the fact that the MLA for St. Johns has spoken directly with abortion providers and with experts in this field.

And so, I'm wondering if the MLA would mind sharing a bit more with us about what, you know, she's hearing from abortion providers and the experts who are using evidence-based practice to provide this care and why this is so important to them.

MLA Fontaine: Yes, I think that, you know, among abortion providers and folks that work within restorative or reproductive justice, there is this, you know, fear and disbelief in some respects at what's taking place literally just a couple of hours from us.

And, of course, abortion rights are protected here in Canada under our Charter and so, you know, often times, people will say, well, that's happening in the US, it doesn't matter. But it actually affects all of us. When you attack the rights of women and gender-diverse folks to access basic human rights, it allows folks to continue on, on those attacks.

And look at what we're seeing in the US right now—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Martin: The member, in response to my first question, indicated, again, that the right to sue or the ability to sue is embedded in the language in some of these states.

And again, I'm just asking, again, for research purposes and for purposes of all members, both currently and historically, to understand the implications of this embedded ability, if the member has that framework to table today, to share with the House so that we can understand the goal of this legislation, and the repercussions of what the American states—some states—are trying to do in terms of dictating what our health professionals here in Canada can or cannot do, which is entirely—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

MLA Fontaine: Well, I didn't bring with me any of the legislation from any of these states, but if you are paying attention to what's going on for the last many years in the US, you will note that, for instance, Texas, in their legislation, has the ability to sue or criminally prosecute abortion providers that provide abortions in their state.

And so, again, as I said, one can—you know, anti-choice legislators want to see this across the US and, dare I say, would like to see this everywhere. And so, you know, I think that if you have anti-choice legislators that are so intent in restricting the ability to access abortion, it's pretty easy to imagine—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: I'm wondering if the MLA for St. Johns can talk a bit about what the impacts are of

lack of access to reproductive justice, abortion services; what that reality means for women and gender-diverse folks, not only in the United States where we're seeing these archaic and draconian laws imposed, but also here in Manitoba where we know there's still not equitable access to abortion services.

MLA Fontaine: Miigwech to my colleague for asking that question. What we see when folks don't have access to abortion, is we are forcing citizens to birth. We are forcing citizens to have a child when they don't want to, when they're perhaps financially not ready to, or emotionally or mentally not ready to. We're literally forcing people to bring children into the world when they don't want that.

And the consequences of that are generational. In some respects, when you're forcing folks that are economically marginalized, you're forcing them into generational poverty and—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cox: We do know that health-care providers and physicians who perform abortions have insurance, and I was just wondering if the member from St. Johns could indicate whether or not that insurance would cover any type of lawsuits that—you know, that are presented to them as a result of providing an abortion to an individual from North Dakota or South Dakota.

MLA Fontaine: Yes, I think that's something to be further researched or looked into, but I do want to go to the experts. And the Canadian Medical Protective Association felt it necessary to write a letter to the Prime Minister to ensure that there was increased liability protections for abortion providers.

And so, what I would imagine is that we can always do more to ensure that we are protecting Manitoba abortion providers. And my hope is that today, folks in the Chamber will see the benefit of that and will do what's right for Manitoba abortion providers, and allow Bill 211 to go past six—second reading.

Miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for questions has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It's my pleasure to rise this morning and put some comments on the record in relation to Bill 211, the reciprocal enforcement of judgments amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think it's incumbent upon all of us to do what we can here in the Legislature, as parliamentarians, as citizens of Manitoba, to ensure that our health-care providers do receive all levels of protection. We—last night, we were in committee, talking about security protection in our hospitals, for staff.

I know the member of St. Johns has brought forward, you know, stories about, you know, staff—medical staff having their vehicles damaged. So, the assaults on medical professionals are indeed wide and varied, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But that being said, we are specifically here talking about the right to access reproductive services, abortion, which is fundamentally a right of any woman here in the country of Canada. And I think we as Canadians should be proud of this fact that we stand with women in allowing them to make those decisions upon—and have autonomy upon their own body.

I was thinking this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I came to the Legislature a year ago, I happened to be in Ukraine and speaking to providers of some of the non-governmental services. And one of the things that we're seeing in Ukraine, and one of the things that we see in, unfortunately, in all armed conflicts, is the use of sexual assault—or rape, to be more blunt—as a tool of intimidation and as a tool of warfare.

And unfortunately, you're seeing situations in Ukraine where women are being impregnated via rape by Russian soldiers. And absolutely, whether those individuals, those women, want to receive those services—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

* (10:30)

As previously announced, the time is 10:30, and we will move to second reading of Bill 219. When this matter is again before the House, the member for McPhillips will have eight minutes remaining.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to take a moment here and acknowledge we have guests in the public gallery, students from R.B. Russell Vocational High School, 16 grade 9s and 10s. Do I get that right? Welcome here, everybody, under the direction of Mylene Villafranca. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith).

We certainly welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

Bill 219—The Consumer Protection Amendment and Farm Machinery and Equipment Amendment Act (Right to Repair—Vehicles and Other Equipment)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I'd like to recognize the honourable member for Elmwood at this time.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), that Bill 219, The Consumer Protection Amendment and Farm Machinery and Equipment Amendment Act (Right to Repair—Vehicles and Other Equipment), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Maloway: The—this Bill 219, the purpose is to amend The Consumer Protection Act and the farm machinery equipment act.

A manufacturer must make items necessary to maintain and repair its vehicle, farm equipment and machinery available to purchasers or repair businesses at a reasonable price. And if the manufacturer does not make the necessary items available, the manufacturer must replace the vehicle, farm equipment or machinery at no charge or refund the purchase price.

Now, this particular Bill 219 deals more with farm machinery and motorized vehicles, recreational vehicles. There is another bill that is very similar, dealing with cellphones and washing machines and stuff like that, products like that.

And these bills—originally, I did two—a little over two years ago. Matter of fact, I sent out a brochure on the other one to my constituents with the repair—supporting the repair garages that are—or repair shops that are doing repairs to, well, it's basically washing machines and other products like that.

So, what we're doing here is we're making the manufacturers—this is the important part to remember. It's not the dealers that we're talking about; it's the manufacturers. We're making them responsible for replacing the product, only if the manufacturer fails to provide manuals and parts available. Just want to make that very, very clear, because it's easy to get this all mixed up and misrepresented, as we've experienced in the past.

So, the main message here: farm equipment—and this includes all of the equipment that we're talking about—it grows more sophisticated, as everyone knows here. Manitoba farmers feel as though they're becoming unfairly burdened 'til manufacturers, who

often have more intent on making money than helping them bring the crops to market. I think that's a feeling upon certainly some of the farmers.

Politicians in the United States, they recognize the need to address this issue, including President Biden, who signed an executive order last year encouraging the Federal Trade Commission to remove barriers imposed by manufacturers on farmers' ability to access repair shops or repair equipment themselves.

Now, European Union, the year before, 2022, brought in huge amount of regulations requiring proper manufacturing of consumer products, because what's been happening worldwide over the years is the equipment is being manufactured on a very sophisticated level, complicated level, non-repairable and at the point where if something goes wrong with the product, the manufacturer simply expects you to throw the product in the garbage, in the landfill, and buy a new product and not to do any repairs to the product at all.

So, what has happened in the European Union is they have come up with a standard, basically—which probably will become the worldwide standard because that's a huge market that we're dealing with here—they have required the manufacturer to build products that will last. And by last, I guess it depends on the product, but, you know, generally 10 years would be reasonable for a product to last.

For example, computers, they're usually obsolete within a couple of years, if that. But I've been hearing recently that people have old Apple computers or Apple laptops that are, like, ten years old and they work just fine. So you see, it is possible to do these things, but the whole of our production is based on obsolescence and throwing stuff in landfill.

So, there was multiple reasons why the right to repair did get established in the European Union in 2021, 2022, and why manufacturers there have to make changes in design, to design products that are going to last longer, design products that are easy to repair and design products that can—and provide the manuals and the repair products to—repair places other than their own repair shops.

And so, what we want to do here is we want to give Manitobans who own repair shops, who are doing repairs in any, you know, consumer-based product, we want to give them a chance to stay alive, to provide repairs on products, not just the ones which are approved by Apple or any one of these other manufacturers.

Now, the manufacturers, historically, what we've seen is when legislation is brought in, which it has been in most provinces and most United States' states, the manufacturers become very effective lobbyists. And they will approach MLAs opposite to tell them that, oh, you know, we've got to make the products complicated because we don't want our competitors disassembling, you know, back-engineering and copying our secrets, our trade secrets. So, we can't have people, you know, repairing their own products and we don't want them taking them apart.

But they don't tell you that most of the products that they're talking about are manufactured in China in the first place, and where all these so-called secrets are already well known to the Chinese government or made available to the Chinese government. So, espionage is the issue here that they are alluding to, and they do have a point; but then again we have to balance whether their point is stronger than the point of our end users.

Bottom line is that people who buy farming machinery or any consumer product, they put out hard-earned money for these products. They have—they're the owners and they should not be told that, for example, a farmer and a piece of farm equipment has to get a repair person out from the dealership just to reset a code to make the product work.

So, let's say it's a combine or other farm equipment, and it ceases to work because they've done a diagnosis or they've done some work on it and they have the code—the code has been—has to be reset. So, now your equipment is sitting in the field when you've got limited hours to work in the first place; it's all sitting in the field, expensive equipment can't go anywhere until the dealer, the equipment dealer, sends out the repair person, which could take a couple of hours, just to reset the code. Maybe there's nothing wrong with the machine, just the code is not working, right?

* (10:40)

That is what we are trying to get to here with this legislation. I've certainly heard, and I know that questions are going to come, and so, I've done all the interviews with the Ag, you know, media people, up to, like, two years ago.

And they contacted me and asked me questions about it. And the members will know that there's quite an interest in this area, not only in the consumer products in—regular consumer products like cell-phones and washing machines and so on, but on the farm equipment as well.

So, we all have an interest here, in supporting the survival of repair businesses because, let's face it, where this will ultimately go is the products will even get more complicated, they'll get more unfixable and they'll be just totally disposable into landfills and you're going to get less use out of your equipment.

So, we've got to put a stop to this because the companies don't have any incentive not to do this. We have to give them a disincentive to do what they're doing right now.

And European Union has set the new standard and it's going to ripple across because if you're Samsung, you're not going to produce product for the European market constructed a certain way, and then a different product for a North American market—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): In the proposed legislation, it talks about reasonable price. Just wondering how this—who determines reasonable price. How is this determined, that it is—any services are provided at a reasonable price?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Well, I thank the member for the question, and as the member knows—he's been an MLA for a number of years—we're at the second reading stage and we're discussing the principle of the bill, not actually all the details. But if he does agree with the bill, he should vote for the bill and then he can make amendments at committee. But further than that, some details are going to be left to the regulations, right?

And anybody—I know we talk about reasonable costs in the bill—and any consumer out there who thinks it's unreasonable can make a complaint. And where will the complaint be? Well, the Consumers Bureau, right, is the place that the complaints are going to be.

But just to give him some direction on that, that's what—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I appreciate my colleague, member from Elmwood, to bring this piece of legislation forward. It's important.

I would like to ask the member: How will this legislation protect small repair businesses throughout this province?

Mr. Maloway: I want to thank the member for the question. I've got to say that is sort of the real reason why we got into this issue in the first place; to develop this legislation. Because we have businesses like the Elmwood Appliance service—you know, small—they're small local businesses.

They're—used to, in the old days, repair washing machines. And they used to go to people's houses to do it; bring the parts with them. Parts were available. And then over the years, they find themselves cut out because now people can go and buy the product in Costco and the product then they buy—I had an issue last year with one of my constituents where they—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): This is an important issue, and it's a very important issue for farmers to be able to get into the field quickly. The member mentioned waiting two or three hours. I've got an example here where it was weeks.

You know, you've got to be able to have a situation where farmers can repair their equipment and that this can be done quickly. And it's extremely important.

So, my question to the member is this: Does the bill meet the European Union standard?

Mr. Maloway: To answer the question, well, I guess—I suppose so. But what the European Union has done is they set the design standards, stuff like that. We're not doing that here in the bill.

Okay, so what the European Union has done is they've said, if you want to sell your televisions or cellphones or farm equipment in our jurisdiction, that it has to be designed in such a way—so it's a design issue—designed that it's going to last, you know, 10 years or five years or whatever the amount is. And then they will allow them to manufacture in the first place, right?

Now here, we're dealing with North American standards. And until those get changed—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I think—I'd like to thank the member for introducing the bill. I've had a look at some of the European legislation and it is very detailed and very complex in going down how far they really want to go, in terms of details.

But I'm wondering if the member has had a chance to look at it. There's a very active industry in sort of remanufacturing old farm parts for farm equipment. And will anything in this bill discourage that industry from taking place? In particular, once the manufacturer quits making it, patent rules change.

And I'm wondering if they have—even if they continue to make it even though the availability is limited, will the patent rules change?

Mr. Maloway: That is a very good question. And certainly one that would be coming up when we deal with the—if you pass the bill through to committee, we deal with the issue at committee.

Generally speaking, I can tell you that in areas where you have to—where you get—have to reimburse. For example, this is not going to be a problem with the big companies like John Deere and companies like that. But if you've got a company that's selling low-priced product into an area and they don't have a dealer organization, they're the ones that are going to be—even today, they're the problems and they're going to continue to be.

And this legislation's going to deal with them because it's going to say—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Brar: Such legislations do have an impact on the economy of the provinces and eventually the countries.

How will this legislation make Manitoba's economy fairer, is my next question.

Mr. Maloway: I have to say, well, it will make us fairer in a way that it's—this legislation is sweeping the world at the moment. And if we don't do anything about it, we're going to be the odd person out, for starters. So we have to do something.

I don't see any problem with this legislation, in spite of what people are telling me about the lobbying efforts of the big companies. Companies like John Deere and so on are really not going to have a problem with this. Because they do have a huge market share to start with. They're going to be producing parts for years and years to come.

The real problem is not going to change. It's with the companies that are getting a toe in the market that are selling very low amounts of—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Wishart: There's been quite an active industry in western Canada for some time, in what many people call shortline equipment. And doing this will put an additional burden on those smaller manufacturers. Will that, and I think we can credit them—they probably perfected the air seeders that are widely spread across the world now, was done basically in western Canada by small shortline manufacturers of various types.

Will this discourage that type of industry from taking place?

Mr. Maloway: Well, I don't see it discouraging any businesses because, the end of the day, it's very simple. What are we asking for in the bill? We are asking for the manufacturer to provide manuals. How difficult is that? Provide spare parts to products that you have sold for a certain length of time, at a reasonable cost.

* (10:50)

And we're making the manufacturer responsible for it. So, if I'm a dealership, I should be happy with this because you're protecting me from angry customers who—you know, if the manufacturer's not being—not producing, not co-operating, why do I want to be taking the brunt of the complaints? Right? I want to be able to draw on that manufacturer to provide—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Are there any other questions?

Mr. Brar: I would like to ask this question regarding the impact on the environment because when we talk about the products that can be repaired versus we buy a new product and send the current product to the garbage or recycle bin.

How will this legislation help to protect the environment and build a sustainable economy in Manitoba?

Mr. Maloway: I want to thank the member for the question. And I think most of us will know that as we were growing up, we had washing machines in our houses for, you know, 10 years and they just got fixed and they kept working. Like, they never stopped.

Remember the Maytag repair man. The Maytag carried the ad for many, many years, indicating that

the thing will never break down. How did things change? Where now you go through a washing machine in many cases, in—every three years you're buying a new one because it doesn't work. We all know that.

So, what we want to do is to have some sort of protection for the consumer here, basically letting the manufacturers know that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Pedersen: I hope the member doesn't go back to, well, it'll be built into regulations and we'll determine this later.

But in the legislation it talks about—ensures that net profit percentage does not exceed a reasonable estimate. I'm just wondering if the member can give us his version or his estimation of what a net profit percentage that is reasonable?

Mr. Maloway: You know, I know the member wants to nitpick here. We talk about reasonable cost, and reasonable cost is simply that. I mean, if you—I think the average person will know that if something should be repaired for \$100 and it ends up costing \$1,000, then there's a basis of a complaint to the Consumers Bureau, right? That's what's going to happen.

And then there's Consumers Bureau, which was started in 1970 under the Schreyer government, they will mediate. And I don't know whether The Business Practices Act would involve itself in this, but one way or the other, it would get sorted out for the benefit—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The time for questions has ended.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): So, I can understand why legislation like this is being contemplated. I know it's happening across the US and I know that the member talked about Europe. I get very hesitant if we're going to copy what Europe has. Part of the reason why we've had so many European farmers coming to Canada and to Manitoba, in particular, is because of the very oppressive government regulations that happen in the ag sector.

So, I would just be cautious about mimicking what is happening in Europe.

Last June, the—a number of us were in Portage la Prairie, including the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), and we met with the Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association, and it was a really good meeting. They were demonstrating—the equipment manufacturers were demonstrating, you know, the latest technology and also it was addressing this very issue of repairs and rights to repair.

And the equipment dealers and the manufacturers are working very hard to make sure that with this new hi-tech equipment that's out there now that farmers, and in this case ag producers, can get access to fixing their equipment.

They're able nowadays to connect their smart-phones to the equipment and able to troubleshoot, and in working through their dealer, with their dealer, they can sometimes even solve issues themselves without having to call that repair service technician to come out to the field. And so, it's cutting down on downtime for them, and there's just—it's pretty exciting, the technology that's happening out there.

I'm really concerned about some of the language in this legislation. Confidentiality agreement: if a manufacturer, through the dealer, has to put together a confidentiality agreement with the repair person, whether that's a repair shop or an individual, I'm really concerned about what they—what the cost is, the legal cost that becomes in there. Do I have to get my lawyer in to—before I sign a confidentiality agreement with the dealer or with the manufacturer before I can—and what cost will that be at?

One of the other things, too, is this reasonable time, reasonable price. Who determines reasonable time and reasonable price? This is working relationships that, when you buy something—and I'll mainly talk about the farm industry—you develop a relationship with your dealer when you buy equipment. If you don't like how the dealer has treated you, you go to a different dealer or different manufacturer and you—it's about relationships that you build with them.

So, I'm really concerned about this bill creating a whole bureaucratic network which will then be trying to determine what is reasonable time and reasonable price.

And I also asked about net profit percentage. Here goes the NDP now, determining who will have net profit, and whether that is—I know profit is a bad word in the NDP language, but who is going to determine whether this net profit percentage does not exceed a reasonable estimate? Again, that's that reasonable in there.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And I know the member talks about, oh, I'll do it in regulations, they'll decide it in committee. But these type of things should have been determined ahead of time so at least the member could have spoke to them now and said, well, in regulation, this is what it will say. Because right now this is very vague legislation; it doesn't address many things.

I did look, and unless I've misread this, recreational motorized vehicle somehow doesn't include motorcycles. It says a pocket or minibike—in bracket, motorcycle—but it doesn't talk about motorcycles. And I know that Harley-Davidson has been involved in some of this in the US. A few of our members actually have motorcycles. And so how does—so are they not covered under this legislation?

Apparently does not include motor vehicles, so—because they're under The Highway Traffic Act—so this right to repair does not affect cars, pickup trucks, highway tractors. And I know that there has been some issues, especially in a highway tractors, some of the newer ones, when they get into computer problems, they're on the road, there is a dealer network across North America for that. But again, I'm wondering how this legislation—or where this legislation is in terms of that.

There's just so many questions that are not answered, or the member's not forthcoming in this. It's sort of a thought, an idea, that he has that this—we need this type of legislation, and there is just so many questions in here.

And, you know, I really wonder whether the member has actually talked to people like the Farm Equipment Manufacturers Association so he's up to date as to how this—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please.

* (11:00)

When this matter is again before the House—*[interjection]* Let's try that. Okay, perfect.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) will have three—four minutes, excuse me—remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 13—Calling Upon the Provincial Government to Follow Through on Its Commitment to Provide Manitobans with Highspeed Broadband Services

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time being 11 o'clock, we will now move to private members' resolutions.

And I would ask members, perhaps coming in for shifts, to keep the conversation to a respectful volume.

I would now recognize the honourable member for Flin Flon.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for failing to—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Lindsey: I move, seconded by the member from Thompson,

WHEREAS high speed broadband and cellphone services should be available to all Manitobans throughout the province, including in remote northern and rural communities; and

WHEREAS in November of 2021, the Provincial Government promised to connect 125,000 Manitobans in 350 different rural and northern communities to highspeed broadband services by handing over Manitoba Hydro Telecom's dark fibre network to a private company; and

WHEREAS nearly a year and a half later it's clear the Provincial Government has broken its promise to Manitobans as it has failed to make any progress; and

WHEREAS communities such as Cranberry Portage, Cormorant, Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Cross Lake, Brochet, Lake Brochet, Moose Lake, Tadoule Lake, Alonsa, St. Laurent and more are still without high-speed broadband services and/or cellphone services; and

WHEREAS according to 2023 data from the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission report, only 14.58% of First Nation communities in Manitoba have access to highspeed internet; and

WHEREAS lack of highspeed broadband and cellphone services disadvantages students, stifles tourism and hinders economic opportunities like new mining operations; and

WHEREAS lack of cellphone services is a public safety issue as many Manitobans can't even call 9-1-1 in an emergency due to lack of service; and

WHEREAS neighbouring province Saskatchewan has highspeed broadband and cellphone services throughout the province, despite being geographically larger and having fewer residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial

government for failing to follow through on its commitment to provide high-speed broadband services to northern and rural Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are the clerks okay with that? We're good? Okay.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion is in order.

MLA Lindsey: This government made some commitments, made some promises to northern and rural Manitoba that the dark fibre that Manitoba Hydro was in ownership of would be given to a private entity and would provide high-speed Internet services, broadband services throughout Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that there is—been no movement in the North to hook anything up to this broadband high fibre. There are some communities in the North that have been working furiously to try and be ready to get everything ready in their communities, but what's lacking is the government's commitment to actually make the service provider that they gave the dark fibre to, to actually do anything to facilitate that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that, particularly, some of the far north communities are disadvantaged in so many ways. They don't have road access and one thing and the other. Throughout the pandemic, it really became abundantly clear that high-speed Internet cellphone service is an absolute must for communities to stay active to participate in a modern economy.

We saw that education during the pandemic, kids had to stay home from school. In southern Manitoba, in Winnipeg, they could go on their parents' high-speed Internet, do school work, communicate with teachers, all the rest of it so they didn't fall behind.

Kids in places like Tadoule, Brochet, Lac Brochet, didn't have that opportunity. Their houses don't have high-speed Internet—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I know it's a shift change. I know there's—you know, there's legitimate legislative catch-up that needs to happen, but if you do need to chat with someone, step into the hallway for 30 seconds or on the loge or whatever it is.

But please, if we could respect the person who has the floor, that is the honourable member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey). And I'll enforce the same respect when it's anybody's turn to speak.

MLA Lindsey: Yes, so, during the pandemic, kids in those northern communities and many other northern communities didn't have access to high-speed, low-speed or any speed Internet. So, their schooling consisted of somebody at the school would have to put together a paper package of assignments and homework for them to do; then somebody would have to physically go to the school in the height of this pandemic, pick up that paper package, take it home for the kid to do and then bring it back to the school.

So, you can imagine how onerous that system is in a community that is already struggling; that it's on lockdown, that's telling their residents not to leave their homes, so that they didn't spread COVID. So, now we know how vitally important it is for those communities.

But more so—or not more so—as important is when this government talks about expanding mining in the North. I know I participated in the development of a mine in northern Manitoba. It was remote. Well, it was like two miles off the highway. But it didn't have access to high-speed Internet. And that company spent a lot of money and a lot of technical difficulties setting up their own satellite system so that they could have high-speed Internet.

I know there's a mining company that is in the process of getting a mine going at Lynn Lake. No Internet service in Lynn Lake. None. Zero speed. So, they're going to have to try and figure out how to set up their own satellite system.

Now, what's the problem with satellite systems? Well, that's a very good question. I talked to folks in Tadoule Lake who wanted to spend the money. And this is an expensive option for people. They wanted to spend the money so that their kids could get on the Internet. The satellite had no more room. It was full. Nobody else in the community could sign up to get Internet.

And how do I know this? Because I talked to Xplornet. I specifically phoned them about this issue and I talked to the manager of government and public affairs. And he's the one that explained in layman's terms that there just is no more room in those satellites. No more chance for people to sign up. So the band hall, the hospital, the teacherage would be about it for high-speed Internet in those communities.

When I was in Leaf Rapids one day, kids are lined up in the mall as close to the library as they can get because the library leaves their Wi-Fi on, which is the only access to Internet so many of those kids have. They don't have it at home. This government's

promise has been broken to people in northern Manitoba.

So again, I talked to Xplornet, which is now Xplore, about what their plans were after the government made this big announcement about how the fibre network was going to expand. What Xplore told me was, we have no plan to expand high-speed Internet in northern Manitoba at this time. No plan to expand high-speed Internet in northern Manitoba at this time, contrary to what this government claimed. They were going to focus on trying to get some more high-speed Internet available in rural Manitoba. And quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think they've been that successful at doing that either.

But I look at the province next door, also governed for many years by a right-wing government that don't call themselves Tories anymore. They call themselves The Saskatchewan Party. But SaskTel is owned by the government, as Manitoba MTS used to be. High-speed Internet is available throughout Saskatchewan because the government saw the benefit to the citizens of their province whereas this government doesn't care about the citizens of their province.

They had the opportunity. This government had the opportunity to make sure those hookups to Manitoba Hydro dark fibre were done. To make sure they were done in a reasonable time frame and to make sure that citizens, businesses, people in the North had some kind of access to high-speed Internet.

And I was dealing with another issue in Snow Lake where somebody wanted to know about an emergency response information kit that they'd heard about. Well, after chasing around several of this government's entities and getting nowhere really quick, somebody finally found the answer for me—what they thought was the answer—and said, well, you don't need those kits to—have an envelope on the fridge so that ambulance attendants, when they come to pick an unconscious person up, they see the sticker, they know that—here's the information. They said they don't need that because it's all available on the Internet.

Well, here's a news flash: ambulances do not have access to the Internet in northern Manitoba. So after much consternation, it sounds like maybe some of that system might actually become available in northern Manitoba.

* (11:10)

We know how important it is for tourism. Not a lot of tourists nowadays want to travel without access

to a cellphone, without access to the Internet, and yet, once you come to northern Manitoba, even in my own community of Flin Flon, once you get like, 10 feet off the highway, no service. None. No cellphone service, no Internet service. Not to be had.

People were promised that if they had cabins not that far off the road that MTS would supply them with these services. They do not. They've had to, again, buy their own satellite systems, and constantly you hear and see people saying, is your satellite service down? Yes it is, it's down all over. Is your satellite service down? Yes it is, it's down all over.

Xplornet satellite Internet is not reliable. It does not work constantly. You see now more people signing up for this Starlink, which, again, is not cheap.

But this government promised the people of northern Manitoba that they would have access to high-speed Internet with this wondrous deal they cooked up with Xplore, and quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's all smoke and mirrors. There's no truth to it. It's not happening, not happening any time soon. Which is further disadvantaging communities in the North, 'further'—further disadvantaging a lot of our Indigenous population, preventing them from being actively able to participate in a modern economy.

Thank you.

House Business

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): House business. Pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Stop Privatizing Health-Care Services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Opposition House Leader that, pursuant to rule 34, subsection 8, the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Vital. The title of that resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Stop Privatizing Health-Care Services.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held for the resolution currently under consideration. Questions can be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any

subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm wondering if the member opposite would accept a friendly agreement to condemn the Selinger government for its failure to provide broadband to northern Manitoba. The fibre was buried—failing that, perhaps he could apologize to Manitobans for the Selinger government's failure. This fibre was buried, it was dark, it was dead, it was not activated, and it is the Selinger government that failed in this regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): While this government and these members like to go back and blame previous governments, this government has had seven years to unbury the dark fibre, and they have not done that. They've had seven years to do the right thing; they haven't done that. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Lindsey: What this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Lindsey: What this resolution says is that this government, at the very least, should live up to what they said they were going to do, instead of blaming other people for not doing something 20 years ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this resolution very clearly says, this government promised to do something and they have not done it. They haven't—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): I remember back in the '90s being part of the IMYM team that was part of the department of Education, the Interdisciplinary Middle Years Multimedia project that was led by Cheryl Propopanko. Truly innovative pieces where teachers were providing professional development for teachers and leading them in their own classrooms. A very, very important piece. I also appreciated the leadership of our tech consultant at the time, Don Reece, and my other colleague, Jason Drysdale, when we were providing professional development for teachers around technology.

My question to the member from Flin Flon in bringing this PMR forward is, how can a high-speed broadband connection transform—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

MLA Lindsey: I thank you for that very important question. High-speed Internet is critical for students in a modern society to be able to participate. We've seen that demonstrated very clearly during the pandemic.

But we know from travelling to communities in northern Manitoba, from talking to residents in northern Manitoba, from talking to all those people that have been disadvantaged and continue to be disadvantaged by this government, that their kids cannot access the same level of service that kids in southern Manitoba can.

We know that that further disadvantages people. Kids can't do research on the Internet like kids in Winnipeg can—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): You know, I've got to ask again the answer, because in 2010 there were cables that were buried that were not switched on. The member opposite seems to go along with his leader and they love to leave it in the ground.

And here's another example. Not only are all those minerals in the North that the member opposite is advocating for, but all the services that he's advocating.

So, would he please apologize to the people of Manitoba for the failures of his previous government?

MLA Lindsey: Really and truly the only person right now that should be apologizing in this House is the member from Swan River who stands up—and I can't use unparliamentary language, but he knows as well as I do that not once have I ever said, leave it in the ground. He knows that our party doesn't say, leave it in the ground.

What we're here to talk about today is high-speed Internet access. And I'm sure there's some communities in the Swan River constituency that don't have it. But does the member from Swan River stand up and say, hey, government, let's treat my people properly as well? No, no, no, he digs out some old notes that have been handed to him by somebody in the back Tory room to try and win—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) and the member for Swan River embarrass themselves here in this House today. And the reason they do that is because they clearly do not have an understanding of what Manitoba Hydro Telecom, a subsidiary of Hydro, was doing to use that dark fibre in partnership with small businesses in your communities to expand access to broadband.

Instead, they've privatized a huge portion of that dark fibre—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —to an out-of-province hedge-fund-owned company. Completely mindless, ridiculous decision.

I'd like to ask my colleague: Why is it important to prevent publicly owned and operated ventures from being privatized?

MLA Lindsey: I want to thank the member for a reasonable question, as opposed to some other questions we've heard.

It's very important to keep some of those services publicly owned, as we can see in the province next door to us in Saskatchewan, a publicly owned telecommunications company actually is able to supply high-speed Internet throughout most of the province. They're actually able to supply cellphone service at a cheaper rate than what MTS does throughout the province.

We've got people that live in Manitoba that have SaskTel's cellphones simply because they get better service at a better rate. When this previous, previous, previous PC government privatized—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

* (11:20)

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): As being from the Parkland rural and northern community, expanding—I know that, day one, expanding connectivity has been a priority of the PC government, and they continue to expand and—inclusive broadband cellphone coverage and enable growth across Manitoba. We know connectivity unlocks potential.

Can the member please explain what federal jurisdiction in telecommunications and the CRTC means here in Manitoba? And can he share his thoughts on

whether this impedes connectivity and development in rural and northern Manitoba?

MLA Lindsey: Here we go with this PC government looking for somebody to blame all the time instead of doing the right thing.

We know what impedes connectivity and high-speed Internet throughout Manitoba. And that's this PC government. That's that member's PC government that impedes that. They privatize access to that service.

They promised that there would be high-speed Internet service spread throughout northern and rural Manitoba. And they have not done it. They haven't lived up to that promise. Nobody believes that they're ever actually going to live up to that promise, particularly in northern Manitoba because we've talked to the company that they gave the service away to and they have no intention—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Altomare: Again, I want to thank my colleague for providing these very pertinent responses to these questions that are coming today.

I'd like the member to expand a little bit more and talk about your personal experience regarding the lack of LTE, 3G, 5G cell service, especially in your 'constit' of Flin Flon.

MLA Lindsey: There's a lot of L-Gs and 5Gs and 3Gs that we don't have in northern Manitoba. We're still in the dark ages when it comes to Internet access.

Here's a sad story. In the community of Cranberry Portage, the fibre line runs right through the community. MTS won't hook the community up to it because they can't make enough money. Because that's what private entity is about, is making money.

We had to fight with MTS throughout the pandemic to get Frontier College hooked up to the fibre line that runs right past their back door. This government should be ashamed of how they treat northern Manitobans when that is right there. But the private entity will not hook it up. Kids can't do the same kind of schoolwork—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Helwer: Well, the member opposite and all the members opposite like to extol the virtues of publicly owned facilities, like MTS used to be or SaskTel currently is, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, I wonder if the member could tell us why I can communicate with my friends throughout the world using a product like FaceTime, using MTS's system, except for my friends in Saskatchewan. There is not enough broadband available in Saskatchewan under the Saskatchewan-owned entity that the member extols for them to communicate with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're in the dark ages—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. *[interjection]*

Order.

MLA Lindsey: I don't know, maybe the member's pressing the wrong buttons. Because I can communicate with people in Saskatchewan on FaceTime. Do it all the time. So, I don't know what his problem is. Maybe he needs to go to school and learn how to use a cellphone and a computer.

Because the problem is, for the most part, in northern Manitoba in particular, they can't use FaceTime. They can't use Facebook. They can't use Twitter. They can't use WhatsApp. They can't use anything because they don't have any service, never mind what speed it might be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for questions has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased to rise to speak to this resolution to bring some correction on the record.

Obviously, the member opposite doesn't like to talk about the failures of the Selinger government, but there are many. And this is one of them, that during their reign, Manitoba Hydro buried dark fibre, buried fibre cables throughout Manitoba and they stayed dark. They had no plan for how they might be used. We understand there was capacity there, lots of capacity to be used.

And then they started to dabble with directed sole-source contracts to individual ISPs throughout Manitoba. Just whoever maybe, I don't know, helped the government better at that time. No universal plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no plan for northern Manitoba. No consistency was perhaps the biggest problem that we ran into from contract to contract.

The member opposite, as we've heard, hates the private sector; absolutely loathes it, as does all of the NDP members opposite. They can't abide by the

private sector doing anything well, which we see time and again in Manitoba—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: I do recollect that there was a band trip from Vincent Massey, actually, and all of Brandon that went to China not that long ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some 10 years ago.

And speaking to many of those that went on that trip, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of them that I'm directly related to—in China, which is maybe something that the NDP opposite really aspire to be, a government of that size, of that dictatorship—in China, you only had access to Wi-Fi in the lobby of the hotel in which you were staying.

And that is so that the Chinese government can see who is using Wi-Fi and track what happens on the Internet. That's what the members opposite want to know. They want to know who's using broadband; they want to know what you're doing on broadband. They want to investigate you and they want to punish you. That's what the membership—members opposite want to do—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Helwer: The nanny state across—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: So, with their colleagues in Ottawa, the NDP-Liberal coalition, they want to make sure that the public is not available—does not have access to what the public needs. And indeed, what we've done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through an open RFP, gone to the market and found somebody that can work with Manitoba Hydro.

And what we've found in the last couple years, that they have doubled—more than doubled—the number of homes that have been connected to broadband that Hydro did in 10 years. That's what the private sector is able to do; they're able to make sure that Manitobans have access to broadband.

That is not Manitoba Hydro's core focus, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we know that Hydro has been working on what they need to do best and what they do best, and we know that broadband is not one of the things that is explicitly in their best interests of what they do well.

You have to focus on what you can do well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why we've been able to use the private sector to extrapolate, to connect people throughout Manitoba. And the members opposite

don't like to hear that most of it has been done, that there's just very few homes that need to be connected, to have that availability to the Internet. And those will happen shortly.

When I spoke to the minister responsible for broadband in the federal government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and told her of the plans that we had done through the private sector with Manitoba, they were just in awe. Because the federal government had tried to do this. They spent somewhere between 20 and 40 million dollars they set aside. And, unfortunately, they failed in Manitoba.

And it didn't happen under the federal government. You know, the NDP's partners in Ottawa, they failed at this and they weren't able to do it. So we found a path, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we can make it work for Manitobans, not just in rural Manitoba and southern Manitoba, but also in northern Manitoba.

And if the member opposite would spend some time and look through the RFP and the responses to that, he would find the pathway of how Manitobans are going to be and are connected to the Internet. I know that the members opposite don't want that to happen, but it has happened.

And if they don't know what's going on, well, maybe they need to get to their home communities more often. In my community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm in a part of Brandon that actually still has copper. We don't have fibre in my area of Brandon. The new areas do, and some of the older areas are having fibre buried and reburied in terms of access to broadband.

* (11:30)

But, unfortunately, I'm in that little section of Brandon that they still use copper. And as good as we are on copper right now, it is not the speed of fibre. So, somewhere down the road, they'll take the time and the ISPs there, I'm sure, will find a way to bury copper—bury fibre—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: —so that we have access to fibre.

Members opposite are nattering away because they don't like to hear truth spoken in this Legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They would much rather put, you know, falsehoods on the record, as we see them do time and time again.

So, it's sad that they don't understand what's happening out there, that they want to keep the fibre dark, keep Manitobans in the dark, so that they

don't know what's going on in Manitoba. It's sad to watch this from a failed government—the failed Selinger government—that not only ignored how to access broadband in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but, what did they do? Let's see now, what did they do before an election? They promised not to raise the PST. That—remember that.

They said it was ridiculous, in fact, and what happened after that election? They raised—not only raised the PST, but they had investigated raising it even further, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, throughout this time that we've been spending on expanding broadband in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was this thing called the pandemic that we all lived through. Some of us unfortunately, we lost people during the pandemic, and we're saddened for that. But yesterday, you know, we saw the Auditor General that reviewed what happened during the pandemic with vaccines.

And this is at the same time that we were expanding broadband in Manitoba to make sure that people had access to it during the pandemic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, you know, when you look through the report that the Auditor General just released, the conclusion is quite—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please.

I do want to allow for some leeway, but I need the member to bring it to the bill that we're discussing. So, I just want the member to help me see how these things tie into this particular bill, please.

Mr. Helwer: I'm reflecting on what the member opposite spoke about, about the need for broadband during the pandemic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I am speaking about during the pandemic we were working on expanding broadband, and how the Auditor General spent the time and looked at what we were doing with vaccines during the pandemic, while we're expanding broadband. Working not only on broadband, but working on the vaccination that required broadband access throughout Manitoba.

And his conclusions were that, of course, as you saw, the Province of Manitoba effectively managed the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, while we're managing expansion of broadband at the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These things were happening in multiple access points throughout Manitoba while the NDP ignored—during their reign, they had ample opportunity to roll out broadband, and nothing happened. Nothing happened. Failure after failure after failure.

And then we saw, again, the NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa tried to roll out broadband in Manitoba, tried to spend money here. Twenty to forty million dollars they had allocated to roll out broadband in Manitoba and, unfortunately, they failed.

But where they have failed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have succeeded. And I know the minister can speak to this, and will speak to this more probably later today, on how successful we have been in rolling out broadband throughout Manitoba for people that did not have access to it under the NDP, but now have access to broadband throughout Manitoba, and more to come.

It is something that we were focused on, that we put together with the private sector and Manitoba Hydro. They worked together to make sure that Manitobans would have access, not only during the pandemic, but into the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is something that will pay off in multiples for years to come.

We know the NDP want to shut that down. They want to go to individuals and say, you don't have access to broadband because they don't like the private sector. They absolutely hate the private sector, and you can see it each and every day from every—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) should be just utterly ashamed for all the words that he just shared on the record and trying to claim some kind of success over what's been going on with broadband in the North, because it is not that whatsoever.

It is absolutely ignoring the issues, and this resolution has brought forward—is just simply asking them to follow through on their commitment. That's all it's simply doing, and it's not—the member from Swan River is claiming it's happening, yet even in their own speeches, in their own comments, they know it's not happening.

So, they try and have these speaking notes that I'm sure were marched out by Brian Pallister saying, hey, you do this, you do this, you say this. You still try and make me sound like I was the champion for northern Manitoba, when it is in fact, not the case.

And instead, time and time again, this government still tries to use the pandemic as a shield for their incompetence. And you've heard it, you heard it in the

member from Brandon West referring to the pandemic and the needs of the communities, and they're—just totally ignored that.

If you go in—and the member even referred to the fact that he could not communicate with various people within the province, within other provinces—and the fact of the matter: that's the reality. That's the reality in northern Manitoba, that's the reality in these communities that were promised to be connected to a system that would enable them to be able to just be a part of everyday life in Manitoba.

So, when we talk about a resolution such as this—and perhaps people living in Winnipeg or in southern Manitoba would—will wonder, like, why is this—what do you mean? What do you mean there's this connection doesn't exist in northern Manitoba, in remote communities in central Manitoba, let alone northern Manitoba?

And the simple matter is, it's because of this government. It's because of this government not wanting to address the needs of northern Manitoba, not wanting to address the needs in central Manitoba, simply because that's not where their priority is.

That's not where their expertise is. I mean, their—they don't have expertise in a number of different areas, but this is for sure one of them. And the—I can't even name three that they do. I can't even name one, for that matter.

But the fact of the matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when these announcements were made time and time again—and I remember seeing the announcements, you know, and I'm sure they just grabbed their compass from their geometry set, then stuck it to Manitoba, made a little circle and say, hey, this, we're going to cover this area.

Oh, we'll do this other one, and I'll try to overlap. At the end of the day, it doesn't exist. That coverage does not exist. And the fact of the matter is, the fact that they took this on, and they wanted to sign it and agree to take on this work—it halted it altogether. It halted the progress that was going to be potentially made in northern Manitoba, so that communities could be connected instead of not doing what they've fulfilled, not doing what they committed to. They actually froze that process, and now communities are for sure left out of the loop and left stuck.

And it's interesting when the minister—or the former minister had referred to the pandemic being some of the reasons why they don't do what they do, and, oh, we've done this during the pandemic. And

they conveniently use the pandemic as an excuse to not do work.

The fact of the matter is that pandemic highlighted the need for this to be in place. Even in this Chamber, we've had a number of members participate on Zoom over the last couple years, and we still do that to this day.

There's communities that do not have that ability. They do not have that ability to simply communicate, to simply learn. And even if you take up your phone and you're in any particular area, if you want to call 911, you cannot do that.

And yet, as society, some of our children are even taught that if you have an emergency, dial 911 and help will be on its way. Well, there's no help in a lot of northern Manitoba and central Manitoba if you do that. So, when we talk about—we're not here trying to kind of push something that wasn't announced, wasn't promised. We're just saying, fulfill your commitment.

And this government is just failing to do that. And again, tried to do what they can to kind of play with the numbers and say, oh, you know what, according to this number, we're doing a great job. And the fact of the matter is, it's not. They're just taking numbers out of one column and moving it to another, and vice versa, in whatever kind of spin they want to say, to say, we're connecting everybody, when that's not in fact the case.

And you could make that call, you could physically make that call. If anybody in the Chamber here picks up their phone and tries to call somebody in northern Manitoba, depending on where they live, you're probably not going to be able to get an answer.

As the member from Flin Flon had mentioned in his words that he shared earlier on, is if you just go perhaps just a couple kilometres off the main highway, or just out of a certain service area, you're left with nothing. And we've seen that time and time again.

* (11:40)

And members opposite have also heard and witnessed and—first-hand accounts of those stories that come out of northern Manitoba where this is a safety—a health and safety issue for Manitobans. And that should be a priority for all of us.

So, when we bring forward this resolution, that's what we're asking for. Fulfill your commitment. Fulfill your promise. And I'm sure they'll come out with another promise in election year and say, oh, yes,

we're going to do this; we're going to, you know, hook up the entirety of whatever. But the fact of the matter is, they've already announced something in here and they've fallen not only short of that, but they've just miraculously not done anything on this file and not be able to connect.

But they'll sit here and talk about, you know, we've done the numbers; we've spun things in a certain way to try make ourselves look good, but the reality is, it's not the case. And it's not happening.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, should we not have that, right? So what—earlier in my speech, I said, Manitobans in southern Manitoba think this exists. They think this exists everywhere, and it just doesn't.

So, down south, you have that ability and you have that capability. Up North, you may have that ability, but you don't have the capability. And you don't have that capability because of this government's failure on this file, this government's failure to be able to connect northern Manitoba and central Manitoba.

And not only the failure to connect, but by doing that and setting up the so-called agreements and the privatization things that they want to do, they freeze northern Manitobans from being able to progress on their own, even. So Manitobans need to have that ability, need to have that faith in government. And it just does—simply just does not exist in this government.

And again, we're not asking for something that's a total out-of-the-blue commitment. We're asking for something that's totally made up. This is something that's real. This is something that's been announced by this government. Again, the government of announcements, not the government of commitments, not the government of actual work. And that's a failure on this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, when we come forward and we say, do what you promised, is that asking too much? No, it's not. It's simply asking to do and hold them accountable. But there is no accountability from this government whatsoever. And in particular with northern Manitoba, we know they ignore the needs. They ignore the health and safety of northern Manitoba. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's just unfortunate that that's how this government looks.

Again, I refer to their compass that they probably plotted out various constituencies here in Manitoba and they thought, okay, you know what, this is where our prime area is. This—we're going to get votes in this

area. We're not going to get the votes in this area, so let's ignore that.

But the real—but the reality is—and I hear chirping from members opposite. And I hear chirping from members opposite who have either been failed ministers—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bushie: —of departments who got shuffled out, will stand up in the Chamber—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bushie: —and give their retirement speeches. But also, ministers that are there, that were there before Brian Pallister, during Brian Pallister and some after Brian Pallister. So, you do not have to carry that same kind of thought process. Stand up. Stand up to your caucus members. Stand up to that leadership that insists on carrying forth that Brian Pallister agenda of ignorance towards northern Manitoba.

And you have that chance to do that. And I'm sure that's going to come up. Those are going to be election calls and those are going to be election commitments that you're going to be asked to do. And all you'll do is you'll just announce it, knowing full well that after election, you won't have to answer for it because you're not going to be in government at that point in time. And that's just the reality.

But again, announcement after announcement after announcement. And not only that, even coming up to just re-announce the same thing, let alone trying to advertise for the announcements, saying, oh, by the way, I'm going to spend millions of dollars to say what we're going to do.

But when it comes to connectivity and broadband for northern and central Manitoba, they've absolutely ignored that issue but, instead, just kind of brought it up as an announcement. Oh, this is what we're going to do. This is what we're going to promise. But the reality is, they didn't even think it through to actually get it done. Instead, will try to blame others, deflect from whatever they're going to do to avoid that responsibility and that accountability that they owe to all Manitobans.

And in this issue in particular, Manitobans and northern Manitobans should be reliable and should be able to rely on the fact that they can be connected to not only their friends and family within northern Manitoba, but to southern Manitoba as well, but to all across the globe and all across this country. But they don't have that ability.

And the minister even referred to that. Or the member from Brandon West—I apologize—referred to the fact that, you know, you could not even communicate with others. And he's referring to other jurisdictions and, of course, they want to be able to do that when it's convenient. Let's refer to other jurisdictions. But the reality is, that would not have happened today.

In a number of my communities in my constituency, if any member here tries to sign into them and communicate with them, they can't because they do not have that ability because of the failure of this government on this issue. The failure to connect all of Manitobans to broadband and the failure to not only not connect them, but hold them back and hold them back from being able to do things on their own.

So, they froze that ability. And that's a shame—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): I'm very pleased to be here this morning. Just by, you know, way of introduction, I can introduce myself as the minister responsible for broadband, taking over from the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer).

So, certainly, I have a lot to say about this particular topic. And I will just reference the member's side comment there about expertise. I've got 30 years of IT experience. I think that's probably more than the entire NDP caucus's IT experience combined.

But, in any case, I'm also very pleased to be part of a government that takes action and gets things done; a government that makes promises and delivers on commitments—not like the members opposite who are happy to pretend that certain things that happened didn't happen; to say that they're going to do something and then do something else instead; to promise not to do something, and then do it anyways. That's what the members opposite do. That's not what we do on this side of the House. We keep our commitments.

Now, I do want to just take a moment, I got a few guests in the gallery. I'm going to briefly introduce them. They're here for take-your-kid-to-work day. I've got Jade Vanderlinde, I've got Rylan Veenendaal and I've got Darius Schriemer, three students with me today for take-your-kid-to-work day. They're right next to my chief of staff, Kyle Reenders, who's up there with them.

And I should apologize to them, and I'll apologize to Hansard, as well, and I'm going to apologize to

the members of the House, because as the members of the House know, I do like to provide, you know, some intensity and some interest in my contributions to debate in this House.

And today is going to be, probably, the most boring speech I have ever delivered in this Chamber. I'm so sorry. And it's not by lack of effort; it's just because the content that I have to deliver is so, so long. I'm going to have to rush through it and that's why the apologies to Hansard.

And I'll just say, you know, I've got friends and family who live all around in rural Manitoba, northern Manitoba, and one after the other, they're sending me screenshots of, hey, check this out: 500 up, 500 down. I can't even get that kind of Internet speed in the city. They're getting it in rural Manitoba. That is the reality. That is the record of our government.

We've entered into an agreement with Xplore. They are working to connect communities up and I actually have a list of some of the communities, and I'd like to read them into the record to ensure that the members opposite understand when they claim that we haven't done anything, we've actually connected—well, let's see: Ashville and Valley River and Blumenfeld and Friedensfeld West and Friedensruh and Haskett and Hochfeld and Miami and Morden to high-speed Internet.

I'm going to continue though. I know the members opposite are like, well, that was only 10, Minister, that was only 10. Surely there's more. There is more: Neuenburg, Osterwick—[interjection]

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —Reinland, Schoenwiese, Chortitz, Reinfeld, Schanzenfeld, Winkler, Dauphin, Bloomfield and Woodside.

I think I've gotten up to 20, now. I'm going to keep on going though for the benefit of the members opposite because they have claimed in this House that we have—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —not been connecting communities to high-speed broadband. [interjection]

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Let's go back to listening to the honourable minister.

Mr. Teitsma: All right, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll have to speak even faster after losing those seconds to heckling and orders.

Waskada, Clearwater, Crystal City, Pilot Mound, Netley, Petersfield, Rosengart, Birtle, Foxwarren, Monarch—I think I'm up to 30 now. I hope the members are paying attention. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: Lake Metigoshe, Glencairn, Glenella, Grass River, Tenby, Durban, Ochre River, Dropmore, Inglis, Kilman, Shellmouth, Bellsite.

I think I'm over 40 already. And I hope the members are interested. These are all Manitoba communities that have been connected by our government through our agreement with Xplore to broadband Internet. They are experiencing unbelievable high-speed Internet thanks to the agreement that this government got done, thanks to the actions of this government in direct contrast to the inaction of the NDP.

I continue: Indian Birch—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation, Mafeking, Binscarth, Gambler First Nation, Harrowby, Millwood, Birch River, Lenswood, Boggy Creek, Boissevain, Ninga, Chater, Cottonwoods, Douglas Station—I apologize if I'm pronouncing some of these towns wrong, but, honestly, some of these places I haven't even heard of. I've been to hundreds of communities in Manitoba, but there's more than hundreds of communities on this list.

All right: Cottonwoods, Douglas Station, Forrest, Hillside, Justice, Spring Valley, Cowan, Renwer, Brightstone, Lac du Bonnet, Milner Ridge, Coulter, Elva, Lyleton, Acadia, Carberry—for those of you who are counting, I think I'm over 70 now, but I have more to say.

* (11:50)

Firdale, Gregg, Riverbend, Chatfield, Broad Valley, Dand, Lauder, Regent, Bacon Ridge, Ebb and Flow, Eddystone, Bethany, Birnie, Cool Spring, Eden, Rolling Acres, Spring Hill, Elgin, Fairfax, Souris River, Ditch Lake, Erickson, Otter Lake, Rackham, Rolling River, Wasagaming, Fork River, Russell, Crescent Cove Beach and Dauphin Beach.

And I believe I'm at about 100 so far. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: I'll take a moment to just refresh myself if the members could be so—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —kind. And we'll continue.

Laguna Beach, Ochre Beach, Scarth, Virden, Moore Park, Malonton, Meleb, Avonlea, Carlowrie, Dominion City, Glenway, Grandview, Ridgeville, Roseau River Anishinabe, Tolstoi, Woodmore, Hallboro, Lake Irwin, Neepawa, Crandall, Decker, Hamiota, Lavinia, Oakner, Channing, Flin Flon—oh, that might be of interest to the member—Vista, Delta, Edrans, Helston, Mayfeld, Pine Creek, Riverdale, Horizon, Kane, Lowe Farm, Myrtle, Silver Winds, Oak River, Mayfair.

I think I'm at about 140. I know the members opposite don't like to hear this list. I'm afraid to say that I'm not even halfway through it yet, but I'm going to keep on going. And my apologies to the Clerk and I will be happy to furnish this list for the benefit of Hansard after I'm done with it, if that will assist the members in our beloved Hansard division. I thank also the page for bringing me water, because clearly I'm going to need some before I'm done.

Ginew, which is Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, Letellier, Neuberghal, St. Jean Baptiste, St. Joseph, Deerhorn, Lunder, Austin, Cascade, Hidden Valley, Katrime, Rorketon, Cardale, Laurier—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: McCreary, Keystone, Little Creek, Marquette, Meadows, Warren, Woodlands, Rosser, Menisino, Pineland, Piney, Sundown, Arrow River, Beulah, Isabella, Miniota, Reeder, Mowbray, Pembina, Rossman Lake, Chimo Resort, Rivers.

I think I'm over 175 now, and I apologize to the members; I only have a few minutes remaining to me, so I'm going to have to rush just a little bit more.

Greenland, New Bothwell, Rainbow, Dorothy Lake, Eleanor Lake, Otter Falls, Pinawa, River Hills, Seven Sisters Falls, Pratt, Moostisootikwan *[phonetic]*, Rocky Lake East, Menzie, Oakburn, Shoal Lake, Strathclair, Whitemouth, Solsgirth, Manipogo, Meadow Portage, Spence Lake, Toutes Aides, Woods Creek, St-Lazare, Fannystelle, Springstein, Starbuck, Elm Bay, Faulkner, Grahamdale, Stephenfield, Benyk's Point, Thornhill, Treesbank, Wawanesa, Treherne, Routledge, Plum Coulee, Fairway, Ingelov and Carrick.

I think I might be about halfway done. I've got, well, a little over two minutes remaining here to me.

St. Labre, Woodridge, Makaroff, Roseisle—hey, that's where my wife is from—Parkview, Poplar Point, Altamont, Cardinal, Eagle Creek, Evergreen, Skyview, Somerset, St. Leon, Heartland, Deloraine, Goodlands, Barren Lake, Caddy Lake, Falcon Beach, Hunt Lake, Little Indian Bay, McDougalls Landing, Moonlight Bay, Penniac Bay, Toniata Beach, West Hawk Lake, Glenboro, Millshof, Stockton, La Riviere, Darlingford, Kaleida, Manitou, Broomhill, Melita, Napinka, Cherry Point, Deleau, Oak Lake, Oak Lake Beach, Clear Lake, Crawford Park, Onanole, Souris, Caliento, Gardenton, Stuartburn, Vita, Lake Francis, Star Beach, Star Lake, Duck Bay, Angusville, Silverton, San Clara, Friedensfeld, La Broquerie, Marchand, Sandilands, Birdtail Sioux, Manson, McAuley, South Junction, Sprague, Vassar, Wampum, Waywayseecappo, Hadashville, McMunn, Prawda, Airport, Macdonald, Oakland, Westbourne, Westroc, Crane River, O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation, Harmony, Notre Dame de Lourdes, Rathwell, Roseisle again, Ethelbert—must be a repeat—Garland, Makinak, Ste. Rose du Lac, Ukraina, Arnaud, Blue Clay, Dufrost, Rosa, St. Malo, Alonsa, Kinosa, Silver Ridge, Basswood, Franklin, Minnedosa. I'm over 300 now.

Mallard, Rock Ridge, Snowkan [*phonetic*], Waterhen Reserve—Snowkan [*phonetic*] First Nation—Haywood, St. Claude, Wingham, Swan Lake Reserve, Clanwilliam, Westview, Bield, Shevlin, Valley River Reserve, Brookdale, Alexander, Beresford, Deerboine, Kemnay. I'm running out of time, Madam Speaker.

Brandon, Anola, Hazelridge, Ridgeland, Vivian, Barrickman, Bon Homme, Cartier, Dacotah, Huron, Iberville, James Valley, Lakeside, Maxwell, Milltown, Rosedale, St. Eustache, St. Francois Xavier.

I think I'm over 350. I've got a bunch more to go. I'm so sorry that I couldn't get them all done, but I'm happy to provide it to the members if they would like me to add it to Hansard with the permission of the Speaker.

The complete list of 418 communities in Manitoba, rural communities in Manitoba that were connected to high-speed broadband by our government.

When the members opposite speak, they have no credibility and there is no reason—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time—the minister's time has expired.

Okay, a couple things going on here. First, was the minister requesting to submit the list into Hansard? [*interjection*] He's providing it. Okay, perfect.

It is—the honourable member for St. Boniface is next on the list, according to the speaking rotation. So, I recognize the honourable member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I'll keep it very brief. I did work at Western Economic Diversification in 2005, 2006, when we were hearing promises about broadband back then. So we've had 20 years of promises that have never been fulfilled. With all due respect to the minister, I—that was—I think we can all agree that that was the worst version of I've been anywhere, I've Been Everywhere that any of us have ever heard.

The other is that many of those communities have actually been hooked up—[*interjection*]—yes, to be—it's not everywhere, not Thompson. I don't think—I didn't hear Thompson on that list. But the other is that quite honestly, lots of those places, I've been to many of those places and they already had broadband. So I don't know exactly why they're saying they're hooking up places like Rossburn where there—and Shoal Lake where there already was broadband.

The other thing about it, look, you—if we're going to argue about private sector and—versus public sector, first of all, we know that there were local companies who were shut out of this, who wanted to be part of it and who were told that they couldn't bid by Hydro. We were approached by them and lots of them are people who provided broadband—already providing broadband to places like St. Pierre and places in southwestern Manitoba.

And the reality is we can—and that Xplornet is not even a Manitoba company. Government and Manitoba Hydro are some of the largest local businesses we have.

That money actually stays here in the province and that's a positive thing, but we spent years, I would say decades, when we had fibre where we could've been running some of the greatest high-speed Internet across this province, and it was completely ignored by both the PCs and the NDP.

So, with saying that, and I will also say that there's enormous work that needs to be done because the areas where it's most needed have been completely ignored while we continue to pour more—again, we're hooking up to communities that were already hooked up.

So I—this is something where this—it urgently needs to be done across the province, and it's the provincial government that makes the decisions where federal funding goes. That's how it works with shared costs. It's the provincial government, not the federal government who makes the decisions.

Thank you.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I just want to very quickly respond to the comments from the minister, the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma). He just spent 10 minutes wasting time in this House reading out communities that clearly—*[interjection]*—clearly had already been served previously through broadband—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —or who very clearly had been served by Valley Fibre—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —a different company.

It's clear if there's any party that cannot be trusted in this province, it's the party across the way, this Conservative government. And at the end of the day, this government has worked to privatize a service that was being provided by a Hydro subsidiary that was very effectively—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —expanding broadband to Manitobans.

What they're doing is a shame, should never have happened. We'd like to bring the question.

Thank you.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I think what is a shame is the fact that the members opposite do not pay any attention to rural Manitoba, to northern Manitoba.

I thank my colleague from Radisson. I could've finished the list off; however, I wanted to get it recorded in Hansard, so he gave up the list. But those communities are very, very, very appreciative of what this government has done for them.

And it did not—it did not even take a coalition. It was a PC government by themselves, unlike the members across with their coalitions that hold things up. So, that's what happens when you don't have the interference.

And I thank the member for Radisson for sharing that information. It was great stuff and we're hearing about it in rural Manitoba—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Swan River will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. later today.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 27, 2023

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