

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, September 3, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 300?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 301?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Are we ready to proceed with Bill 302?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Under concurrence and third readings of public bills, are we ready to proceed with Bill 204?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 209?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Are we ready to proceed with Bill 208?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. We've made it. Good.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

Mr. Speaker: Then we'll call Bill 208, The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Act, standing

in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight), who has nine minutes remaining.

**Bill 208—The Universal Newborn
Hearing Screening Act**

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): It's my pleasure to get up today to offer a few words on this bill. It is our intention today to see this bill move to committee.

And I just wanted to, in speaking about this bill, talk about something that happens that is perhaps rarely seen and rarely reported on, although it happens more often than not in this Chamber, and that's when we're able, as members who represent, perhaps, different political parties and sometimes very different constituencies, able to come together, discuss an issue and come to a consensus that allows a good idea like this idea to move forward. And so part of those discussions mean that we are able to support this bill. We do intend—as has been discussed privately with members of the opposition, we do intend to see some amendments at committee that would give more time for this to come into effect so that we can ensure that the hospitals, the regional health authorities, have the staff in place and are able to meet the requirements of this legislation.

I would say, I think, as has been said in the House other times this has come forward for debate by the—both by the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) and other members, that there has been a lot of progress made in this area within our regional health authorities and hospitals. But all of us know—any of us, especially who've been blessed to become parents, know that in those first few hours and few days how important it is for us to know that our babies are healthy, that they get what they need. And that if for some reason there is some issue like an hearing deficit or something else, we all know the importance of catching that early enough so that there can be the right kinds of intervention so that all

our kids have a chance to grow up and learn and have a healthy life.

So I want to just briefly really give a lot of credit for this bill passing today to the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). And he has been a strong advocate for this bill, I think, throughout his time in the Legislature, but he's also been a strong advocate for both child and maternal health. And sometimes that results in questions that are assertive that come to us, but I never doubt where his heart lies. And I know it's informed by his past as somebody who cared very much for the health of children and who often saw the results of those children not having the kind of health that we would all appreciate, that we would all want for people to have. So I want to thank him very much for being a strong and consistent advocate for this piece of legislation. It is really to his credit that we are passing this to committee today, and I would be remiss if I didn't make that known to everyone, and he should be very proud of this accomplishment.

I also want to thank very much the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald), who has worked tirelessly to ensure that this is a—this is legislation that cannot only pass the Legislature, but can actually come to be in reality.

And often times, you know, we can—writing the legislation and passing it is the easiest part of the journey. Making sure that our hospitals and health-care facilities have the staff they need to do the things that we want them to do, that's a much more difficult part of the journey. And certainly the Minister of Health, who's been extremely committed to that, has found new and innovative ways to accomplish that while also containing the costs in health care, and that's probably not something that she gets enough credit for but I want to make sure that she hears that today; that she has done an incredible job in the most difficult portfolio in government, and I should know.

So with that—and also thanks, of course, to the member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat), whose name this legislation is in, who has also been a champion and advocate for this bill.

I believe that this bill can proceed to committee. I know there's a couple other members that want to say a few words about it. And it will be a good day in the committee because it will show that even when we disagree about many things, when it comes to the health and well-being of kids, we can agree and we can find a way forward.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I do want to put a few things on the record in regards to Bill 208.

Having a bit of a hearing problem myself that I—my wife says it's selective at times, but I totally disagree. I can tell you I listen intently. Sometimes I may not understand, but I can tell you that it is a bit of a problem, hearing, in our family.

And my—I know my brother was born with a hearing disability. And I remember going to school, and back in those days it wasn't common knowledge that hearing was a significant issue. And I remember very clearly that, you know, back in the day, when we went to school, if we got in trouble at school, we usually got in trouble at home. And my brother, of course, once he got into grade 1 and was struggling through school, it wasn't until grade 3 that they actually identified the fact that he had a hearing problem. And back in those days they had those little transistor radio-size hearing aid that he used to carry in his shirt pocket. I'm sure older members of this Chamber would be able to relate or had family members that are aware of what I'm talking about.

And what a world of opportunity that opened up for our family. And I can tell you, even for him today, you know, he's had different surgeries. He had one that, actually, they implanted a hearing device within his—behind his ear that—it works somewhat, but not to the capacity that an actual hearing aid that works inside the—or outside the body picks up just a lot better.

* (10:10)

So we know very clearly that this bill will help to alleviate some of that stress on newborns. And, of course, that next chapter, as they move each year forward into life, we know very clearly that whenever we can come across some of those hurdles in life that makes it that much easier is a step in the right direction.

So I commend the member from Riding Mountain, of course, the Liberal Party, and, of course, the government for having the foresight to move forward on this newborn hearing screening act. And I can tell you that I think it's a really important step. I know that from experience in family the challenges that it has for those family members, and it's not necessarily the individual that has the hearing problem that's devastated by not being able to understand what is going on. So it's also the ability to be able to pick up 'senna'—sentencing and words

and wordsmithing, those types of things. So we certainly know how important that that is and the role that it has to play. We also are very much looking forward to getting into seeing when this might be able to become a reality for those helped people that'll be able to ensure that the screening takes place fairly soon, rather than later. So any time we can do that, we're certainly pleased to be a part of that process.

And I know the member from Riding Mountain brought this forward several times, several times in the past, and I commend her for her ability and desire to see this become a reality.

So, with that, I know there's other members, then we have 'ano'—a couple other bills we want to speak on here this morning. So I'll allow the members of the Assembly to be able to put their stories on the word as well, but certainly pleased to see it finally become to reality.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Steinbach.

An Honourable Member: Do you want to go?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Tuxedo.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I wasn't sure if other members wanted to, on the other side, wanted to speak to this, as well, but I am very pleased to rise in the House today and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 208, the universal newborn hearing and screening act. And I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat) for bringing forward this piece of legislation in the Legislature. And I want to thank members on the government side for agreeing to allow this to pass. I think that is a very positive thing. I know the member for Riding Mountain has brought this forward several times here in the Manitoba Legislature, and there has been some back and forth about it, and I'm just happy to see that, finally, we've been able to come to an agreement to allow this to pass through to committee and hopefully be enshrined in legislation here in the province of Manitoba. So, again, I want to thank the member for Riding Mountain for spearheading this very important initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I have two children and, you know, I know that when they were first born—and they were born at St. Boniface Hospital—and I know the importance of that initial test and the timing of that initial test in the newborn hearing and screening test and the importance of that. And I was a fortunate

person; my children didn't have hearing problems, and I am very thankful and grateful for that. But I will tell you that the importance of that screening test so that people and mothers and families and fathers can get to the bottom of what could be very serious issues when it comes to hearing. And having that screening done allows—like, sooner than later—allows families to make a decision and to move more quickly in those areas to ensure that they deal with this situation.

And so I think it's very important for this for—to have this piece of legislation, and I just want to thank again the member for Riding Mountain for bringing it forward and, indeed, for all members of the Legislature for agreeing for—to have this pass through to committee.

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say thank you for the opportunity to speak to this. Universal newborn hearing screening act is obviously very important. I had a particular experience myself with my own children—with one, my youngest daughter. And, certainly, I think when you have first-time parents, especially with a newborn that ends up having a health condition, their reliance on the guidance of their obstetrician, their midwife, their pediatrician, is critical.

In my case, I wasn't a first-time parent, but it was still a very frightening experience with the development of something that happened very shortly after birth that we detected something was wrong. Fortunately, the care that we received was excellent, and they were able to help us through the process of finding the best treatment possible. And I understand how terrifying that is if you feel that something isn't going to be done quickly enough, or that there's enough recognition that something is actually wrong.

We're—certainly, in Manitoba, with this government, since taking office, we've expanded and improved the screening that happens when children are born and we're certainly devoted to making sure that we continue universal screening. I think that this is—it's a wonderful opportunity to make sure that that work that we're doing continues, and working with members—other members in the Chamber as well to make sure that that happens. It's going to bring a great deal of security for families who go through this kind of situation to know that they'll have at their access all of the supports that they need in place.

And it just continues to build on the work that we've already done.

I have actually mentioned this twice now since being elected, and I see our obstetrician—sorry, not our obstetrician, our pediatrician regularly with my children, and I honestly—every time I see her, I feel like hugging her and saying thank you for the work that they did. It was just a day in the life for her, but it meant the world to us.

So I'm very happy that we're going to move ahead with this and make sure that all parents and their children that are dealing with this issue in particular will find the support that they need and be able to address this issue quickly.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I would like to thank the member from Riding Mountain for bringing forward Bill 208, the universal newborn screening act. It's been four—this is the fourth time she's introduced this bill, and up until now, it has never passed. But with the government's help today and members from the Liberal Party, hopefully, this bill will be put through today.

Hearing is something that's important to people that—a lot of people don't understand how important it is to get the children of this province looked at early and intervention started early if they have a hearing problem. According to the Hearing Foundation of Canada, approximately six in 1,000 babies are born in Canada that have some degree of hearing loss, and that's a lot of children to grow up in this world that can't hear properly. Many years ago when I was in school, there was a young boy who came from a family that was—there was some alcohol and child abuse involved in the family, and he never was diagnosed with a hearing problem until later in life. And through school he suffered with bullying and a number of other different things, so I think it's very important, as a society, that we make it mandatory. I mean, we bring in laws of all kinds to protect consumers, to do all kinds of things, but yet our most precious possession, our kids, sometimes we're not interested in bringing those laws. And I believe it's very important for every member in this House today to stand up and support the children of this province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): It's certainly a pleasure to be in the House this morning, Tuesday

after the long weekend, to talk about this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, many children will be going to school, back to school, this week, and it's certainly something that many parents look forward to, I think, as the summer moves on. So this bill certainly speaks to children and the newborn hearing—and the screening that's done for newborn children. And, you know, just looking through my notes here this morning, it's—I think it's pretty critical that we do proper assessments of children as they move forward. And, clearly, the concept of having that screening done when the children are very young, in terms of their hearing, is very, very important, because it does have a very dramatic effect in terms of their ability to learn as they progress through life.

*(10:20)

And, you know, we do assessment on children once they get close to school and then as they move through school as well, Mr. Speaker, in various different categories, and that's pretty important too so that we are able to determine what issues children might have that impact their ability to learn. And clearly this legislation speaks to the ability to hear, and clearly that ability to hear properly is essential in terms of children's development moving forward.

So I'm certainly delighted to hear that all parties are supporting this legislation that's been brought forward on a number of occasions to the Assembly. So we certainly look forward to having this committee move to—pardon me, this bill move through the proper stages, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know this particular process and, in fact, the screening itself is a relatively inexpensive procedure once you look at what the benefits are in terms of once the screening is done, and clearly I think, when we do this earlier, it's obviously in the children's best interest and certainly will help the parents too in terms of moving forward to make sure that their diagnosis is done early so that families know how they can then deal with the various situations that they're involved in.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take you back to a bit of a story that—a personal story. It's when we were expecting our third child and for some reason it was flagged that we should have some additional tests, at least my wife Marilyn should have some additional tests taken, and I guess there was a combination of different things that the doctors will look at I don't

think—she wasn't that old at the time, but certainly that's one of those age factors that they looked at as well as a number of factors.

So we went for the—a pre-screening test to look at a number of different issues, and part of that process was sitting down with a geneticist and it was very—a very interesting way to spend an hour because the geneticist goes through your family history on both sides and it was quite interesting, you know, the questions, just a whole wide range of questions they had in terms of what your family was like and what kind of issues your family has, all kinds of various health issues and it was quite interesting, you know.

And, by those questions that the geneticist was asking us on both sides of the family, they could give you an approximate percentage of what the potential was for your child to have one of those genetic traits, and it was quite alarming, actually. I was overwhelmed actually.

So you wonder after all those things you go through, all those different issues that so many things could go wrong with individual babies, Mr. Speaker, and you wonder, when you look at all those numbers, you wonder how they'd ever be born and they're okay and without any imperfections. So it was quite an interesting process to go through.

I think it's something that, you know, we should probably send all kids through that process because, you know, I think that would be a tremendous form of birth control if students were looking at getting engaged and potentially having a baby and they found out the percentages of things that could go wrong with babies, which obviously cause certainly some hardships within families, is quite an overwhelming process to go through.

So hopefully, you know, this particular legislation will help many Manitoba families out into the future, Mr. Speaker. It's relatively inexpensive and there is a fairly substantial percentage of babies born in Canada that do have some degree of hearing loss. So we certainly look forward to this legislation passing for the benefit of future Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to speak just for a couple of minutes on this particular bill as we see it move forward to a committee after this stage.

I want to thank the Government House Leader (Ms. Howard) for her comments on the bill and her commitment to see this bill move and to see it ultimately pass before this House rises sometime in the next few weeks. I also want to commend the member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat), obviously, for bringing forward the legislation and for being a champion on this particular issue. I know it's been introduced for a number of years, and sometimes you have to try and try again to get things to move forward, and that's maybe not always as it should be, but sometimes that's part of the legislative process. So I'm glad to see that her perseverance will see this bill passed and ultimately for the benefit of newborn children and their parents, as well.

I want to commend the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), as well, for his passion on this particular issue and for his strong determination to support this bill and other issues around pediatric issues as well. I think he's got a long and distinguished record both in this House and outside of this House on those issues.

So I think this is an example where parties have decided to do the right thing for the right reasons, maybe not exactly the right time. The right time might've been a few years ago, but I suppose this is the best time that we have left, just to do it now.

So I want to thank the Government House Leader, obviously our opposite critic, and the member for River Heights for his support on this bill.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on bill?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Question before the House is second reading of Bill 208, The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Act.

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

We'll now proceed to—are we ready to proceed with Bill 211?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes? We'll now call Bill 211, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows, who has 10 minutes remaining.

Bill 211—The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): It's a pleasure to be up again on a bill where all of the parties are working together. Certainly, identity theft, I think, is something that everyone is concerned about around the world.

I know last year I was able to go with my daughter on a trip to Europe, the first in a very long time, and I was surprised to discover that now I needed to buy those special protectors—which I hadn't realized even existed—around credit cards, so that people walking by you couldn't just simply scan the information right off your cards as they walked by without even touching you. That was a surprise to me, Mr. Speaker, and so I got all of those purchased and all my credit cards and everything put into those little folders that protect us that way, but the ingenuity, certainly, of the criminals in this particular area seems to be exceptional. They certainly are going out of their way and really working hard to find ways to steal people's identity, and we've all heard those stories of horror, of people whose lives have been really just destroyed by identity theft.

And so, I would like to speak of a few of the things, Mr. Speaker, that we have already done and that's good, to work on this problem. One is a website that I'd like people to be aware of that exists, set up by the Manitoba government back in 2006, and that includes things like ID theft prevention kits and ID checklist, FAQs, tips for reducing the risk of identity theft. And honestly I really recommend that everyone out there look that up and make sure that they're actually doing everything they possibly can.

You know, not that I want to talk about how old I am, but I remember a time when you put right onto your resume your social insurance number, and that was just common practice, you know. It said, your name, your address, your telephone number and your SIN number was right there. And I know my daughter was just filling out her—making up a resume the other—a few months ago, I guess, and she was wondering whether she should put that on. And I said, oh, my goodness, no, like, never, never should that appear on your resume that's just handed out all over the place anymore.

So we really want to make sure of that kind of awareness, that people realize how easy it is for these things to happen. So I really do encourage everyone to take the time to look that up.

Other things that you really want to make sure you're taking the time to do, Mr. Speaker, is not just throwing things into your recycling bin. We really want to be recyclers, we want to make sure that's going, but it needs to be shredded. All that banking information, all the things on our credit cards, we have to be vigilant in actually guarding our personal information and documents because all of that can be stolen so easily out of your garbage or your recycling, your mail—that sort of thing.

* (10:30)

So—and people, like I said earlier, are ingenious in finding ways, and one of the ways is tampering with ATMs. That kind of blew me away the first time I heard about that, but—that they were actually able to adjust the ATM so the information went directly to them instead of, you know, to the machine—that that was amazing. And point-of-sale terminals as well, that can read your debit or credit and collect your PIN numbers, and then the criminal takes that away and has all your information.

So we really want to be working on making sure that people are aware of those kind of things. So certainly increasing the awareness—and, I mean, I know this bill is going to do other things, but I think the passing of the bill will also simply increase awareness on the dangers in—of identity theft, and what people need to do to try to protect themselves. So that in itself is certainly a good thing.

I think another thing, Mr. Speaker, is phony offers. And I think the reason those things work is that we all hope that someday we are going to be the recipient of one of those, you know, million-dollar offers. You know, your relative died, that you never knew existed, and they, you know, they live in, I don't know, in Africa or the United Kingdom or France, or wherever it is they might be, and they've left you millions of dollars and all you have to do is just give them that little bit of banking information. And I guess there must be some hope in all of us that that could really be true, and we could be the recipients of those.

And so some people do hand over their information. And it's so important that we understand that we're probably just not going to be that lucky in life. We're probably just going to have to keep working every day to make sure that we have our money, and it's probably not going to come through that. And we should never be sending our information over a phone or an email.

I often get emails—I don't know if everyone else does here, I'm sure they do—saying again, that, you know, I've been a very lucky winner. And if I just email them my information, that's going to be really excellent, and they're going to send me a lot of money.

And so all of these things are things that people really need to watch out for and be aware of. All those mail, phone, Internet promotions really prey on our sense of, you know, hope, that someday, we will be in that, I don't know, top 1 per cent.

Also, you want to remember to do things like cut up your old cards, like, you know, make sure they're cut up so that you can't read the numbers. I know these things may seem really obvious, but a lot of people are not doing them.

And so these kinds of risks really are important, and it's really important to do everything that we can, in order to do that, to make sure that none of these things are happening.

Some of the things that you can also watch for, is if you do start getting phone calls—Mr. Speaker, if this happens to you I want you to be aware of it—if you start getting phone calls from collection agencies, things like that, saying, you know, you haven't paid those bills and you owe thousands of dollars. So I'm—if that's a surprise to you, and you don't really owe those thousands of dollars, right, you really want to be following up on that, because that has happened to people and, you know, thousands and thousands of dollars have been put into their names, that they now discover that they have to pay back. So that's one of the things that you can watch out for.

If your mail starts to disappear out of your mailbox, you know, don't just go, wow, I was lucky, I didn't get my bill this month. No, you have to actually follow up on that and try and find out what happened, because that could be somebody trying to steal your identity. So we want to follow up on those things.

If your financial accounts—don't just not look at them, you have to follow up, you have to look and see if withdrawals are being made, Mr. Speaker, that aren't you making them, and you didn't hand that over to some person in your family to just let them go ahead and withdraw from your account. If you didn't do that, then you want to make sure you're following up and finding out what's happened.

One of the good things that has already been done in that area, was the protection that occurred when it made it—provincial legislation under The Consumer Protection Act that limited consumers liability to \$50 when a credit card is lost or stolen, or the credit card information is used to make fraudulent purchases. So that, again, was another piece of legislation that was really invaluable because you could be in debt for thousands of dollars otherwise, if you had lost your credit card. So I think that was a really important piece of legislation as well.

Also, Vital Statistics have taken steps to ensure that critical personal information is protected, and there's actually fines of up to about \$50,000 that can be imposed on anyone possessing or using fraudulent documents or using legitimate documents unlawfully. So I know that, you know, there is lots of work that has been done in this area already, and it's good to see that more will be coming to protect the people in our province.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): And here it is, of course, the first day after Labour Day, and, indeed, when I went for a run first thing this morning, there was a bit of a fresh breeze blowing through the West End.

And here we are with Bill 211, which has been brought forward by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). It was, I think, gifted to him by Mavis Taillieu, the former member for Morris, who, I think, had tried this. The member for Lac du Bonnet has now brought this forward, and I think this is something that we can certainly agree to send ahead to a committee. I do believe there's work that yet needs to be done and I'll talk about that just for a few minutes but then I think we're quite prepared to have this bill go forward to committee.

This bill would govern the collection, use and disclosure and destruction of personal information including employee personal information by organizations in the private sector in Manitoba. And as I spoke about the refreshing breeze this morning, it is also refreshing to have the Progressive Conservative caucus recognize that regulation, indeed, in many places is necessary for the protection of Manitobans and is, indeed, useful to govern the relationships between individuals and private corporations, so we're prepared to have a good discussion about this.

Now, it's our intention that when this goes ahead to committee and it looks like with all parties' agreement, this will be passed into legislation, there are three things that I think we want to do. We want to make sure that the passage of this legislation and when it eventually comes into force, we build on the existing measures that are already in place to protect Manitobans from identity theft, to make sure that whatever we do does not conflict with federal legislation and federal regulation which already exists in this country, but also, frankly, to minimize the additional burden on businesses in Manitoba.

I think that with this bill we can strengthen protection for Manitobans. We want to make sure we don't do it in a way which puts a dual burden on Manitoba businesses so they have to comply in one way with federal legislation and another way with provincial legislation. But I think with co-operation and some good work we can certainly get there. And, of course, Manitoba is a province that has one of the lowest regulatory burdens. I don't usually quote the Fraser Institute in my speeches, but even the Fraser Institute noted that Manitoba has one of the two lowest regulatory burdens in the entire country.

And, of course, for small businesses, which are the lifeblood of Manitoba's economy, we know that the small-business tax rate, which stood as high as 9 per cent and was at 8 per cent in 1999, has now been reduced to zero, and, indeed, the first \$450,000 of profit that small corporations make is no longer taxable in the province of Manitoba.

Now, we know there's more work that's yet to be done. There needs to be, I think, extensive consultation with the business community to make sure that we're not doubling up or putting unnecessary requirements on businesses and to find out what can work and be the most effective. I do believe that for this bill to be successful, as we move towards bringing in regulations, we need to involve law enforcement and we need to get the view of the police on what things we can do that are really meaningful. And, of course, I think we need to do some consultation with the community itself. And as I've said, we'll want to make sure that regulations that will be prepared and brought in under this bill do not conflict with the federal legislation.

I guess for all of us, sometimes we don't even think about the amount of personal and private information that is collected. Sometimes that's as employees, when employers receive information. Sometimes it's as customers, as we pull our

AIR MILES or our Aeroplan cards out of our pocket to gain points, sometimes even as donors to a charitable organization. There's a lot of information collected. Some of it, of course, is entirely legitimate. Some of it I would call quasi-legitimate when, perhaps, an organization asks for information they probably don't need but they find useful for their own purposes. And, unfortunately, as the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) has talked about today, sometimes this information is simply obtained in an illegal and inappropriate fashion.

And, of course, I know in the course of my day as I carry my AIR MILES card around, every time I go to Safeway I suppose somebody out there knows exactly the positive or negative eating habits of my family. I use my AIR MILES card at the Liquor Mart, and perhaps this summer more than any other someone could take a look at that piece. And, as well, when I go to RONA to buy home improvement products, that information is all collected.

* (10:40)

And I think most of us have confidence that the AIR MILES program works the way it should and that information isn't shared inappropriately, but we just want to make sure that any information of that type is only used for appropriate and reasonable purposes. I'm sure all of us have been 'riss'-in receipt of telephone calls from people attempting to sell us things over the phone, the very annoying recorded messages that all of us hang up on. But unfortunately not all Manitobans are as quick to hang up the phone when those kinds of calls come in, or, as the member for Burrows said, those kinds of emails that wind up in our inbox. And, as well, we know that some of this information is sold or transferred to different corporations or different groups with which we'd not really be interested in doing business. So I think there's more that we can certainly do to make sure that we protect ourselves.

And it's interesting, the member for Burrows had mentioned, you know, suddenly that the shock that you may get if there's a bill collector looking for you. I had an experience where a bill collector was looking for someone who shared by name, who, at least at some point, lived in the West End. And I began getting calls from an individual. I phoned back, and the fellow—I guess, as bill collectors are supposed to be—was rather rude and pretty brusque and wanted my social insurance number over the phone. And I explained to him that I was well aware of the concerns of identity theft and I certainly wasn't

going to give my social insurance number over the phone, which confounded him a little bit, but then he went back into his bill-collector mode and, eventually, after a couple of phone calls, we agreed that we would negotiate this and I would give him my year of birth which would allow him to know right away whether I was indeed the person he was looking for. I gave him the year of birth. He then said, all right, well, that's not you; sorry about that, and that was the end of it. Not everybody would be quite as prepared to negotiate with people trying to receive that information.

I did say at the start that we want to build on measures that's already been taken by our government. An ID theft prevention website was set up back in 2006, which includes access to the ID theft prevention kit, an ID checklist, frequently asked questions, tips for reducing the risk of identity theft as well as contact information for a variety of organizations and resources.

And I do think, as MLAs, we can all play a role in attempting to provide that information to our constituents, primarily the younger members of our cohort and the older. Young people may be very, very savvy when it comes to using electronic devices, but they're not always as savvy when it comes to safeguarding their information.

At the other end of the spectrum, I've had the chance to be at meetings with seniors, and the information provided is very, very important for seniors who may be quite trusting and quite prepared to give out information they shouldn't. The SafetyAid program, of course, is well known as a program which provides safety equipment and information to seniors, but when you sit and watch the presentation, they actually give some identity theft prevention information as well, and that's good. What is always a little bit nerve-racking is to hear the gasps of some of the folks in the audience who realize how easy it is for people to get that information.

So, with those words, Mr. Speaker, I can say that we're quite prepared to send this bill along to committee. I think we all want to work together to make this a better and safer province. We know that identity theft is a substantial risk and we hope with passage of this legislation, again, with the necessary work to get regulations in place and doing the consultation, we can certainly protect Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide support to this bill. I want to thank the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), who brought this forward. I also want to recognize the work of form—*[interjection]*—oh, I'm sorry, Lac du Bonnet—member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). And I also want to thank the former member for Morris, Mavis Taillieu, who has played an important role in ensuring this legislation moved forward previously.

I think privacy issues are extremely important today, and it is important that we get the balance right in terms of making sure that there is sufficient privacy and also that there is sufficient access to information in the right and appropriate way. Certainly what will be important is hearing from people at the committee stage, from business points of view, from public point of view, to make sure that we have the balance right in this legislation, as I think we are very close.

I want to talk for a moment or two about my experience when we had the Canadian—the national Information Highway Advisory Council, and we had around the table about 30 people, leaders in communications businesses across the country, leaders in the—people who were involved in their own communities from—as advocates for access, as advocates for privacy. And it was a very fascinating discussion and always the importance was on getting the right sort of balance so that we're able to structure the legislation so the Internet is as open as it possibly could be, and yet we were able, at the same time, to match and balance and include privacy concerns.

Through encryption and various other ways, we see the importance of getting the right balance in Manitoba in health care where it's vital to maintain privacy, but it's also vital that the people who need to know have access to the information. We had changes, for example, to the freedom of personal information act which would enable people to get 24-hour access to their own medical records or, in some cases, close families to their family member's medical records where they're responsible. And this kind of access was vital at the same time as ensuring the overall privacy of the system. Similarly, it's important that health providers who are providing care have the critical information that they are going to be able to use to provide the best possible care to the individual concerned, again, under a regime which ensures that there is privacy of the health knowledge beyond those who immediately have a

need to know, and that this balance of openness and privacy is something that we have to be very careful about getting right.

I think it's interesting what has been happening in the last several months with revelations, for example, that the United States has been using techniques to search emails and to search through Internet traffic in highly technical ways, and that there is discussion and concern by leaders of foreign governments, most recently in Latin America, about the United States having access to their private correspondence. And, certainly, public sector privacy is also very important, and although I don't believe that this bill will touch on what the United States is doing, it heightens the awareness of all of us in terms of making sure that we have the right respect for privacy, the right insurance that our privacy is protected and, at the same time, an openness of those who critically need to know for specific purposes for the benefit of society, not for the benefit of—necessarily of individual corporations. We want to make sure that there is a right to privacy for individuals and for groups.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that this legislation is moving forward, that we have all-party agreement and support from the NDP to move this forward, and I look forward to the committee stage and to third reading. Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I'd like to put a few words on the record, as well, in support of this bill, Bill 211, brought forward by the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

Protecting personal information is something that I think we need to be far more aware about, and it was interesting to listen to the member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) talk about the concerns on her trip through Europe. And we, like many other people, I'm sure, have had some experience with this. We were actually buying school supplies two years ago, went into a fairly major chain store, used a credit card to pay for the purchases there. Everything seemed to be normal from our perspective, stood in a long line with many other people—it was a busy time—and went on to another store and went to use the card again to make a purchase and there was a hold on the card. And we thought, well, this is strange. We dealt with our purchases a different way and then went out and—to phone the credit card company to see what the reason for the hold were. We weren't out of our traditional area purchases in particular and thought it was strange.

* (10:50)

Apparently, one of the people working in that store had been under suspicion for scamming card information and that someone else in the line, whoever it was, was actually an undercover RCMP officer and had, in fact, after we left the store arrested that individual right there. And, of course, all the information that had been scammed during that day, which apparently was substantial, was put on hold as soon as the company was identified.

Now they must have had some tip, obviously, that this was going on in this store. But it was not, in the nature of a transaction, anything unusual and you really had to wonder how easy it had become with the technology that they had installed, and they had put some kind of a reader into the credit card machine so that they had actually picked up the information on a little chip and they could do whatever they wished with it later on, and I'm sure selling it was obviously the plan. So we had to, of course, destroy that card and get a new one and new PIN numbers and all that stuff had to follow, and I'm sure it happened to many other individuals as well.

But it does drive home how easily the technology—or how quickly the technology has evolved to take advantage of even the latest insecurity because it was a chip card and you had to enter your numbers and that was a fairly new thing at that point in time. And certainly it has brought home the fact that we have to be much more defensive, and the sleeves that were talked about by the member for Burrows, which are now starting to become common practice, I think probably should be far more common in the future, are probably a step in what we have to do. But the real process is to protect the information as many places as possible, and we do use our cards, whether they be AIR MILES cards or whatever, in a number of different situations, so it is pretty easy for the information to get spread around that you would like to protect and becomes—it's quite—has quite a substantial commercial value to some people.

And so—and I am told that some of the latest credit card scams have involved multiple countries and that your information gets spread around very quickly and sold on the Internet or whatever other way to people that know how to take advantage of that, and so we certainly need to do what we can here within the guidelines of the federal legislation that's already in place to try and protect our individuals. We do pass a lot of laws, rules and regulations, in

this province to help protect consumers and this is actually a common denominator for almost all consumers because virtually everyone has some form of credit card or debit card information that needs to be protected. So this is far wider reaching than many of the—much of the legislation we deal with.

So I certainly appreciate the chance to put a few words on record in support of this legislation that is brought forward by the member from Lac du Bonnet and originally championed by the member from Morris, and hope that we move forward very quickly on this. It's nice to see all parties working together to try and deal with an issue like this that has been somewhat delayed in getting progress—move forward, but I can see the pressing need for it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further debate on Bill 211?

House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 211, the personal information protection, identity theft prevention act.

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, can you canvass the House to see if it's the will of the House to move directly to private members' resolutions?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to proceed directly to private members' hour? *[Agreed]*

DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now call, as previously announced, the resolution No. 26 on your Order Paper today, Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives, standing in the name of the honourable member for Agassiz, who has two minutes remaining.

Res. 26—Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise again today and complete my comments on the resolution brought forward by the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

I—at risk of repeating myself a little bit because it's quite some time since we did debate this resolution and I'm not exactly sure what all I said the first time, but I am certainly supportive of putting

another outlet into Lake Manitoba. I know the resolution's addressing some other flood mitigation also, but the—for many years, we've been dodging the bullet on Lake Manitoba, as far as an outlet goes. An outlet was the next step in the process to follow up after the Portage Diversion was put in place and Lake of the Prairies and all the other flood mitigation structures that were put in that place—into place at that time. And it's long past due to put it in place, and it's going to be a lot longer past due by the time this government gets around to doing it. They've made an announcement—lots of fanfare—but they've made an announcement that's seven years down the road—actually nine years after the last flood—and they bring up various excuses of why they have to wait that long. I think there's probably very little intention from this government to actually put another outlet into Lake Manitoba in the near or further future.

The people around Lake Manitoba are living in the fear of another flood similar to 2011, and it's just simply not fair to leave them in that state, and I think the outlet has to be done sooner rather than later.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's a great privilege to speak in support of the resolution brought forward by my fellow MLA from the Interlake area, and I guess it's no secret that the Interlake area has probably been inundated with the floods for a number of years and continued to have those challenges.

I was pleased to hear that member opposite just indicated that he supports building alternative flood mechanism protections for the province of Manitoba such as a secondary outlet that we've been talking about in Lake Manitoba. So, it's a pleasure to hear his commentary that he agrees in it, but I guess one of the challenges we have is that the members opposite choosing to pass the budget as we can move forward with the additional dollars to make that reality in the Building Canada Fund so we could have some additional dollars, Mr. Speaker. So, definitely, I'm pleased to hear members opposite believe in the same 'algidy' as far as the hydrology—as far as the—of the water—surface water management.

I've been involved in conservation districts in a number of years, and definitely, without doubt, Mr. Speaker, the environment, the rainfall has totally changed over the years. And who knows what it's going to be like in the next number of years? What

we do need to address is the fact that we have to have safety nets and programs such as surface water management in place so we could prevent these additional overland flooding, similar to what we've developed in the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, my brother-in-law lives in High River, Alberta, and his wife, Kathy, experienced the flood that just happened in Alberta this year, and here's a true resemblance of the unpredictable Mother Nature. And what's really challenging, for the members opposite to work with us to put a positive message towards the flood protection in the province of Manitoba, as we all know that definitely the weather patterns have changed drastically.

And a prime example being in my area—RM of Mossey River, the village of Winnipegosis—here's a situation where we experienced, Mr. Speaker, a 5- to 6-inch rain in one hour. Those are the weather patterns we are being faced with. Based on a hundred-year flood mechanism, there is no way that infrastructure's ever been designed for a massive amount of rainfall that we had in that short period of time.

Now, we have producers that are affected—cattle producers. We've got grain producers that were affected by overland flooding, and I guess the question is here is that we need to put dollars into infrastructure to prevent a reoccurrence. And a prime example is—the MLA from the Interlake indicated—we need to build the control structure at Lake Manitoba to Lake Winnipeg, because truly it is costing the taxpayers of Manitoba, it's costing the taxpayers of Canada, so let's be realistic of investing our dollars into infrastructure that prevents a reoccurrence for the betterment of everybody affiliated in the tax program.

We all know what happened around the city of Winnipeg and the rationale why we decided to build what we did build to prevent the city of Winnipeg. The payoffs have been tremendously unforgettable as far as, Mr. Speaker—to the taxpayers by investing in the floodway around the province of Manitoba. And yet what we're hearing from members opposite, they're kind of criticizing our government that we're moving too slowly on it. Well, there are regulations that we have to abide by, and it's not only the Province of Manitoba's regulation, just theoretically, it's the federal government regulations that we need to abide by as we move forward.

*(11:00)

So I want to assure that, as Agriculture Minister, and I really realize the effects of the flood of Lake Manitoba to the cattle producers and the ranchers, what they've been faced with, but not only in that area; RM of Pipestone was another prime example. I just indicated, also, RM of Ethelbert, RM of Mossey River, the village of Winnipegosis.

There are situations that we in the province of Manitoba have to reinvestigate to see how can we prevent a reoccurrence. A prime example is that the province of Manitoba is now dealing with water, Mr. Speaker. We're dealing with water that comes from Saskatchewan; we're dealing with water that comes from the south, from the Dakotas and Montana areas.

Basically, to sum it up, the province of Manitoba is the bathtub of a watershed. What we've become is the drainage of the bathtub, and we've got additional taps coming in, into the watershed and that we are challenged with—the province of Manitoba is challenged with it. What we have to do is provide additional outlets out of the bathtub.

And that is why the MLA from Interlake brought this forward, but we as a government, in partnership with the federal government, need to have dollars, infrastructure dollars, so we can move forward, prevent a flooding of the reoccurrence that we had in 2011. When we talk about a \$1.2-billion flood that occurred in 2011 and the repercussions for the next three or four years, it just doesn't get corrected in a matter of one year. It takes years and years of the hardship that people have to be faced with when we talk about the flood that we experienced in 2011.

And the members opposite choose to play politics—that we're stalling. Well, theoretically, Mr. Speaker, it's not stalling. If we could do it next week—but we need the dollars. We need to have the bill passed. The 1 per cent PST dollars was part of the infrastructure dollars that we need to generate when we talk about partnership between the federal and provincial government. But more importantly, it's for the agriculture industry in the province of Manitoba. It's for the urban centres that have flooded on an occasional basis because of unpredictable rainfall.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank the opportunity to speak in support of this resolution. I thank the MLA from Interlake bringing forward the resolution because, truly, weather patterns have changed, surface water management needs to be addressed, and we need co-operation from members opposite to

move forward in a timely manner so we can address the surface water issues.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's a great privilege to speak on behalf of this resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding this resolution.

And in some of my comments on other bills in the last week or so, I have had a chance to talk a little bit about some of the flood protection works that have been done and those that have not been done under the—this government's regime.

In particular, I made reference to the work on the lower Assiniboine dikes, which was in place to—when the—with the turnover from PFRA, which is a branch of the federal government, Agriculture and Agri-Food, and between Water Stewardship at the time, to move forward to actually rebuild the dikes on the lower Assiniboine, which would've been absolutely valuable during the 2011 flood, and how one year was done and the commitment had been made for a five-year deal by the federal government.

And the Province had signed on to that, but their part of the role, after the election change in 2011, was to acquire the property that the work was to be done on because it is a difficult situation, mostly with old river lots and many of the old river lots actually give people title to the water's edge, which means that much of the dike was actually on private land. So either easements or purchases had to be made, and it required—and river lots, of course, being very long and narrow, required a number of individual property owners to be contacted before the work could be continued. And the Province had not done that, so the agreement fell by the wayside, and we did not get, other than the one section of dike from Portage down to Norquay, which did get rebuilt in the first year back when the—in the Filmon years, and no more was done.

And even today, when you go and tour those dikes, you can just see where the line is. You can see where the work was done properly because we have a history of really only working on the lower Assiniboine River dikes during flood years, and flood years are absolutely the worst time to work on a diking system. Everything's wet, getting compaction properly done is virtually impossible and often you're working with river silt which does not make a good dike. You actually need to find the clay

that often is below the river silt, and so excavations need to be done, and we just don't take the time to do them. And so we end up with a very poor dike system.

And if you go and look at that dike you'll—during a flood year, you'll see it leaking very badly in a number of places. And that was actually one of the major causes for concern during the 2011 flood, and actually the main reason why the military was called in to watch that portion of the dike because it was far too risky to have volunteers in that particular area. The dikes were very unstable. Had they broke—and there was substantial reason for concern about the safety of the workers along those dikes, and the military are far better equipped to deal with that than anyone else was.

And I actually had a little bit of personal experience because the military stayed in a community club that I was part of the board on, and that was their residence while they were there. And we were busy setting them up and they had some people out scouting the dikes. And they came back in, and, you know, I met with a few of them there to make sure that they had everything that they needed, showed them where—you know, where the waterworks and everything was, made sure they had power, all that stuff, so they could set up their camp there. And I said to them, well, what do you think the risk is? And he said, there's no way we're going to hold that dike. And yet, credit to them, they managed to hold that dike not only for a week or so, but for six more weeks, with water lapping at it every day. So I give them a lot of credit for the work that they did.

But the NDP's history really is not what they would like you to—have you believe. Certainly, the work originally done on the Red River Floodway was done by the Duff Roblin government. And, certainly, I'd like to credit their foresight in the future; not only did they do that, they did the Assiniboine River Diversion at Portage and they were also responsible for the Shellmouth Dam. And both those structures have had significant roles in water control in Manitoba, now and into the future.

But there have been opportunities to improve on them. Some work has been done on an emergency basis on the Assiniboine River Diversion at Portage. It needs to be stabilized, and there's been a little bit of work done to complete that, but it's still far from done. And the outlet is just there. The outlet actually doesn't function properly anymore. Water—usually spills more water over the fail-safe than actually goes

through the outlet, and that usually ends up flooding a couple of individuals—actually about six individuals—on a very regular basis, because no one has made the commitment to actually fix the outlet. And the outlet does need work very soon.

If you—the engineers that are responsible for it say it now has a 7-degree slope in the wrong direction, meaning that it's—someday in the not too distant future, something will happen to it and it will end up in Lake Manitoba and we will have no controls at the outlet whatsoever. And we'll just have a complete runout there and it will do, no doubt, fairly significant damage to that portion of the beachfront which has already taken quite a pounding in the last few years.

But I did want to touch briefly on, do we know what we're doing in the future here. And the studies that are under way are absolutely necessary, but the studies, I think, are focused more on the outlet side of things than actually on the—where the water is coming from. And that's something the Ag Minister briefly made a couple of comments on the major rainfall events, and they are certainly a factor, but there is a lot more to it than that.

When they calculate the one in 700, the one in 300 that they talk about, those are all based on models, and those models depend on the quality of the information that is put in them. And one of the big factors is the landscape itself, the amount of water that comes off in a—on a 2-inch rain. It depends an awful lot on not only the drainage but the crop that is there and the time of year on the crop. And to do that they have a factor they call drainage coefficients. And drainage coefficients have been used by engineers for a hundred years plus to calculate the amount of water that they have to deal with after a rainfall event in the system, and to get it right. And that's a big part of the model.

However, those numbers have not been recalculated for over 60 years. So we—here we are using numbers that are completely out of date, and they change with time because the nature of the cropping practices on the landscape has changed. In the 60 years—I don't think I have to tell anyone in the House here—the cropping practices have changed dramatically. If you go back 60 years ago there was far more livestock, a lot more pasture land, a lot more hay land. And the amount of water that runs off an acre of hay land is actually none. In fact, there's a deficit. And some crops—actually, based on your

average annual rainfall, some crops have an annual deficit, meaning that they need more than falls.

* (11:10)

And the biggest rainfall numbers that you get in Manitoba are 22 inches during the summer season, and that applies to part of the Red River Valley, really, more than anywhere else. And the driest part of the province is 14 inches annual rainfall in the southwest corner, and that applies to Saskatchewan and parts of Alberta, especially across the south. But the crop that is there is a big factor. So something like alfalfa, which uses way more water in a year than ever—it ever has a chance to—it actually mines water from the soil—has a deficit of negative 10 inches per year. So it actually could handle another 10 inches beyond what it gets. And there are other crops, for instance, common crops like wheat, which has positives, meaning it has a run-off factor every year on—even with average rainfall of plus four. So there's—as you can see, from minus 10 to plus four, that's quite a substantial difference in the amount of water.

And the fact that we haven't recalculated these numbers is a big factor. And a friend of mine is a hydrologist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Regina, and so we were talking about this one day, the fact that the work hadn't been done. He said, well, we're doing some of this work. We're doing it for Qu'Appelle Valley. And so how—I said to him, well, how much different does it seem to be from the old numbers? Well, he said, the new numbers are four times higher than the old numbers. So I think that whatever we're building for in the system we are not sizing appropriately. So we're talking about much more rainfall than—or much more run-off coming off an acre than we ever thought was—would be the case before.

And I thought, well, maybe, you know, maybe this is an anomaly in the system. So I had some contacts with the US Army Corps of Engineers. So I phoned them and said, you know, have you looked at this as well? And he said, well, as a matter of fact we have. We—and I was hoping they had done the Souris basin which, of course, is a big factor in Manitoba. They hadn't done that; they had actually done Devils Lake, which is right next to it. So I thought, well, this is pretty good. What are your numbers? And they said 3.86. So very consistent change, so I'm afraid that whatever we're building in the future here, unless we factor that in we will undersize and we will be dealing with one-in-700-year floods on a

one-in-50-year basis because we have not built to the—used the appropriate information.

And the numbers in the Red River Valley have also changed, not as dramatically as in western Canada and on the US side of the border, so I hope that whatever is done in the future here as part of the plans for development and protection against flooding that we actually factor in the right information.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to thank the energy from this side of the House of people wanting to speak on this PMR.

It gives me great honour to speak on this, and I just have to say that over the time I'm very proud to stand up on this side of the House and say how we worked hard during the 2011 flood, how the Premier (Mr. Selinger) was out and had many photo ops because he was actually working on the dikes and that, and as the election turned out, it showed that the opposition leader at that time was nowhere to be found. And I like to think that that says something about our party, is that if there's going to be some emergency somewhere in Manitoba, whether it's in the south, north, east, west, we will be there. And with flooding I think we've been there. I think you can see our past and see that, yes, we improved the—Duff's Ditch and, you know, I—Duff Roblin is a man that we all look up to. But I just want to put on record, during his first term he was also involved in a controversy that could have made the Duff's Ditch even wider at the time, but, basically, he threw away \$83 million to Churchill forest industry in the—that scheme with the Swiss financiers. So when we go back to that, we could have done it probably earlier and saved a lot of damage back then. But, you know, let's not just go back in history, let's look ahead.

And when I look at the opposition, they're looking and they do see light at the end of the tunnel, but that light at the end of the tunnel is the climate train coming down the tracks, and, you know, get out of the way because we—

An Honourable Member: The love train?

Mr. Pettersen: Well, part of the love train, but this is the climate train, and it's coming down the tracks and we want to prepare for the new climate in the future. We want to make darn sure that we're at flood preparations in Brandon. We want to make sure there's flood preparations in Portage la Prairie, in Winnipeg, and you know what? I don't know if I

heard this right or not, back in 1997, I think it was the mayor of Morris—I might need two glasses of water by the way—back in '90—where is it here, oh yes, the mayor of Emerson had only five sandbags to fend against the red sea that was coming towards his town. Days later, the army arrived and the town was evacuated for over a month. This is from the Free Press on April 13th, 1997. Because of our government, and I'm quoting here, because of our government's investments, times have changed in the Red River Valley, the mayor of Morris said. And that has been a big change since 1997 and I think we've looked at different areas of Manitoba and now, like I say, there's rumours going around. They are thinking about doing a movie. I'm hoping maybe the honourable member from Morris, he might be trying out—it's been, you know—as one of the actors in the movie and I don't know who he would play, maybe the mayor, I don't know.

But the thing is, about flood preparation, it takes times, it takes engineering and I really believe that we've been doing that and I guess we just have to look to west and our neighbours in Alberta and say, you know, the Manitoba model works and it works for everyone and we're not just going to sit on our hands and say, well, you know, the flood won't happen next year or whatever. We're saying, let's get prepared, let's, you know, let's do some preparation.

I honour the member from Portage la Prairie saying that, you know, looking at a different rain levels and looking at different scientific methods, and I think that's important. I think he's brought that to the table and eloquently stated that we've got to keep on top of this at all times because climate or times are changing and I think that's a quote from Bob Dylan, if there's any Bob Dylanites around: the times they are a-changing. And with these new times, we don't know what to expect. We don't know what the rain fall's going to be or the drought and, like I say, one need—[interjection] Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you, I appreciate the applause. I didn't know I said something important, but it just feels like I have all the attention of all the members in this wonderful House.

But anyways, getting more to some facts, the cost of the flood was \$1.2 billion and that's nothing to sneeze at and the thing is we have shown Manitobans if you live on the lakeshore of Lake Manitoba, we will have compensation there whether you're—you know, it's your year-round home or whether it's your cabin. We are there even though, like I say, I know the honourable members have said,

hey, we're going to load up our truck and we're going to move to—

Some Honourable Members: Saskatchewan.

Mr. Pettersen: No. Bemidji. They want to go to the States now because, you know, things look good down there with their lower tax rates, but when you go down there and you look at Minot, there's still people that haven't been compensated or will never be compensated for their floods down there and I think that's very important to realize that sometimes the grass looks greener out of our province in many ways, but sometimes you have to judge everything, you know, apples to apples, oranges to oranges, and when you do the judgment, we live in a great province with great opportunities, great riches and we are a province that cares about our people and we are going to make darn sure that we're prepared for any—

An Honourable Member: Contingency.

Mr. Pettersen: Contingency, thank you. I know an opposite member was talking about tornado alley, the member from St. Paul. I thought that was down—I thought tornado alley was like, you know, a—in the Wizard of Oz or something like this but no, we are the southern tip—or the northern tip, the tornado alley actually comes up to Winnipeg, I guess but, you know, fear mongering is not going to help the state. What we need is we need feet and shovels and troops on the floor getting prepared for floods, and I think the honourable member from Thompson has really took it as his passion. And knowing him very well, he's spoken eloquently about the different things that the government is doing in flood preparations, in roads, in bridges and fixing things so our infrastructure can be brought back to the way it was. And we're still—like I say, when you think the flood's over, what happens? Reston gets flooded. And, you know, things can happen, you know, any time, now. So, we have to be ready and we have to be there, as the government, to make sure that people know that there's somebody looking after them.

* (11:20)

And I feel honoured to be part of this government because I feel that we put people first—and we put all people, not just some people—and I thank you for that. I think it was—like Oprah says, you know, she says, there's one thing I know for sure—well, there is one thing I know for sure, is that we're going stand behind the people of Manitoba and we're going to be there—[*interjection*] Thank you. We are going to be there when there's a flood and

we're going to be there when there's other emergencies. And I'm just so respectful of my honourable members on our side of the House that work diligently to different solutions in the flooded areas, different solutions in the—economic of the province. And I can see that we're working as a team, trying to make things better for all areas. We're not just picking out our own—how can I say it—NDP constituencies, we're building bridges, roads right through the provinces, schools. I heard in Winkler a new school opened up and I was honoured, saying, hey, that's great; even though I'd like a new school up in Flin Flon, I think that's great that Winkler got a new school.

But having said that, I just want to sum up that it's been an honour to work, on our side of the government, through the flood. I had many hours with the honourable member from Thompson, talking about the contingency plans that he has for different areas of the flood and how ready we are. And that doesn't mean everything is 100 per cent foolproof; it means that we're going to be there, we're going to be ready. And, like I say, it's an honour to know that—one thing I know for sure is that our government and our ministers are going to be there for the people of Manitoba.

So, thanks, Mr. Speaker, for letting me put a few words on a—on record. And I think this bill is important because we want to make darn sure that we don't stop—we don't stop—being ready. And that light at the end of the tunnel is us coming down the train tracks with the flood prevention and everything else. So, thank you for letting me put a few words on record.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise and welcome the opportunity to trumpet our party's accomplishments when it comes to flood protection.

And I might make a small comment on the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen) talking about his train coming down the track. I would suggest that he's—he sounds a lot like the engineer on the Prairie Dog special, or the Prairie Dog Central. He's kind of a way behind in times, and his memory's failing a little. The factual wording that he put on, on what the flood's all cost, is factually incorrect. And when he talks about how they're all united on his side of the House, behind the people of Manitoba, they're a long way behind the people in Manitoba. And it's, basically, kind of a paradox, is that this government's living in.

The NDP member who proposes this resolution congratulating a government on their leadership and flood management is the same NDP member who asked frustrated, flooded-out farmers that the government would not help them if they kept protesting the government's treatment of them. That's the very member that put this forward, is trying to bully these people that are fighting for their very existence.

And it's the same member who told Lake Manitoba flood victims things could have been a lot worse, and, in fact, they could consider themselves lucky. There's still 2,000 of them out of their home, Mr. Speaker, 2,000 of them, two years later, that are out of their home, and this is from a party that says, we're standing behind—we're behind Manitobans.

Well, yes, you are behind them, but you are a long way behind them. You're not even close to them. And the member from Flin Flon is either misinformed or intentionally misinformed the House on how close they are behind Manitobans.

The NDP like to take credit for the floodway as if it had been their idea. And we're here to remind Manitobans that it was Duff Roblin, a strong Conservative member who fought a lot of opposition from people like the member from Flin Flon, from people like the member from the Interlake, to get the floodway built. And yes, it has been improved, but only because it was built once.

When we start talking about standing behind Manitobans—and for 13 years we've known that that Fairford outlet needed to be expanded and it wasn't expanded. We knew that the dikes on the Assiniboine River needed to be rebuilt. All Manitobans knew that and there was money put forward. There was studies that indicated that and we built them on frozen ground. This is what standing behind Manitobans are?

Well, I'm sorry. The members on this side of the House don't stand behind Manitobans like that. They have a vision and they move out 9 the Interlake and his idea of standing behind Manitobans, and if I can quote this, it says that he's frustrated with the filibuster in the House, that the Conservatives are filibustering and he's not able to do his job. And he says he and the Finance Minister, Jim Struthers, had planned to spend time meeting with owners of businesses in Okno road just outside of Arborg to discuss a number of issues, including the Province's announced commercial infrastructure fund and urban

infrastructure fund, but the filibuster forced them to cancel the meeting.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask that member of the Interlake if, in fact, that was a typo, that the name of the Finance Minister was a typo. And if in case it was a typo in the Interlake paper—and I'm sure that the member must've picked that up right away and would've let them know. But if that was a typo, then, perhaps the rest of his comments in this particular article are typos as well.

And he poses the question, is it fair to bump a project that has a thousand vehicles a day and has been waiting for some time to carry out political favour? What are we talking about, political favour? We're talking about building Manitoba. It's not political favour, but that's the attitude of the member for the Interlake. The member for the Interlake is—has misled a lot of people, but what he did do and effectively did in the Interlake was tell the people up there on the Okno road that they built in the wrong place, that their businesses shouldn't have been built there. And I'm suggesting at this point that they should've known that they had to ask him where they could build a business in Manitoba.

We should be talking about this flood protection and what they can be doing, but the NDP Premier (Mr. Selinger) repeatedly stated that the PST hike would be close to 300 million—each year would be used for flood protection. In the same breath—in the same breath—what he has said was, no, we're using this for hospitals and we're using this for splash pads and we're not using it for flood protection. What he did say to them, we're looking at a 10-year study on—in Lake Manitoba, that this study, then, would tell us what we need to do. Surely, we should know this by now. We have 2,000 people that are not in their homes and you claim to be standing behind them. You're standing in front of people. You're stopping them from doing what they should be doing, and you're not leading at all. There's no leadership whatsoever.

And just to give you another example of the lack of leadership, the NDP always want to take credit from other people's actions, and where they do have that opportunity to actually build new flood protection infrastructure the response has been delay, delay, delay. No better example of this can be found than in Brandon. Brandon is in desperate need of permanent, effective flood protection. In June 2006 the Doer government promised permanent one-in-100-year flood protection. Nothing came of

that. Five years later the flood of 2011 hit the city causing millions of dollars in damage and disrupting the lives and the commerce of the people there. This could've been avoided or at the very least mitigated had the NDP actually followed through with their promise for permanent flood protection for Brandon.

On July 2nd the Premier (Mr. Selinger) told this House in question period that the government had extended a one-hundred-year flood protection to the city of Winnipeg and would extend the same protection to Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin and Brandon, not to mention many other towns in the Assiniboine valley. After a few hours, after the plan—the plan that was unveiled by Brandon City Council provided for less than one-in-300-year protection. And the Brandon Sun reported that the NDP government was involved at every step of the planning process and refused to provide any money for the protection of Brandon beyond a \$20-million pledge after the 2011 flood.

* (11:30)

Now, I ask these members opposite here, the members that stand up and say they stand up for all Manitobans: Is this standing up for Manitobans? In the same day, in the very same day, you've missed by 400-year protection, is that standing up for Manitobans? Do you feel good about that or could it be worse? Could it be worse, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I've been somewhat lenient in listening to the comments by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), and he'd come pretty close to the line with respect to parliamentary accepted practices and language here, and I've cut him some slack on that, and I note now that he's turning the debate into personalized debate and using the word you and looking directly at other members of the Assembly specifically, and I'm going to caution him at this point and ask him to put his comments through the Chair, please, and ask him to follow the parliamentary practice and procedures that are long established in this Legislature.

The honourable member for Emerson, to continue with his comments.

Mr. Graydon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister for Aboriginal and Northern Affairs stated quite candidly on CJOB, two years was too long for the Lake St. Martin evacuees to be away from their homes, and yet this government has 'done'—done nothing to move them back home. There's nothing. Two years—two years—that they've

been out of their homes, and some of them have been in 21 homes in that period of time. Their children are in different schools, certainly not with their families; they're spread out all over Manitoba in Winnipeg and many other places.

So for two years they've been living in hotel rooms and staying with friends and family in the city of Winnipeg while this government dithers on getting them to permanent homes. It's nice of the minister to agree two years is too long to be away from home, but it doesn't help solve the housing crisis. That's not standing up for Manitobans, Mr. Speaker. That's not standing up close to and beside. If you're behind them and standing behind them, as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Pettersen) pointed out, then you're standing a long way behind them.

This resolution calls on the Legislative Assembly to support Manitoba's Building and Renewal Plan, that is, the PST increase to invest in critical flood protection, yet the messaging of this government has been incredibly murky with regard to what money will be used for. We've heard alternately that it will be used for roads, highways, bridges, community centres, hospitals, schools, splash pads, municipal infrastructure, flood mitigation; in effect, it will be used as a general revenue would be used to fund various government projects. Those are normal functions of a government, Mr. Speaker. Those are not dedicated to any one thing. The PST increase is just for the normal function, or is it to build up a slush fund? There's nothing special about the building and renewal program beyond the fact that it will pilfer more money out of the pockets of Manitobans. It's simply an NDP slush fund.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): It's a pleasure to stand and speak to this resolution brought forward by the—my honourable colleague, the member from the Interlake, and, certainly, set the record straight after what was unfortunately some partisan comments from the member from Emerson. Because, Mr. Speaker, for him to suggest that we haven't credited Duff Roblin for the floodway is, quite frankly, disappointing, because we as Manitobans recognize the importance of that infrastructure and we certainly have applauded the efforts of former Premier Duff Roblin and the impact that the floodway has had in protecting Manitobans. So for him to suggest

otherwise, that we're taking credit for it, I think is rather an unfortunate choice of words.

But what we did, of course, was expand on the floodway because we recognized, as my colleague from Flin Flon so appropriately said, times they are a-changing. Since 1997, the flood of the century, I believe we've had five episodes of equal or greater magnitude which we have mitigated largely because of our investment in the infrastructure that we have today, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the expansion of the floodway, which we did do. The members don't seem to want to give us credit for expanding the floodway to one-in-700 protection, but that is what we have done. And the expansion of infrastructure in the Red River Valley where we had over 10,000 claims in 1997, and I think we've had one since because of an unfortunate incident where some of that infrastructure was compromised. But to go from 10,000 claims to one really speaks volumes to the impact that our investment has had. We know that we have issues of flooding in this province.

I recall researching a paper in my history classes for the university talking about First Nations and the impact of the smallpox epidemic in the 1820s, and I came across an entry from a journal in 1826 where the gentleman charged with the functions of a post in the Red River Valley was paddling over his post trying to determine where it was located by virtue of the treetops that were sticking out of the water. And he referenced the only thing that he could see, the only land he could see for miles, he pointed to the northwest of his post and identifies this land mass. And I asked the archivist, what's this land mass, I'm not familiar with this name. He was talking about Stony Mountain. The entire area of what is now Winnipeg was under water in that 1826 flood. We have a history of flooding, and though nature reminds us we might be charge, we're not in control. And we are doing our best to control what nature deals with us every year.

And they're talking about the Brandon flood. I do recall going to Brandon in the spring of 2011, and the local paper was saying, why are we stacking these super bags, these 4-foot super bags, three high? This is overkill. We don't need this. They're trying to scare us. And I recall being in Brandon a couple weeks later when the same paper was saying, you didn't do enough—you didn't do enough because there was only a foot of freeboard on that side of the dikes that were put in place as a temporary measure. And, of course, we'd been working with the City of Brandon and taking the advice from the City of

Brandon to make sure that we're protecting the city of Brandon.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a history of floods. And, you know, the member from Flin Flon, he cited Bob Dylan and talked about times they are a-changing. Well, I'm a little bit less advanced in years, perhaps, is the way that I could say it, and I can cite one of my favourite bands, the Talking Heads, talking about take me to the river. But we don't have to take you to the river; the river often comes to us. And we have to find ways to prevent and mitigate flood damage when that happens.

And, of course, the lakes, Mr. Speaker, living along Lake Winnipeg, I know the power of that lake. I remember as a young man growing up in Gimli that there was a developer advertising 300-foot-deep lakefront lots. And after one storm, he had to change it to advertise 240-foot-deep lakefront lots, because that can be a very violent, violent lake when the winds pick up from the north.

And we've been working with communities to protect Lake Winnipeg. I remember the flood in 1975 where we had—I was 10 years or, I guess, 11 years old at the time, and I was out trying to pitch sandbags that were—weighed half as much as me, which was hard to believe at that time, but now those super bags weigh the same, but that's another 'stissue'—another story. But I was out there pitching sandbags as a young boy trying to help protect my community, and we'd seen dikes built to protect the community in 1975. And who built that? That would be the Schreyer government that invested in that infrastructure after that flood in the late '70s. So we invested in infrastructure—or, pardon me, the Pawley government would have been the government that invested in those dikes.

And we invested in infrastructure then and we reinvested in 2005 when there were very serious concerns in Gimli about the height of the lake and the impact that north winds could have. And we spent about \$15 million preparing dikes around the south basin. And I know people weren't entirely happy about that, Mr. Speaker, because you live by the lake and you want to see the lake. And people didn't realize how much they would see that lake if they decided to change the dikes, as some unfortunately did, and water came in when we had that weather bomb in 2011.

So yes, we have a history of flooding, and, as I said, we are in charge but we're not in control. Mother Nature doesn't afford us that luxury of being

in control. But we can be in charge of what we do to prevent flooding, and we have been very successful in our efforts to do so. And I know that people look at some of the efforts that we've made in ice jam mitigation, Mr. Speaker, because we've been doing something that no other jurisdiction's been doing with the Bobcats that are out scoring the ice before we send out the big Amphibexes to cut and break up the ice and how we're able to do more and more each year, and how those Amphibexes are impacting the—and mitigating the possibility of ice jams on the Red River.

And I know how important it was when one of the Amphibexes went to Riverton and broke up the Icelandic River where we have been building dikes, as well. I know how important it was when we sent the Amphibex up to The Pas and the Amphibex was able to break up ice and allow the water to drop, I believe, about 8 feet in a very short time frame. And it was very touch and go in The Pas when we had done that. And we know that we have invested about a million dollars in dikes to protect The Pas during that particular flood episode. And unfortunately under the disaster financial assistance program at the time, the federal government would have reimbursed us a portion of that dike had we taken it down again. That didn't make any sense.

* (11:40)

Now, of course, we've changed that. The disaster financial assistance program has changed, where they are recognizing the need to put in permanent structures because we get flooded. We've been flooded time and time again, and, of course, the work that's been done in the Red River Valley and in expanding the floodway, people actually don't realize that we've been at various stages of flood levels over the past few episodes of floods because people aren't being impacted in certain areas.

But we know there's more work to do, and part of that work includes the channel that's been built from Lake St. Martin. And part of that work includes a quarter of a billion dollar investment in infrastructure to make sure that doesn't happen again.

So, consider what happened in 2011, where we had to pay over a billion dollars in mitigation and compensation. Now, if we don't go forward and invest in flood infrastructure, who's to say that a one-in-350-year flood won't happen again in the next 10 years? Who's to say that that won't happen? Because in 1997 people said that was a one-in-a-hundred-year

flood, the flood of the century, and we've had four or five episodes of similar or greater magnitude since. Who's to say the one-in-350-year flood will not happen again in the next decade?

So we need to invest in that infrastructure and we're moving forward to invest in that infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, because that is what we do. We stand up for Manitobans; we work with Manitobans, and we work with local government; we work with local communities, and I have to give them tremendous credit for the work that they have done to protect and ensure the safety of Manitobans. And I know that the flood of 2011, as catastrophic as it was, it certainly could have—it could have been even more devastating. And I really feel for the individuals who lost property and lost businesses as a result of that flood. But it was a one-in-350-year flood, and people have to understand that this was one of incredible scope and scale that we haven't dealt with in our time, since Manitoba's been a province.

So, we'll continue to work with local authorities to address issues around flooding. We'll continue to work with local communities that have concerns around flooding, and that is what we do best. And, again, I have to say, as someone from the Interlake area where we've seen significant floods from storm surges from north winds, significant work has been done along the shores of the south basin of Lake Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. As somebody who represents a constituency that is subject to ice jams and the impact of ice jams, and it was really devastating to see what happened on Breezy Point when the ice jams literally lifted houses off of their foundations and moved them and moved cars several feet away from where they had been parked, and the devastation that that caused, and we did the right thing because we ended up offering compensation to buy out those individuals and move them to more appropriate lands. And now that area is returning to its natural state.

Decisions that are made in the past sometimes impact the impact of the floods, Mr. Speaker, and we have to deal with that and we'll continue to deal with that and make our communities safer.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to put a few words on the record with regard to this resolution. You know, I think it's always a good idea to have the opportunity to talk about issues that are affecting your municipalities or the communities and the people that you represent.

It's unfortunate this government decides to pat itself on the back with platitudes and share lofty promises that we know, over and over again, Mr. Speaker, are not fulfilled. We know, for example, that the Shellmouth Dam in the northern part of my constituency have been fighting diligently to get their voices heard over several years, and we know that they have been let down by this government.

You know, they brought—the government brought in the Shellmouth Dam act, compensation act, but, you know, what happens is emails that the stakeholders send—not only the stakeholder, but the municipalities representing these stakeholders, actually don't get responded to. They were—and then when they are asked again for comment, they are said, oh, I'm sorry. Your email must have went into—into junk mail, or spam. You know, that's not acceptable.

It doesn't say a lot about this government's interest or concern with regard to those ratepayers and those municipalities that are trying to work in the best interests of those ratepayers. And we know that this government has, you know, promised many things and have delivered very little with regard to these individuals along the Shellmouth Dam area and the Assiniboine valley.

We did a caucus tour a year and a half ago, meeting with a lot of the ratepayers and stakeholders along the Assiniboine River. We took in several constituents' concerns and visited several sites, and, you know, this was, you know, something that the landowners appreciated. We know that they made several requests to the minister responsible for EMO and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and were told that a meeting wasn't possible. I know that the EMO minister had actually indicated to his staff, which was shared with constituents, that the minister had absolutely no interest in meeting with the Shellmouth Dam or the Assiniboine valley producers, you know, so this is not a government that really respects how these people are dealing with flood issues, and we know that when the government brings in an act and then fails to actually implement the compensation for 2011 and 2012, speaks volumes.

And we know that, you know, that the municipalities have a vested interest in ensuring that their ratepayers continue to provide, you know, provide revenue for their families, because they do—it's based on assessment. If the producer can't produce on land, then it puts into question anybody receiving revenues or their share of supports to

continue making healthy communities and healthy municipalities. So, you know, I guess my question with regard to the Shellmouth Dam is, you know, we know that the dam itself is not working at its full potential. There's issues with regard to that dam.

We know that the Minnedosa Dam in Minnedosa is not working to its full potential because there are issues with regard to the structure. We know that, in discussions with the mayor and council there, that there's been little to no negotiations at this point with regard to addressing the structure issues. And we know that it causes—when you don't have a dam that is reliable or has potential issues with structure that it's not going to be able to give assurances to the people that are managing that dam or the people upstream or downstream from that dam that if they had to run it at full capacity that it would be able to do what it was intended to do.

And so you see communities like Rapid City dealing with, you know, sludge-type issues in their water source. That water in Rapid City is actually what they need to use for fire protection, and so we know that when one structure is not working at full capacity, it has a detrimental effect on communities upstream and downstream.

Mr. Speaker, so when this government makes an announcement that the PST increase is going to be used to address, you know, flood issues, we pay close attention, and so do the municipalities that have a vested interest in how those PST dollars would be used to actually support the initiatives that they have in their backyard.

So when we hear from the Town of Minnedosa and we hear from the municipalities in around the Shellmouth area and Russell, the RM of Russell and St-Lazare, we don't see this government actually having the discussions that are necessary to ensure that the PST dollars are going towards flood protection. We need to ensure that those discussions occur because we have seen with the former minister of Water Stewardship, how she negotiated a contract with Saskatchewan to ensure that Manitobans would compensate the losses on behalf of Saskatchewan but did nothing to support the Manitobans living on and accessing the Assiniboine River on the other side. There didn't appear to be much public consultation, if any, and very few environmental assessments.

And we know that the environment and assessments that are required along these flooded rivers, Mr. Speaker, is very worrisome. We know that this is going to affect not only the banks with

erosion but also the fishery industry and the wildlife. So there are so many challenges that this government has failed to lay out in an organized and transparent process of how they actually are going to be addressing these concerns.

* (11:50)

You know, and I guess we can talk to track record. And the NDP, in 2006, promised permanent one-in-100-year protection to Brandon and broke that promise. And then the Premier (Mr. Selinger) announces a one-in-700-year flood protection for Brandon, but that seemed to be in contradiction to what the Brandon community itself had indicated was a one-in-300-year protection.

So we know that this government makes announcements but fails to involve the municipalities in the planning process. And one key point is that, you know, the government refused to provide any more money for the protection of Brandon beyond \$20 million pledged in 2011 flood. So, Mr. Speaker, they made an announcement again, and—but based it on a former announcement made by this government, which is not uncommon for this government.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Swan River (Mr. Kostyshyn) talked about being realistic and looking at ways for governments to prevent a reoccurrence. Well, I've just laid out a number of communities who have flood-protection infrastructure who have received little to no comment from this government to support in a—and ensuring that there's no reoccurrence in flooding.

And when we visited communities in the Interlake just last year, Mr. Speaker, one of the municipalities talked about the concern about assessment and how moving landowners and moving residents to other areas of their municipality, or into another municipality, is definitely going to affect assessment. So we know that there are challenges across the board, across the province, and we know that this government is starved for dollars. They're addicted to spending and aren't keen on providing a transparent or, you know, a visible way of how they're planning to spend those dollars.

What we hear from municipalities in the Interlake was that they called this government the study-and-stall government, Mr. Speaker. And I thought that was rather interesting. You know, study and stall pretty much sums it up. And, you know, it's unfortunate that, you know, that their representative for the Interlake indicated during, you know, the height of the concerns and the debate with regard to flooding, said that it could have been worse.

Well, in closing, I can say that it has and will continue to get worse—

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I'm sorry that we didn't hear more comments from the members opposite on this resolution. I can see why they wouldn't want to speak to their record on this issue, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, it's already been laid out well by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) and the member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat) about some of the concerns we've had in terms of how the government has dealt with issues around flooding and the fact that they haven't taken it as seriously as we would have liked in many situations.

Some of the comments from the member for the Interlake—and we know they've got a great public play already in the media in terms of suggesting that those who are suffering from the flood of 2011, in some ways, should have been grateful that it wasn't worse. And we know that that's a difficult thing for anybody to have to hear at a time where they're going through a very difficult time in their life. And anybody who's going through the kind of flooding that we saw demonstrated in 2011, of course, should have nothing but empathy and should have nothing but support—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The one-hour allocation for the private members' hour discussion has expired.

The hour being 12 noon, this House is recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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