

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, August 15, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

PETITIONS

Provincial Road 520 Renewal

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The rural municipalities of Lac du Bonnet and Alexander are experiencing record growth due especially to an increasing number of Manitobans retiring in cottage country.

(2) The population in the RM of Lac du Bonnet grows exponentially in the summer months due to increased cottage use.

(3) Due to population growth, Provincial Road 520 experiences heavy traffic, especially during the summer months.

(4) PR 520 connects cottage country to the Pinawa Hospital and as such is frequently used by emergency medical services to transport patients.

(5) PR 520 is in such poor condition that there are serious concerns about its safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to recognize the serious safety concerns of Provincial Road 520 and to address its poor condition by prioritizing its renewal.

The petition is signed by J. Barbour, N. Barbour, R. Thompson and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Further petitions?

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

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

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition's signed by J. Siemens, K. Deneka and J. Hem and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

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

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition's submitted on behalf of L. Yorke, S. Monro, M. Wobick and many other fine Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will hurt—that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this petition is signed by A. Veerandaal, T. Veerandaal, G. Wildfang and many more fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of

their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And this is signed by V. Martens, J. Toews, S. Froese and many others.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This petition is signed by J. Steves, M. Willy, T. Stewart and many other fine Manitobans.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

* (13:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by A. Barbosa, R. Ramirez, L. de Sihea and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed, Mr. Speaker, by K. Anderson, L. Yamzon, H. Hyndman and many, many others.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And this is the reason for this petition:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

Preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of the lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of the eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This petition is signed by C. Dimen, W. Dimen, A. Santos and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions?

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September of 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

And this petition is signed by L. Spitzke, S. Hergesheimer, R. Vanderdorpe and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition

of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Signed by S. Axelrod, H. Axelrod, K. Goossen and many other fine Manitobans.

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

* (13:50)

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been

diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

This is signed by T. Brakel, G. Lesoor, M. Beltens and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

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

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by D. Allard, C. Lord, A. Klassen and many more fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-aged services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And this petition is signed by C. Jordon, M. Hunt, V. Simons and many, many others.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

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

(2) Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without legally required referendum.

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

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this petition is signed by V. Smoley, T. Friesen, B. Ostberg and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on with committee reports. No committee reports, we'll move to—

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour and I—and the privilege of tabling the 62nd Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board annual report, for the year ended March 31st, 2013, and the quarterly report for the three months ended June 30th, 2013. I commit the reports to the House for their reading, their edification and their comprehension.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Seeing none—

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Charlene Roziere and Patrick McMahon, who are the guests of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers). On behalf of honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PST Increase

Impact on Low-Income Manitobans

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has forgotten who they were elected to serve. Now it is all about them, all of the time, and taking the vote tax is a perfect example of this.

People struggling to make ends meet are the ones that are going to be hurt most by the PST hike.

It's not the rich that are going to hurt the most; it's the poor that it's going to hurt the most.

So I'd like to ask this Premier (Mr. Selinger) to tell them: Why has he turned his back on low-income Manitobans?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, members opposite voted against Budget 2013, which had several measures that were designed to help low-income Manitobans, whether it be in terms of direct support or tax relief.

I'm surprised the member for Charleswood would even mention the—public financing, Mr. Speaker. The member for Charleswood took \$11,531 in public financing. Maybe if she repaid that money, that money could be directed to the poor people that she claims to help.

Referendum Request

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, he seems to forget that it's his party that's taking an extra million dollars out of the pockets of Manitobans to pay themselves more. How shameful.

Mr. Speaker, Lauri St. Germain is here in the gallery today. She's fighting for the little guy and gal. She's leading the charge to hand out Stop the PST signs. In fact, there's 400 of them out there, and those numbers are growing. She's also part of a Facebook group of over 1,800 people who say, no PST hike—tell the Manitoba NDP you still believe in democracy. She's livid with this government who took away her right to vote in a referendum.

So I would like this Premier to tell Lauri, because she wants to know: Why did he steal her vote?

Mr. Struthers: And maybe the member for Charleswood needs to be reminded that it was her financial officer of her Conservative Party that bragged about the million dollars that they were rebated after the last election. Maybe she would like to stand up and justify why her leader collected \$16,107 in the last election in public financing. *[interjection]* Yes, I know. I realize they're touchy about that because they are very hypocritical and self-righteous about it.

But this side of the government did undertake a 1-cent-on-the-dollar increase to the PST. We have been very clear that that money is going to go directly into schools and roads and bridges and

hospitals. We've guaranteed that through legislation in Bill 20 and—

* (14:00)

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

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, this government is more interested in taking that PST money for their slush fund. They have forgotten about the little guy in Manitoba.

Lauri feels that her opinion should matter to this NDP government. She feels robbed of her democratic right to have a say about the PST hike and how it is going to hurt the little guy and gal. She feels that this NDP government has gone hog-wild on a stolen credit card and it's her credit card.

So on behalf of Lauri and all the little guys and gals out there that are fighting: Will this Premier show the respect to them and do the right thing, withdraw Bill 20 or at least call a referendum?

Mr. Struthers: As a matter of fact, I've written a letter to the Auditor General asking the Auditor General to confirm that every single nickel that we raise through the 1 cent on the dollar is going to go directly into schools and hospitals and roads and bridges, every single dollar.

It is very clear that our approach to governing is in stark contrast to the \$550 million worth of cuts the members opposite have said they would do, and our protection of health services in Manitoba is, again, in stark contrast to the acceptance of a two-tier, public, for-profit, American-style health-care system that her leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), is expounding. I'll take our approach any day.

Tax Increases

Impact on Low-Income Manitobans

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't think the vote tax would be one of the necessities of government.

Raising taxes, including the PST, has left those with limited and fixed incomes with less disposable income to spend on their basic needs. This group has little choice but to go without some of the necessities of life. This is the position that our—that this government has put them in.

How is it that this government feels its spending priorities, like the vote tax, are a higher priority than

allowing someone to provide the basic necessities of life for themselves?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely amazing that the member for Portage, who accepted \$8,651 in public financing after the last election, would get up and complain about it now.

This government, not members opposite when they had their chance, but this government guarantees for the people that he pretends to represent, Mr. Speaker, has guaranteed in law the lowest hydro—the lowest bundle of hydro rates, Autopac rates and home heating rates in the country. That's independently qualified by Deloitte and Touche. We come out No. 1 with that budget right across Canada.

Mr. Wishart: I think the Finance Minister will find that my campaign cost less than his.

Increasing taxes is bad enough. Increased taxes will also—has also fuelled increased inflation. Manitoba's inflation rate recently topped the country's at 2.7 per cent. This fact erodes the purchasing power of Manitobans, leaving those with limited incomes further behind.

How can this government reasonably promote a policy of taxation that hurts those that can least afford it?

Mr. Struthers: It's also pretty amazing that the member for Portage, whose leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), when he was in Cabinet with Gary Filmon, cut back—actually intercepted—the National Child Benefit from single mothers in this province. He stepped in and he took that money right out of their wallets, and now he gets up and he feigns interest for poor people in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you what we're not going to do. We're not going to take the advice of the member for Fort Whyte and cut a half a billion dollars' worth of funds out of health care and education and other top priorities of Manitobans. They can put that policy forward if they like. That's not us, though.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, this government's policies are failing Manitobans. The minister can tout programming aimed at the poor, but the fact is the impact of this government's taxation on the poor is completely offsetting the poverty program of this government.

Will the minister admit that the policies put in place by this government are hurting those that need the help most?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's just take an example of one of those policies. This side of the House, this NDP government, has put in place an opportunity for Manitoba to access free cancer drugs. That's not hurting Manitoba families. That's a benefit to Manitoba families. Moving cancer treatments closer to rural communities, closer to people who need them, that's not hurting Manitoba families.

This side of the House will stand with Manitoba families any day and will protect them from the regressive policies of members opposite day after day.

Witness Protection Program Data High-Security Designation

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, this government continues to fail vulnerable Manitobans, except, perhaps, the Minister of Finance because we have so many government lawyers trying to protect him.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General recently completed an audit on information technology security in management. In her report, she expressed concern that very little data was actually in the high-security zone.

Mr. Speaker, the witness protection program creates very sensitive data, data that must be secure and protected.

Can the Minister of Justice (Mr. Swan) tell this House today why this highly sensitive data is not in the high-security zone?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, we had a chance to discuss this issue during the Public Accounts Committee last week, and as part of her recommendation—there was an overall recommendation from the Auditor General and it called for a strategic plan whereby you would classify within various categories the level of security that was applied to certain programs. Not only did we accept that recommendation, but we said we would also move on that recommendation.

And I'm very pleased that I was the minister that introduced the witness protection program.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. data—Mr. Speaker, data from the witness protectors—protection program should be in

the high-security zone. If it were to fall in the wrong hands, people's lives would indeed be at risk.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister of Justice assure those who are in the witness protection program that their identities are protected if their data is not in the high-security zone?

Mr. Chomiak: As was recounted in the two hours before Public Accounts Committee and the previous three hours that had been spent in Public Accounts Committee on this particular matter when the questions were asked by members opposite, the member also heard from the deputy minister that, in fact, there had been no instance of any compromise of the system.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General is concerned that, and I quote, highly sensitive information not placed in the high-security zone may be at risk of unauthorized access. End quote. She identifies the witness protection information as such highly sensitive information.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Justice assure this House that witness protection information is secure and that there has been no unauthorized access?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, first off, during the lean, mean, Tory years there was no witness protection program. People were on their own. We had to bring in an act to have a witness protection program.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, not only did the deputy minister indicate there had been no compromise of the system, we said he would accept all the Auditor General's recommendations, and they were dealing with categorizations of risk, and there'd been no compromise of the system.

As usual, the members are repeating old questions. They've run out of material.

Clean Environment Commission Report Government Involvement

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): As heard yesterday, individual Manitobans have been very negatively impacted, if not bullied, by the NDP's dictate to force Bipole III the extra 500 kilometres long and winding road down the west side of wrapping—and wrapping around south Winnipeg.

The June Bipole III environment report indicated that many shortcomings in the commission's ability to make reliable decisions, yet the go-ahead got—

still got the go-ahead—was cleared for an environmental licence.

* (14:10)

This contradiction raises the obvious question: Why did the minister or the Premier (Mr. Selinger) interfere with the CEC process by giving them an ultimatum to clear the project regardless of the hearing's findings?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, there was—[interjection] Well, the hearings started, actually, on land-use planning in that area in 1997 when the mean, lean Tories were in power. The actual hearings on this matter commenced in 2008. In fact, the Clean Environment Commission actually indicated in the report that there was consultation fatigue because of so much consultation with respect to the hearing process, and, in fact, that was an independent process that made independent recommendations, and the recommendations came back with the strictest terms ever before put on any kind of project in Manitoba history.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why members opposite are so against hydro transmission, because there's all kinds of people around this province that want hydro; they want expanded hydro.

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact, the report, the Clean Environment Commission report, states that the Clean Environment Commission had to rely on Hydro's environmental impact statement, preceded by a scoping document from which the CEC noted that items had been left out, like only being allowed to consider the west-side route. They found the impact statement to be, quote—and I quote: Not well done, fraught with problems and not well written. Manitobans assume Hydro has the expertise to write a sound report.

So, Mr. Speaker, has the Premier directed Bipole III to be built down the west side only? Why did he or his minister direct Hydro to leave out pertinent analysis of data from their environmental impact statement, leaving a substandard document, to get the results they wanted?

Mr. Chomiak: First off, the CEC is an independent body that made a recommendation to give the licence, Mr. Speaker, and that was reviewed.

It's ironic, on the 10th anniversary of the greatest blackout in North American history, the line in Manitoba that could provide security—because there

was a breakdown in 1997—a line that could provide security, and members opposite are against that on the anniversary, the 10th year, of the greatest blackout in history, and they're against the transmission line for reliability.

Mr. Speaker, it says why they are the party of no, the party of no go, the party of stop hydro, the party that goes back to coal. We want to build that transmission for reliability and help all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Arthur-Virden, with a final supplementary.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Route Endangered Species Impact

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): What Manitobans know is they have a no-democratic party leading this province, Mr. Speaker.

As an—and as an example of not listening to Manitobans, the woodland caribou are a threatened species in Manitoba, yet it appears they have never been threatened—more threatened than under the watch of this government. In their report on the bipole west route, the CEC expressed concerns that the cleared right-of-way would permit predators like wolves and non-native species like white-tailed deer to travel further north and put pressure on the woodland caribou. So, Mr. Speaker, the caribou are dwindling in Manitoba and the NDP wants to build a massive new hydro line straight through their habitat.

Can the minister explain why the NDP choose to further endanger an already endangered species?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Well, Mr. Speaker, I—it's pretty strange for a Conservative member to be asking anything about the environment.

But I might add that there's very strict conditions that have been put into 62 recommendations, including monthly monitoring, camera monitoring, regular updates, website updates, unprecedented measures that have been put in place by the department to ensure that these matters are dealt with.

The bottom line is really why members opposite cancelled Conawapa, cancelled Limestone, are against hydro development when people like—say—people say, like in the Edmonton Journal yesterday, Manitoba Hydro produces some of the cheapest and most environmentally friendly power on the planet.

And who wrote that? One Steven Fletcher. Maybe I'll repeat that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

I'm happy to see that members are in good spirits today, considering that it's Thursday. But I would really appreciate if you could just keep the volume down a little bit so I can hear both the questions and the answers, please.

The honourable member for La Verendrye has the floor.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Prior to the 2011 election, this NDP government committed to eliminating wait-lists for children with autism trying to access ABA services. We know that this was just another broken promise.

The minister has been deflecting our questions by talking about increases in autism outreach services. The minister knows that these supports do not include ABA services.

Does the minister agree with her colleagues that reading petitions supporting Manitobans with autism is a waste of time?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the minister—the member for La Verendrye, who represents a rural constituency, would get up to ask a question to slam people who are providing 'sert'—services to families with autism in rural Manitoba.

Now, maybe—maybe—it's because those people providing services are civil servants, and we know that the plan on the opposite side is to fire those people who provide services that Manitobans count on. Maybe that's why he's against that.

Those services are important to the families who depend on them. We fund those services. We fund ABA. We are working with families and clinicians to provide better service to families who have an autism diagnosis, and we'll continue to—

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

Mr. Smook: Children with autism are not getting the supports they need.

The member from St. Norbert suggests that by reading petitions, and I quote, using those folks to gain political ground.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister agree with the member from St. Norbert, or will she ask him to apologize to the families of—with children with autism?

Ms. Howard: I think what is important for everybody in this House to recognize is that when we stand up and ask for something, those words have power. And when you stand up and ask for an increase in resources at the same time as your leader is advocating half a billion dollars in cuts, you have to ask some tough questions in your caucus.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for La Verendrye, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Smook: Mr. Speaker, this was promised before the last election.

We know that the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) has no respect for families. We know the member from the Interlake lacks the same respect. Several weeks ago he yelled across the floor that our petitions were a waste of time.

Will the minister do the right thing and encourage the members from St. Norbert and Interlake to devote their portion of the vote tax to families that are trying to access ABA treatments?

Ms. Howard: What I will encourage the members opposite to do when they go back and have their caucus meeting is ask themselves how standing up for a cut in the services to families who have autistic children, how that would help those families. What I would challenge them to do is go back and ask themselves how cutting \$300,000 out of those programs, the equivalent of four fewer children being able to be in the ABA program next year, I challenge them to ask themselves how that helps those families.

Bill 33—Municipal Amalgamation Request to Withdraw

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, August 6th, the Minister of Local Government woke up from his deep slumber in the House and said to the member from Midland, and I quote: What change do you and members of the opposition want to see made to Bill 33?

Really? Now the Minister of Local Government wants to listen to us? Wake up, pull the bill and start listening to municipalities.

* (14:20)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Well, we've consulted a lot with AMM and municipalities throughout the province of Manitoba, and members opposite have to realize, you know, taking a stance on not modernizing municipalities truly is hurting those municipalities. Lack of funding, lack of money for water projects, sewage treatment projects, recreation projects, that's exactly what they're doing by blocking and continuing trying to be opponents to modernizing municipalities.

The fact of the matter is a lot of these municipalities cannot afford on their own to provide funding for many of these truly important infrastructure projects that are going to develop rural Manitoba to its potential.

Mr. Ewasko: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, is those municipalities are balancing their books.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the minister is only used to working one to two months a year, and I'm glad he is now open to hearing suggestions from us, reeves, mayors and hundreds of Manitoba citizens who will be impacted by the forced amalgamation.

Now the minister of government wants to listen. Wake up, listen to municipalities and pull the bill.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, my comments to the opposition—we're looking for ideas, for suggestions. I was trying to give them at least an opportunity to try to improve a good bill and make it even better.

And so, you know, but the fact of the matter is they don't have one single idea on anything. It's regrettable. They want to stop hydro projects. They don't want new hospitals or personal care homes. They don't care about daycare centres. And why do I say that? Because they voted against the budget, 2013 budget, which had all components related to the items I just mentioned. They don't have one good idea amongst the whole works.

RM of Victoria Beach Government Meeting Request

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, here's the one good idea: Pull the bill. Start again.

The minister stated in the House that he had the opportunity to meet with mayors and reeves of municipalities in regards to Bill 33. Victoria Beach is one of the municipalities that are still waiting for that meeting.

Mr. Speaker, single question: What day is the Minister for Local Government going to be meeting with Victoria Beach?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Mr. Speaker, it was just a matter of weeks ago that I met with municipalities and went around the province consulting with them, and recently we had meetings also with AMM executives. We continually do that and continue to have conversations with them.

In fact, this bill that—Bill 33, on amalgamations, has enough flexibility built into this particular bill that will address any unique circumstances, and yet we haven't heard municipalities necessarily asking for extension of time or any other items that members opposite seem to raise any time they wanted to say something with regard to progress on amalgamations.

But the factor of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the horse-and-buggy party that continually raises these issues—municipalities have not changed their borders for decades, and depopulation continues to happen. And the fact of the matter is they are not able to build new water treatment—

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

Public Trustee Case Concern

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, twice this week the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said here that the Public Trustee must act in the best interests of the individuals for whom the trustee is responsible.

August the 7th, eight days ago at the committee meeting on The Public Guardian and Trustee Act, Kerry Anderson spoke about his aunt, Dorothy Loewen. He said, the trustee walked into my aunt's house early January 2012, told her she was mentally incapacitated and was now a ward of the trustee. Since then, both Dr. Campbell, a renowned geriatric psychiatrist, and Dr. Hayward have said she is actually not mentally incapacitated.

I ask the Premier: How is it in the best interests of a person who is mentally competent to have her life taken over by the Public Trustee?

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It is certainly helpful to have bills move into committee so Manitobans can come and indicate their views, and it's a very, very good thing, and I'd like to see a lot of other bills move on to committee to hear from Manitobans. I'm grateful to individuals who I know are up in the gallery who came and presented thoughtful presentations at committee.

I believe that the Leader of the Liberal Party should be aware that the Public Trustee does not designate itself to become the committee. There are procedures under The Mental Health Act which are not contained within the Public Trustee's office.

I would point out that anybody who's appointed a committee, whether it's the Public Trustee or whether it's a private individual, are bound to follow the best interest. The Public Trustee should be held to the same standard as any other Manitoban. We think that's appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the family members, Marg and Len Anderson, who are with us in the gallery today, they're very concerned that even as the matter of whether Dorothy Loewen is mentally competent continues to be debated now for 19 months, the Public Trustee has been making day-to-day decisions. These decisions are depleting the bank account of Dorothy Loewen, and the trustee has also indicated that the 'fam—to the family that they want to move Ms. Loewen out of her home and put her in a personal care home.

I ask the minister: Is it in the best interests of a person like Ms. Loewen to have the Public Trustee acting with such unilateral authority even before the courts have provided a final ruling on whether or not she's mentally competent?

Mr. Swan: As the Leader of the Liberal Party has suggested, there are some disputes in this case that are before the courts that I won't comment on.

I would point out, however, that when an individual is need—in need of assistance, it is important to have a body there that can act in the person's best interest to take care of their financial needs as well as their physical needs. Under the authority of The Mental Health Act, the Public Trustee has appointed—has been appointed to do that very thing.

What I told the member at committee and what, indeed, I told the Anderson family at the hearing is that we want to improve The Public Trustee Act to make it easier, should there be a valid and enduring power of attorney, to make it easier for the Public Trustee to remove itself if, indeed, there is a family member or friend who's been designated by the person in need of assistance. We think that's an appropriate way to move, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) said yesterday, and the minister reiterated, that the trustee, just as members of the government, will act on behalf of that person's best interests.

Now, I first wrote to the Minister of Justice on the unnecessary intrusion of the Public Trustee into Ms. Loewen's life on January 16th, 2012, shortly after it began. Nineteen months later, the situation is unresolved and Ms. Loewen now fears being inappropriately relocated into a care home.

Can the minister explain how such a traumatic and costly delay in addressing this situation shows that the Public Trustee or any member of the NDP government is acting in the best interests of this citizen?

Mr. Swan: I think it's important, again, for the member to understand that the Public Trustee is acting under the authority of The Mental Health Act. The Public Trustee does not, in and of itself, take control of people's estates.

I am aware there is a dispute. I am aware that there are family members who have a different view. I am aware that those family members have brought an action in the courts, and an independent judge with all the facts will make a determination on whether the Public Trustee should continue, whether indeed there are valid and enduring powers of attorney that should be given precedence over the Public Trustee. And I can assure the member that the Public Trustee's office will respect whatever that decision should be.

But let me tell the member opposite that it is not the place of individual members to make political decisions on matters such as trusteeship and looking after vulnerable people best handled under The Mental Health Act, best handled when the committee—

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

Winnipeg Community Infrastructure Program Cultural Centre Funding

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, all the members of this House know that Manitoba's diverse and vibrant multicultural fabric is second to none. It's a source of our strength for our province.

This vibrancy is currently on display at Folklorama, and it showcases many of the different communities which have brought their cultural heritage home to Manitoba. In fact, I've been at 15 of the pavilions, and last night I was at the—one of the pavilions where I ran into the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) and his male friend.

And with Folklorama looking to his culture and centres to sustain strong communities in mind, I ask the local—the member for Local Government if he can tell the members about this House the commitment to this government has made to the long-term strength of these communities.

* (14:30)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government): Thank the member for St. Norbert for the question.

Today I was really pleased to be attending an event and announcing an investment in cultural communities. Today the Winnipeg Chinese cultural community, the Italian-Canadian Centre, the Belgian Club and the South Sudanese community centres all received funding from Budget 2013 and the Manitoba Building and Renewal Plan. And, truly, we celebrate the diversity and the cultural diversity we have in this province.

And, regrettably, members opposite voted against Budget 2013. Really, and what would half a billion dollar cuts do? It certainly wouldn't be contributing to these cultural centres, and they know it. And the MLA for Lac du Bonnet asked for a \$10-million road. Mr. Speaker, every day in their petitions they're asking for more and more money, yet on the one side they vote against Budget 2013. They can't have it both ways.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Line Easement Agreements

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in response to a question I asked about Manitoba Hydro and easement agreements for landowners, the member for Kildonan responded by saying, and I quote: "If they can't get an agreement they work a way around it." End of quote.

So does this mean the NDP will expropriate landowners should they decide to stand up for their individual property rights?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): I thank the member for the question, and I hope that I can get through the—I hope I can get through and my voice handles it.

But the member should know that Hydro has access under the act to utilize land. The new licence that's been offered, that has been recently agreed to, on Bipole III allows—has a provision that ensures—diseases such as blight or clubroot can have a negative economic effect on agriculture. That's why there's a provision that Manitoba Hydro will follow all terms and conditions in the environmental licence that has a protection provision built in that under section 46 of the licence.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, it sounds like expropriation to me, because what the minister is saying, private landowners have no rights, no right to be concerned, and they are expected to bow down to this NDP government. It's shameful that they expect that expropriation will happen as decreed by the NDP: no choice, no options, no respect for private property rights.

When will this government—this minister and this government stop bullying landowners and threatening them with expropriation?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, we all—nobody wants a hydro transmission line in their backyard. Even the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) didn't want a transmission line through his constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the 450 landowners whose lands are transgressed by the 66-metre-wide swath around the particular pole will be compensated by 150 times the land value. It's an easement and Hydro will bend over backwards to provide any kind of provision for the easement.

We do it for all Manitobans. We share. If we don't have a line coming down, Mr. Speaker, they will not have reliability, and if power blacks out like it did 10 years ago, it could result in a tragedy. We all share the ability to have transmissions lines—which aren't like oil lines—which have a record and don't provide any—don't cause any damage.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Speaker, this just shows the ignorance and the arrogance of this government.

They have no understanding of the impact that this line will have on landowners.

Landowners' only recourse is to try to negotiate with Manitoba Hydro. But in the end, if they can't, what this minister is saying—doesn't matter, it doesn't matter what landowners say. We're going to take your land, we're going to expropriate.

That's shameful. And this minister, of all people, should know that, that that is a shameful act to do, and landowners have better to expect from this government than to be expropriated.

Mr. Chomiak: You know, Mr. Speaker, the provisions in the hydro act are the same when the Conservatives were in power, the Conservative party that did nothing for landowners, built no hydro.

Mr. Speaker, we need hydro, for example, in southern Manitoba. We need new power to Steinbach; it's a growing region. We need new power to Letellier. That has to go through people's land. Are members saying we should not provide those hydro transmission lines because the power's in demand in those areas? That's a foolish argument from the member opposite.

There's compensation paid. It's fair. They sit down with the landowner.

It's, again, another attempt by members opposite to do anything in their power to block hydro development because they know that if we get the hydro development our province—well, and the economy will continue to grow as it has for the past 10 years.

Hydro is good, clean energy. It brings money to the Province and the money we get from the export revenues go towards paying down the price for those dams.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Norbert.

Point of Order

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert): On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order.

Mr. Gaudreau: Yes. I said some words—regrettable—in my question to the minister about the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler) and his male friend. I would like to retract that from the record. I didn't mean it in any other way than I saw him last night at the event

with—along with some other ministers here, and I'd like to retract those words, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the same point of order, the Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

We will—we need to continue to be cautious in this House about the words that are used. You have an issue, Mr. Speaker, under advisement, and I know that you'll come back and you'll rule that at some point, and I won't speak to that.

But I get more and more alarmed by members opposite when they're using certain words and they're trying to do it in a certain way. They're doing it disrespectfully. They're doing it to all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I understand the member for St. Norbert has stood up and he's tried to bring forward an apology, but I would suggest that he and other members, and maybe all members of this House, need to be more cautious before they actually bring forward those words.

So I've listened to his comments and I've heard his apology, but we're getting very, very close, Mr. Speaker, to saying things that are harmful to all of us as legislators, and this has to stop.

And I look forward to your ruling on a similar matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): On the same point of order.

I respect the member for St. Norbert standing and making an apology after he said something he regrets. I think that is a difficult thing for anybody to do. He has said that he regrets the comments that he made. He certainly intended no offence to the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler).

But I do think, as the leader of the—the House leader for the official opposition has said, we could all reflect on the words that we use with each other in this House. Just in the last few minutes, I heard members on the opposite side use some very alarming language to members of my party. And so, you know, I have a responsibility to be careful in the way that I speak in this Legislature, but we all do. And if we want the tone to be better in the House, this is where it starts, Mr. Speaker. It starts with the

words that we choose to use with each other, whether those words are on the record or not.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau)—and I thank the Official Opposition House Leader and the Government House Leader for their advice on this matter—I want to start first by thanking the honourable member for St. Norbert and indicating his apology to the honourable member for St. Paul for comments that were made during question period here.

I have often said in this House, and will continue to say every opportunity I get, this is our workplace. I believe very strongly in a respectful workplace. I do my darndest to make sure that we follow the rules and practice and procedures in—with—and we conduct ourselves with dignity and that we have the proper decorum in this Chamber, and so I take very seriously the comments and the advice provided by the Official Opposition House Leader and the Government House Leader in this matter.

I want this to be a good workplace, but this cannot happen just by the actions of the Speaker. I need to have the co-operation of all honourable members in this regard. And by working together, we can make and continue to have this as a respectful workplace, but it starts first by picking and choosing very carefully, as previous Speakers have said, the words that we use in this Assembly, because they can be hurtful.

And I want to make sure that honourable members—which I sense by the comments made here—recognize that, but we need to conduct ourselves with some dignity when we conduct—when we have our debate here in the Chamber.

So I thank the honourable member for St. Norbert for his apology. I hope that it is acceptable to the member for St. Paul and that we will now continue with our question period.

* * *

Mr. Pedersen: And I listened very carefully when the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro gave his answer, but I still question—he says Manitoba Hydro will bargain in good faith. Landowners will obviously bargain in good faith because they have a lot at stake in this.

What I really want to know, Mr. Speaker, is: Will the minister rule out expropriation for—and so

that these landowners know that when Manitoba Hydro comes to them that they really are dealing in good faith and not with another purpose in mind?

Mr. Chomiak: Well, I will answer the member's question by referring to the way that the Conservative government dealt with Crown corporations. When they privatized Manitoba Telephone System, they took away all the rights of landowners. They took away some of the lowest rates in the country. Now they have the highest rates in the country and they—the money went out of the province.

And I want to contrast that with the Crown corporation that has representation that operates in good faith, that provides power to—and electricity and natural gas to over a million people, that provides—has one of the best reputations in North America, has the lowest rates in North America and perhaps in the world. And those same landowners get the benefit of that, and all they ask for in return is to negotiate in good faith, which Hydro has done successfully all throughout its tenure. And they have continued to do—

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

Time for oral questions has expired. It is now time for—

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Little Free Library

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I love most about living in St. James is a sense of community that is so keenly felt there. I rise today to wish a happy 1st birthday to Little Free Library 1849 on Mandeville Street in St. James and to recognize the constituent Charlene Roziere, who helps to create that atmosphere through endeavours such as the Little Free Library.

The Little Free Library movement seeks to build a sense of community and promote the love of reading by encouraging free book exchanges across the world. Private citizens install miniature libraries as free book drop-off and pick-up points for the neighbourhood. The movement was born four years ago in Wisconsin and in that short time more than 6,000 Little Free Libraries have registered with the movement, some as far away as Denmark, Ghana and Pakistan. I'm proud to say that the first Little Free Library in Winnipeg was established in St. James. Charlene Roziere and her family run a

small, beautifully constructed red library that sits on a post next to the sidewalk by their home on Mandeville Street. Their library may be little, but over 1,400 books have been taken to date. Some have been returned and many others have been replaced by donations from members of the community.

Since the St. James chapter was established, others have also joined the LFL movement. Winnipeg is now home to a network of at least seven Little Free Libraries across the city that are offering books to their neighbours. Outside the city, MacGregor, Carberry and Brandon also have Little Free Libraries.

The Little Free Library movement is a brilliant way to promote reading and literacy, but the library does so much more. The Little Free Library in St. James is building ties within our community as people of all ages stop by to browse books, make donations or share their favourite stories. Moreover, the libraries are creating connections between communities with people from other neighbourhoods coming to our community to visit the library and many getting inspired to start their own.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Ms. Roziere and the Little Free Library 1849 on an incredible year of promoting the love of reading in Winnipeg, as well as thanking Little Free Libraries across Manitoba for their work to make communities in our province stronger. Thank you very much.

Folklorama

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): It is indeed a pleasure to get up in this House and speak to the 44th Folklorama that's taking place in the city of Winnipeg.

I had the opportunity to go to 16 pavilions last week, of which I was privileged to take guests along including my son and my daughters, who had a great time. People just love it when the children come, and they love the performances. They love to see the different cultures. I'd like to point out that the Spanish pavilion, last week, my daughter Corina, who's 13, just loved the classical style. In fact, there was a gentleman out there that was making a beautiful jewellery box and—I hope this doesn't go any further—I bought one of them for her for Christmas.

Folklorama is just a terrific thing to go to. In fact, this week so far I've been to eight pavilions. And last night I was able to go with my association

president, Lucas Golebioski, who's a great individual and a fine upstanding individual in this community. We were at the Columbian, Israeli, and Hungarian pavilions, and I'd like to say all of them were outstanding. The Israeli pavilion was just terrific. I don't know if I've been to a pavilion before where they actually have a live band. It was just outstanding. The kind of performances you get for as little as you pay for \$6 is amazing.

And for those of us who are allowed to take guests along, I've been able to take members of my community along, I know they appreciate it. We love what these communities are doing. We love that they keep getting better and better every year and we are so looking forward to the 50th anniversary and the 60th and the 75th and so on, so forth.

This is a great thing for this city and this province, and I am so proud that I can go out to these communities, take guests along with me and be able to enjoy what our city and province is all about.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tory Tough Love

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has said that it is time for Manitobans to experience some tough love. Many of us in the House have children and have occasionally had to employ tough love, but I think the Leader of the Opposition and I have some very different ideas about what tough love means.

What does tough love mean to the opposition, Mr. Speaker? It means \$550 million in cuts to front-line services that Manitobans depend on. That would mean \$52 million from health care. That's nearly 700 nurses. It would mean \$5 million from Justice or about 60 Corrections officers. It would mean \$16 million from Education, which is almost 200 teachers. And it would mean \$11 million from Family Services, and that's 135 social workers.

That's their solution to coming out of a recession: to put people on the unemployment rolls, whether they're nurses, teachers, flood forecasters or Corrections workers. These are people who help deliver essential services to Manitobans. We are talking about people who help keep our communities safe, who take care of the health of our families, and who work with our children to help them learn and flourish as they grow.

We all remember how Tory tough love has worked in the past, Mr. Speaker. We are all familiar

with the legacy of the previous government, a legacy of cuts and of privatization. The government that the opposition leader called the finest government Manitoba's ever been blessed with also attacked our front-line services, and where did it lead?

It led to crumbling school infrastructure. It led to frozen or cut Education budget virtually every year the Leader of the Opposition was an MLA and the loss of over 700 teachers. It meant firing 1,000 nurses and cutting nearly \$37 million from rural hospital and personal-care-home budgets in the 1990s. It led to reducing funding for bridges and highways five times and putting the brakes on infrastructure spending.

As a parent, I personally would dearly love to see the Leader of the Opposition in a time out.

Halli Krzyzaniak

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, Halli Krzyzaniak of Neepawa continues to amass quite an impressive resumé and is continuing to build a strong hockey career. Not only has she won two women's world under-18 hockey championships, but she has now been invited to the 'Canada'-to Canada's National Women's Development Team's selection camp.

Team Canada invites over 40—only 40 players from around the country to this camp, which features some of the best women players in Canada. Three western Manitoba players, including Halli, Ashleigh Brykaliuk of Brandon, and Karissa Kirkup of Virden, were invited, with only 13 of the 40 invitees being selected to join the 27 players already on Canada's National Women's Team, where there is the potential to play in the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

In 2012, Halli represented Canada at the under-18 world championships, where Canada won gold. She also represented Canada in a miniseries against Team USA this past summer, where she was named an alternate captain.

In November, she captained Team Manitoba at the Women's National Championships, where she was named the tournament's most valuable player, as well as the tournament's top defenceman award, en route to a silver medal.

Halli is one of only five players in history to repeat as an under-18 world champion. This fall, Halli will play for the University of North Dakota, joining one of the best collegiate hockey programs in the United States, where she will also prefer-pursue

a degree in biology. She is also one of the six finalists for the Sport Manitoba Junior Female Athlete of the Year award, and was the only finalist to come from outside the city of Winnipeg in the junior female category.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating Halli in all of her hockey accomplishments, and I wish her nothing but success in the future. I hope to cheer her on nationally and internationally.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any further members' statements? No.

All right, we'll move on with grievances. No grievances?

* (14:50)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Can we resume debate on report stage of Bill 20, please?

Mr. Speaker: So we'll now resume report stage on Bill 20, The Manitoba Building and Renewal Funding and Fiscal Management Act (Various Acts Amended).

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I move, seconded by the member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler), that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Brandon West, seconded by the honourable member for St. Paul, that the House do now adjourn.

Is that agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

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

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

* (15:50)

Order. Order, please. The one-hour allocation for the ringing of the division bells has expired, and I'm instructing that they be turned off and we'll now proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is the adjournment motion.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Allan, Allum, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Caldwell, Chief, Chomiak, Crothers, Dewar, Gaudreau, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Kostyshyn, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Robinson, Rondeau, Selby, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Whitehead, Wiebe, Wight.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 17, Nays 31.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Goertzen: On House business, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce the private member's resolution now be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Manitoba's Road to Economic Recovery, brought forward by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that in accordance with rule 31(9) that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is

the resolution on Manitoba's Road to Economic Recovery, brought forward—sponsored by the honourable member for Emerson.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, can you seek will of the House if it's the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour now being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, August 15, 2013

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