

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

**Official Report**  
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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MELNICK, Christine	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	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
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WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Arthur-Virten	
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 28, 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, 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, colleagues. Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Mr. Speaker, could you canvass the House to see if there's will to go directly to Bill 200, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Democracy for Voters)?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to proceed directly to Bill 200? *[Agreed]*

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

##### Bill 200—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Democracy for Voters)

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll now call Bill 200, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Democracy for Voters), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Mineral Resources (Mr. Chomiak), who has three minutes remaining.

Is there leave for this matter to remain standing in the name of the honourable minister?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No? Leave has been denied.

Further debate?

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's—having been at the AMM banquet last night and visiting with all—many rural councillors—or many councillors, from not just rural, from urban and rurals, last night, it was certainly a good event. Congratulations to the AMM on another successful convention which, as I understand, would

be going on right about now. I—there may be some action happening there right now.

But, Mr. Speaker, further—speaking to this bill, Bill 200, democracy for voters, I would first like to offer my, again, offer my congratulations to Larry Maguire on his substantial victory. All members, no matter what political bent they may have, realize that Larry is a worker And Larry is—we have always called Larry the machine, because Larry could work night and day. And it certainly showed in this by-election, federal by-election, where despite the polls and despite all of the political 'pundints', he did go out and engage voters, he went out and asked for their support, and they, in turn, returned that support to give him an election victory. And he will be an excellent Member of Parliament. He has a great understanding of Manitoba and Manitoba's needs, and will make a fine representative for not only for Brandon-Souris, but for all of Manitoba in the federal Parliament. So we look forward to his introductory speech, his maiden speech in the House of Commons, and I'm—again, knowing Larry, it—I doubt whether it will be brief when his introductory speech is in there. But good for Larry, and we wish him all the best.

And now back to Bill 200, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't it be novel if we could have some by-elections in Manitoba so that we could have a couple of new members in this Chamber? Morris has been vacant since last February. And under current legislation the government has the option of up to a year—has the option of up to a year and they are obviously seeking to go to very close to the year. We hope they don't break the law and go over the year, that's—they've had issues with law with other bills this session.

But it's really a sad state when the constituents of Morris have not had a representative in this session, and there's been ample time to call this by-election; after all, we were in here all summer. We could have had it anytime in the past year, but this government has chosen not to. And with that they have chosen not to let Morris constituents have a voice within this Chamber.

And, you know—or we know that there are reasons why the government has delayed this, but it's not valid reasons, but they have used reasons. There

are reasons out there and, of course, first of all, the most paramount, pressing concern of government is that their ribbon-cutting parade will be cut short during that—the time of the by-election, because with the exception of the previous minister of Health, there's not supposed to be any announcements during an election or a by-election, and this government knows that. So it would certainly cut into their ribbon-cutting parade if they had to hold back for the 35 days of a by-election. But—and that's not a reason for the voters of Morris, the constituents of Morris, not to have a voice in this Chamber.

And, of course we know that, too, with a by-election, candidates would be going door to door and asking for support, earning support from candidates. And as what was very obvious both in Provencher and Arthur—and Brandon-Souris federal by-elections is that the NDP candidates fared very poorly in this. There was a voter response to the illegal PST hike, and the candidates themselves, the NDP candidates, realized that. And, you know, perhaps this government is hesitant to go out and ask voters for their support in here in the provincial by-elections based on what they obviously know, they've—if they have listened at all to Manitobans over the past almost a year, or since July, since the budget was introduced in April about their PST hike—illegal PST hike. And it's become a tipping point for this government because they no longer want to consult with Manitobans and they're no longer willing to listen to what Manitobans have to say. And, you know, besides day-to-day interaction with the citizens of Manitoba, certainly a by-election would be a very strong indicator of support, as they seem to think they have support out there for this PST hike. So call a by-election and see what—how that—what Manitobans in these two constituencies and—would have to say to this government about their illegal PST hike.

\*(10:10)

And, so, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that this government continues to believe that the money that hard-working Manitobans raise—earn through their jobs, is better spent at the Cabinet table, rather than at the kitchen table, and this is—no amount of announcements by this government will convince—be able to convince Manitobans that their money is better spent by this government rather than at their—and decided where to be spent rather than at their own kitchen table, and a by-election would certainly bring that message home. I believe it would bring that message home to this government. If I'm wrong,

well, then I guess we will see. That's the voters' right to do that, and that's—it's just—it continues to be unfortunate that they have—this government has such a callous attitude towards Manitobans, and through not calling these by-elections, through not consulting with Manitobans, the excuses are—have run out. The Premier (Mr. Selinger) tried to say that he wanted to call a—two by-elections simultaneously because it would save taxpayers money, and Elections Manitoba certainly corrected him on that. There was—there is no cost savings in holding two at one time, so that was, again, certainly blown out by Elections Manitoba, because Elections Manitoba is very credible in knowing what their—how to run these elections, and we should be paying attention to that.

And—but we know that really it's the ribbon-cutting parade that will be cut short whenever the by-elections are called. And I certainly want to encourage this government to finally call these by-elections. Let's have representation and let's let the people of Morris, and now Arthur-Virden, decide who they want to have representing them in this Chamber. It is their decision and it should be their decision and it should be their decision sooner rather than later. And waiting—putting a decision off is not going to change what Manitobans think. In fact, it's—as many constituents of Morris have already said, they're feeling quite angry at not having representation here in a timely manner. We know that it takes time to do these things, but it just—it's unfortunate that this government has become like a dictator in Manitoba in that they are not willing to listen to what Manitobans have to say, in particular, to what the good citizens of Morris and Arthur-Virden have to say, and let them decide. Call the by-elections and let them decide who should be their representative in this House so that they can represent the issues and the concerns that those citizens have in those constituencies.

So I urge the government to call a by-election. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure to rise today in the House and discuss this bill. I'd like to point out a few things to the members of the opposition, that when we called the by-election for Fort Whyte, where their leader ran in, they complained that it was too fast. It was too soon. It's August. It's family time. Everybody's at their cabins. That's what the Leader of the Opposition said. Oh my goodness. We can't have an election now; everybody's got to go to their cabins.

So now they flip-flop on their position and now we're taking too long [*inaudible*]. We can't win, Mr. Speaker, no matter what happens because all we hear from them is the negative nellys of this province complaining about everything. You hear the Leader of the Opposition in the newspaper was saying if he freezes his tootsies off during this election he's going personally hold the Premier (Mr. Selinger) responsible.

Oh, Mr. Speaker. It's too hot in August; it's summertime for families. Or it's too cold in the wintertime for them to go canvassing. When is the proper time for them? I mean, you know what? I'm not psychic, but I'm just guessing because, based on past history in the province, we have not had by-elections when we're in session. And since they decided to hold us in session all summer, which was fine—I mean, I was—I had a great time, you know, we're here all summer for the democracy of Manitoba. But since they decided to hold us in all summer and we made an agreement to come back right away, very quick turnaround, I'm guessing that maybe right after—just—not psychic, but I'm guessing that after this session, when we finish in a week from now or a week and half from now, that there will be by-elections called. I think that that's probably like it is in every time in Manitoba, where we don't hold them while we're in session.

You know, they want to talk about democracy. This is funny coming from the group who was called the biggest liars in the history of the province in the Monnin inquiry. They vote-rigged, there was a scandal, and they want to talk about democracy in voting? I mean, it's absolutely unbelievable that these people talk like this. They take no responsibility for what they're talking about because one time it's too soon, it's August, it's too warm, it's family time; another time it's going to be too cold, his tootsies will freeze off. It's unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, you know, and then the member opposite just got up and spoke about the PST. Well, it's interesting, because they go around saying that we talk about this during the election. Well, let's talk about what they talked about during the election. During the election, their promises were outspending us by almost half. So we were saying one thing, and they were, like, one and a half times us. But now the real side of the Conservative Party comes out, when now they're saying let—we want to make deep cuts. Half a billion dollars in cuts right across every department in this province. That would deeply affect Manitoba families. So they want to talk one

thing but then they want to talk out of both sides of their mouth. It's one thing and then another. We're talking about—they said they were going to spend and spend and spend—way more than what we were going to spend during the election. And now it comes out that they're going to cut a half a billion dollars. So what would have been the truth had they have been elected? It would have been deep cuts across the province. We all know that reality. We all know it.

You know, they want to talk about democracy. This is coming from the party who's just seen the biggest scandal in the history of the country. Actually, the member for Arthur-Virden is now an MP in Ottawa, and, you know, they're talking about the biggest scandal in the history of the country with the Senate scandal. Now, you know, they don't want to—they didn't want to support our resolution to abolish the Senate. No, they think that there's—that Senate reform is good and that—you know, that it could be happen. But the Leader of the Opposition admitted himself that the Senate is rewarded to plum—its plum spots were awarded to people. And he admitted it. He said it in his speech that, yes, it's—while it's—you know, it's time for, you know, some reform. We admit that, yes, the spots are rewarded to plum people. Well, what happens when you get an independent of the Senate, Mr. Speaker? Is the population now populated with electorate party politicians?

So how would that impact the thinking and sober second thought on the Red Chamber? And I'm quoting out of an article from Peter McKenna, who's a professor and the political chair of science at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown: How would the sober impact of the second thought in the Red Chamber? Clearly one should be concerned about the level of partisanship—and politicized beyond what it already is—that an elected Senate would foster.

And in the—you think that the involvement of the Prime Minister's office in the current Senate scandal is troubling, try to imagine the level of political interference that would be if both federal government and majority senators, as is the case today, belonged to the same party. Fearing punishment, what sort of backroom deals, pressure tactics and horse-trading would there be in the upper house then? Accordingly, those who advocate vigorously for the elected Senate should really be careful what they wish for. Elected senators not only fuel unhelpful partisanship and legislated obstructionism, but it also empowers those same senators to act on their

'legitimacy'. So instead of mostly rubber-stamping, Canada's Senate of electorate parliamentarians could—will be in a position to push back against their counterparts in the lower house. Of course, all of that inevitably 'translates'—translates into political paralysis, partisan finger pointing and frequent political crises. Does anyone really think that this would be healthier and better for the democratic process as—and respective to the federal government?

Now, I ask them again, Mr. Speaker, maybe now they'll stand up after they heard these words, that they would want to abolish the Senate, because no matter how we do it, the Senate has outlived its usefulness—\$92.5 million a year in taxpayers' money that could go back into our province and every other province to do good things like childcare and education and health care. But no, no, they would rather have plum positions. And I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition is awaiting his appointment to the Senate as we speak. We know that the current Prime Minister has appointed more senators than any other Prime Minister, all from—all part—are partisanship, all Conservative senators. And we know that we have a Senate ripe with scandal, and we know that the Prime Minister is involved in all of it. I mean, the RCMP are investigating.

\* (10:20)

But you know what? This group of people claim to be the ones who are the champions of the public interest. I would question that very deeply, that the Conservative Party has anything to do with the interest of—the public interest.

You know, it actually showed up again in the House of Commons recently, underneath their party, that they actually allowed businessmen and financial people to present at a committee hearing and made sure that when labour wanted to present, they were the next day. Oh, and guess what happened the next day? Oh, it was too late for labour to present and make changes to the omnibus bill, the over 300 pages that's being presented right now as we speak in the House of Commons. The champions of democracy, Mr. Speaker, over there, oh, look at them go. They make sure that the labour parties couldn't ask for changes to a 300-page omnibus bill.

So for them to say that they're the champion of democracy and that we should hold an election within six months is such a falsehood. They're trying to make an issue out of something that it's not. Had they have not held us in the House all summer—like I said, which we were all enjoyed being here—we

would have had an election during the summer. We don't hold elections when we're in session, and that's why we haven't seen one as to date. But we will be holding one, and, like I said, I'm not psychic, but I'm pretty sure you'll be seeing one called very shortly, Mr. Speaker, after session ends.

But, you know, to have them talk about—all of the lack of facts that they put on record. I mean, I said it before, Mr. Speaker, you could sail the Titanic through their arguments and not scrape up against a fact. They talk a big game and all they do is put falsities on the record.

The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) cries all the time that the, oh, the economy's terrible, Mr. Speaker, it's terrible. Well, let's review this. When they were in power, unemployment was 7.6 per cent. What's it now? Five point three per cent. I would argue that that's a lot better for the province; more people are working, the unemployment rate's lower.

But, you know, the negative nellys over there can do nothing but complain about our province. All we hear is about Saskatchewan and how great Saskatchewan's doing. Well, they have potash, Mr. Speaker, and they have a bigger oil supply. And you know what? I encourage the members—once again, I'll offer to buy the one-way bus ticket for them to leave the province and move to Saskatchewan and Regina. Maybe they can become MLAs in Regina, because that's where they think it's better.

I am going to stay in Manitoba where I was born and raised, in the province that I love, and I'm sure that everybody on my side of the House agrees. And that's why we fight so hard every day in this Chamber, to make sure that they don't have their hands on the wheel, so unemployment rates don't go up and that businesses and financial institutions aren't going to be the ones who are—the almighty buck doesn't rule this province, Mr. Speaker.

We value our labour. We value people in this province. We have raised the minimum wage every year that we've been in power, compared to when they were in, twice—twice in 10 years, and a paltry 50 cents, Mr. Speaker. And they think that they're the champions of people in this province and they're the champions of poverty and they're the champions of democracy?

The greatest scandal ever with the Monnin inquiry, the Senate scandal that's going on right now with all of the senators being appointed and the rampant spending. Mr. Speaker, I implore people to

pay attention to this bill and to the hypocrisy of it when they're talking about trying to be the democratic party of this province.

Right after session, like I said, I'm sure that we'll see a nice election being called. And maybe the Leader of the Opposition can buy some warmer boots so he can canvass in the snow and not freeze his tootsies off and have to blame the Premier (Mr. Selinger).

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** It gives me pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 20 that's been put forward by my good colleague from Steinbach.

Democracy for voters, isn't that something? Isn't—and that's a statement, Mr. Speaker, that we should all be proud of, democracy for voters. We should be proud that we can go out to our voters and say, look, this is what we plan on doing in the future. This is what we want—this is why we want you to support us in the next Legislature and the next government in this province.

This bill says that, very, very clearly, that taxation without representation is unlawful. And yet for the party across the way, it doesn't matter to them.

What we've just heard now is the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) auditioning for the drama club there. Didn't put anything on the record that made any sense whatsoever. What he did say, though, was he's opposed to lying. Well, let's say—let's take a look now, when in the last election, in 2011, what we've seen very clearly was we went door to door and we went, hi, I want your support. I'm not going to raise taxes. I'm not going to raise taxes. Nonsense. Nonsense. We're not going to raise the PST.

But what happened, Mr. Speaker? What happened was very clear: the first opportunity that they got to raise taxes, to broaden the PST in the province of Manitoba, what did they do, they broadened it wider than ever, the tax increase in Manitoba was the biggest in the century. What happens next? The next year they don't have enough, they don't have enough and so then they say we're going to raise the PST but their advisors said, no, you can't do that, you'd be breaking the law. You would be breaking the law in Manitoba. They said, never mind the law. We're over—we're above the law. The people in Manitoba can't do anything.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what's very, very clear, they did not want to have a by-election in Morris because they would see what happened with their support. And so they held it back while they could do the ribbon-cutting, that they could run with their scissors from one ribbon to another. The only place in Manitoba that was really expanding was the ribbon factory.

But the reason that they did not want that by-election was the people in the province of Manitoba would see the collapse for the support of the NDP party. So, along comes a by-election, federal by-election, and I have to say right now and put on the record, that Merv Tweed did a great job in this province. Vic Toews was a great asset to this province, as well, federally. Both of them have moved on to other things in private life and to have some time with their families but they're replaced with two great candidates. Ted Falk from Steinbach is now an MP in Ottawa and will do a great job for Manitoba. Larry Maguire, that sat in this House for many, many years and proved that his ability to represent the people of Arthur-Virden, has done a great job as well.

And what did we see, what was the result of the by-elections? The result was a complete collapse of NDP support, not just in rural Manitoba, not just in Ste. Anne, where the Green Party outstripped them, beat them up, two to one in some of the polls in Ste. Anne, a stronghold for one of the members on opposite. At the same time, his colleague was throwing him under the bus and AMM saying, we're sorry that you were so surprised by our announcement of killing the heritage of this province by forcing amalgamations throughout rural Manitoba.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reason that they would not call a by-election and give the people of Manitoba the opportunity to have representation in this House was because they were afraid of the collapse that they knew had taken place. That's a very main reason that they took the vote tax in the province, so that they would not have to go door to door and say, I want your support, can you give me some money? No. We'll take it out of your back pocket without you knowing. That's what they have said to the people of Manitoba.

Complete disrespect and at the same time I'm not calling the by-elections in the province, what they have done then is that they've been able to go and make announcement after announcement after announcement to offset the bad news from what they

had said in 2011 when they went door to door and said we will not raise taxes, we will not raise the PST. They fooled the people of Manitoba once but they did not fool them in the federal by-elections. There was a complete collapse of their support, even in Brandon East, a stronghold, complete collapse of the NDP support. They're not interested. They're not interested in respect; they're not interested in democracy. They're interested in breaking the law and taking money unlawfully out of the back pockets of the people of Manitoba. They are a tired, out-of-gas, bottom-of-the-barrel government with no new ideas, Mr. Speaker. They don't value democracy at all.

\* (10:30)

Mr. Speaker, the tired, old, bottom-of-the-barrel government has no new ideas. When they took the tax money, they didn't—they're not telling the people of Manitoba the real reason. Oh, no, we have—I think now we've got 35 priorities, 35 priorities that they presented in this House, everywhere from splash pads to hospitals to highways to schools, but no real priority. They've cut front-line services continually. They've cut them continually, and just an example is the 19 ERs that are closed now. We have cut to—cuts to education. We have cuts to infrastructure. Two, three years in a row, the infrastructure budget was never maxed out. They did not do what they said they would do. They raised the gas tax and that was dedicated to potholes. What they didn't say was it was dedicated to making the potholes, not to fixing them.

All of the things that they have said they were going to do, they did not do, and they have no intentions of doing it. What we don't know for sure is what our bond rating is going to be going forward. Even with the increase in taxes, increase in the PST, I fear that our bond rating is going to go down. I can understand that they don't understand finance. They've never been in business. There's no one on that side of the House except one farmer that's actually been in business, that's actually made a paycheque for someone, that has created a job in the province with their own money, not with someone else's money.

Government can't give you something that they haven't taken from someone else, and these people are great at taking stuff, but they do not create an environment for free enterprise in this province. We have lost 143 jobs a day for the last month, Mr. Speaker. That's their record. It speaks clearly that

they have no idea how to run a business. They shouldn't be in business. All they need to do is create the environment, and to help them create that environment, they need to call that by-election for the constituency of Morris so that it can be properly represented here.

Those fine folks deserve a voice in this Legislature. The same as everyone in the seats that you represent, they deserve that same voice in this very Legislature. But we see members like this member from St. Norbert that would deny democracy outside of the city of Winnipeg. It's okay for him, but it's not okay for the rest of the province, and that's a shame. It's shameful that he would stand up in this House and deny the people of Morris, deny the people of Arthur-Virden the right to be represented in this great House here and represent their area in the province of Manitoba.

They have views. They have needs. And what we've seen is they've said, oh, now, what we're going to—we're going to shut down a bridge now going into Morris. With no alternative, we'll shut that bridge down for four months. What impact is that going to have on the commerce in Morris? I know the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau) wouldn't understand commerce because he's never been in business. He's never created a job, the same as many of his colleagues in this House have never done that.

But representation in democracy is the backbone of this province. Call a by-election. Call a referendum on the PST. Quit breaking the law.

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Mr. Speaker, I really feel privileged to speak in this Assembly, coming from an isolated village from the Third World country. And being one of the greatest country, one of the better—best country in the world and to be in the Assembly, that's a great honour to be here. And also I feel really humbled by the support I got from my constituents. And you know in The Maples there's not only an election, there's also nominations. You have to fight each and every inch, and people supported me wholeheartedly, and this is a great honour.

We—under the circumstances, sometimes we are forced; not every immigrant come as an economic immigrant, because of that, but they come—also they have to come over here because we have such a great democracy so people can have their rights and people can have their responsibilities. And let me tell you one story. I went to get my papers attested to the magistrate, and still the guard would not let me go,



and—because I would not pay him 10 rupees, and every time I will be bypassed. So then I rushed—after about six hours waiting, I rushed to the magistrate. I said, are you guys accepting bribery, because he's asking for \$10. Do you have any share in that, and he said, no, I don't have. I swear on that. Because why you are not testing my paper? So he tested my paper.

So since then I told my father, I said, you know, this country needs change and I don't have enough money to get elected over here. I want to go to a foreign country where I can make money. Although everybody thinks a lot—immigrants think they will go to the other country and there will dollars on the tree. He will shake and then he will rake and—but that never happens.

And so I mean to say because of that corrupt system and because of when people are poor start to leave, and why that corrupt system we have to look at in the public finance. And public finance is a—sometimes being criticized of—from the other party like this vote tax. It's not vote tax. It's advancement of democracy [*inaudible*] So that's why that's very important.

In India, I previously mentioned, a party takes support like that. There's no public finance. After you get elected, then you have to raise money for the next election. So what the party will do, they will tell the civil servant to get bribery and their share will go from bottom to the—up to chief minister we call a premier over here. So that kind of system is created because of them no public finance.

And I—sometime I wonder, does this PC party, they want to create that kind of a system. I'd—personally I don't want, because I ran from that system. An immigrant, I ran from that system. We want a system where people can, according to their ambitions, according to their ability, according their ambition to serve the public, they can be elected not because they had deep pockets. This system, if we don't have public finance this system will create their system. Only people with deep pockets, they will be able to elected.

You know, those people who have seven, a garage for seven cars, they will understand ordinary people? No, they won't, because they will say tough luck. We want to people—take people along with us so that nobody should be left behind, everybody should be taken care of.

Sometimes I think that person that is wise who adjusts according to the circumstances. If there are

circumstances you don't need to increase tax, sure, you don't have to when you say we are not. But when circumstances change and you want to make sure that public's being—or could be solved. In that case, you have to do something. If a federal government is asking—telling that if you spend on infrastructure we will pay 50 per cent, we don't want to miss those chances. So circumstances change. That's why we have to increase 1 cent for one dollar.

But who will get hurt? Who will let the people will get hurt. Normally, ordinary people, how much are they going to spend every month? So maybe hardly \$15 per month that they will have to pay more? But rich people, they have—buy big items. Those big items cost money, lots of money. So it hurt the poor rich people, not the ordinary people. Ordinary people are hurt if we cut the services, if we—the—if the day I'm not able to send the children to the school, if they're not able to take service in the hospital and if they have to pay for to go to the doctor, if they have to pay for part of operation, that's where it will hurt.

So to make sure that ordinary people don't hurt and we make sure the economy keeps going on, we have to increase 1 cent per dollar. But, again, every ordinary people should think, will that really will hurt them or it will hurt their [*inaudible*] partner so if they're hurt we ask them to go to doctor pay the user fees, or if we tell them go to the school and the children have to now pay a fee over there, or if the student and the university did not get that 60 per cent back, that will hurt—that will hurt.

\* (10:40)

So, therefore, we should think about the democracy. Some people—for some people, democracy is dirty; for other people, democracy is sacred. I think you can look at Mike Duffy, you can look at the Prime Minister's office, and there's something—dirty play was done there. And you can also look at the Monnin inquiry. So that's where—that's the dirty politics of people just wanting to be in power, doesn't matter what they have to do.

But on the other hand, look at Tommy Douglas, who created the system that people can be served according to their needs, and they can get medical service according to their needs, not according to their deep pockets. That's the sacred of politics.

And it's also sacred politics—make sure all the services are being given to ordinary people. That's again sacred politics. It's not a sacred policy, it's

tough luck and you are left, you're alone. If you die, if you live, that's tough luck. So those people who preach tough luck, how they can be sympathizers of the ordinary people? Sometimes they fool. They say, we are very close to you; we will take care of your poverty. We will take—how you will take care of poverty by cutting \$500 million? How you will take care of poverty by doing all those things? How you will take care of ordinary people if you have private home care?

So all those things—look around to all those things. How these people—although—think they are very close to ordinary people, no, no. They are fooling—they try to fool the ordinary people. They are just for—work for the rich people. They are work—for the business. And so, again, I—the way I was saying—like, I have seen—even look at the business, how they will do the business, how business happen and it's over the country. Politicians—they want a share of the business. If you don't pay the share, *[inaudible]* example, restaurant. If you want to—if you don't want to pay that share, what they will do, they will stop the lease over there and the police won't let people go over there. That's really what they are forced to do. So that's the system, I think, the opposition wants to create.

And that's why I think it's very, very important having public finance. Don't say it—a vote tax; say it advance—democracy advancement fund. So I think they have to adjust their terminology and adjust their thinking.

And as far as it goes for elections, you know, every day they will call an election, because our opposition leader will force—he may have forced Larry to go to Ottawa. He was forced by Filmon to go to Ottawa. Maybe that's the habit. He may have forced Mavis to quit. So then, what will—how we can get granted that he won't force to—another member who comes in.

But as far as to take care of the constituents, we are on building a highway and we are taking care of Morris. And to call every day elections, won't it cost more money to the taxpayer? So they think—they should think awhile—twice to ask for that quick election, because otherwise every day will be an election, every month will be an election. How that will help the public?

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to get up today and speak on Bill 200, democracy for voters, brought

forward by the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

I think it's very important that we all have proper representation in a timely manner, and many of us were at AMM yesterday and yesterday evening at the banquet, and while I was there, I did run into a number of people—councillors and reeves and mayors—representing areas that are included in the two constituencies that are currently unrepresented—Morris, which is approaching a year without representation, and Arthur-Virden, which has just recently become without representation. And they were all very concerned that they would be given an opportunity to have proper representation in a timely manner. And, frankly, they were a bit frustrated that it has taken as long—in particular in the Morris constituency—to make any move on that. There has been plenty of opportunities to do that.

I know that there are some rules around ribbon cuttings that probably have been an issue with why the government has chosen not to call that, but the bottom line here is not about convenience for government; it's about proper representation for the people in the constituency.

And I know that many of us on this side of the House have had to help people out that are actually in the Morris constituency. I have spent a fair bit of time representing people that were not really my constituents in that case, but had called my office or come to my attention with issues that related to government problems and needed assistance from an MLA, and I was certainly prepared to act on their behalf and help them out. And it was a wide range of issues. I mean, some of it was infrastructure issues; some of it was taxation issues, without a doubt.

But the ones that really concerned me are often getting timely access to health care, in which we had a number in the constituency of Morris. And you can say, well, they can survive without a year of representation, but if it comes to a health-care issue, those are extremely timely, and to go even a few months without proper representation when you're having trouble getting the health-care system to function as it's intended can be very important to an individual. And we certainly had a couple of cases like that that we had to bring to the attention of the minister's office and the minister to try and get a resolution to in a timely manner.

So I think it's—that presses home to me how very important it is for these people to have access to representation as much as possible and as efficiently

and as quickly as possible. And so I think that that's really the issue here. We seem to be getting a lot of rhetoric about, you know, representation in general and who's doing what. The issue is the constituents, and the constituents are not being represented at this point in time and they need to be represented because they have significant issues.

Now, I mentioned earlier that we were all at—or many of us were at AMM and we certainly heard a lot of discussion there about a number of issues, certainly the amalgamation being one that came up very often for many of the constituents from all across the rural areas, and they are very concerned that that will have an impact on their futures and change the nature of their communities without co-operation and consultation with the people in their communities.

And they're very frustrated that they do not feel that they are being heard. And this seems to be a consistent theme with this government. The people of Morris are not being heard because they are not being represented.

It would seem that there are a number of other areas in the province where the municipalities and their views are not being heard. And it would seem that the people of Manitoba in general are not being heard. We didn't get a referendum on the increase to the PST when we probably should have under the legislation.

I guess maybe court challenges will determine whether that was actually correct or not and you can certainly expect government certainly should be looking forward to a good, robust court challenge to find out if they're doing things within the law, because a government that doesn't act within the law should not be in place.

So, certainly, we hope that we can move forward with this by-election as soon as possible, not only here, but in Arthur-Virden, and I think it's particularly important that we remember we're doing this for good representation in the constituency, because these are the people that we should be concerned about. The rest of it is often just general rhetoric about government, but people need to have proper representation. There has been wars fought over good representation going back hundreds of years.

A number of initiatives—I know the honourable member for—or the member for Maples brought forward the issue of good representation. Everyone

deserves good representation without any discipline to—or any difference based on race, colour, creed or financial wherewithal. And I certainly agree with him. I think that that's something that the people of Morris actually deserve as well. They represent a wide range. I'm sure that there's no particular group, certainly, held in that constituency that is unique to that constituency. It's part of the fabric of Manitoba and they deserve good representation accordingly.

So I know that there are a number of people that want to speak to this issue, so I certainly appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on record. I hope the government moves—and moves in a timely manner—to deal with this issue. I certainly encourage them not to put it off much longer. I know that there'll be a lot of people that probably aren't real happy that it may occur over the Christmas season. Those are the realities. You have to do what you have to do. Certainly, we want to have these people well represented, and the sooner the better.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, good morning. It's always a pleasure to rise to speak on the topic of democracy, but it just strikes me as bizarre that the Leader of the Opposition has the audacity to bring this topic to the fore. I think he's working on the old advertising principle, if you repeat something often enough that ultimately the public is going to buy into it. So, you know, I expect that he'll be up again and again and again, repeating how democratic and freedom-loving the Conservatives across this land are, and, well, I will—I'll dwell on that for a few minutes here.

\* (10:50)

Mr. Speaker, having come from the Interlake, obviously, the first point to make would be, as many have referred to already, discussing the vote rigging back in 1995 with the Monnin inquiry and the list of characters. It's—well, they say truth is stranger than fiction, and when you look at the who's who of the Tory party that was involved in that odious episode, Julian Benson, Treasury Board chair, Arni Thorsteinson, one of the biggest bagmen—

**An Honourable Member:** Uncle Cubby.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Well, somebody said Uncle Cubby. And a member opposite, actually, mentioned Uncle Cubby, my mother's brother, also a Tory kingpin, one of the biggest in the Interlake, and a good bagman in the millionaire tradition. Yes, he was totally embroiled in that fiasco.

And in the subsequent fiasco in 1999, I have to say, once again, if I thought 1995 was the low point, the smear campaign that was orchestrated against me personally in 1999 took it to an even lower level than that. And, you know, and—on that occasion, though, there were actually some convictions. I won't mention any names because—[interjection] Or can I? I won't. I'll keep that under my hat.

But we all know that the individual that was convicted of obstruction of justice and defamation of a candidate was no less than the campaign manager for the Conservative candidate in the Interlake. So definitely the dots were connected over that event, and the public was wise enough, once again, to figure out that the Conservatives were up to their old vote-rigging tricks and, once again, returned a New Democrat to office.

Oh, the clock is ticking fast here, Mr. Speaker. I do have to rush. I just took a few notes down this morning, and suddenly I have four pages of Tory bagmen. Where should I go first here?

Well, they mentioned Mr. Maguire, and the one thing that strikes me is that he abandoned his constituency, left it mid-term, typical Tory opportunist, and I have to think back, well, who else on that side did this in the past?

And I think that the—no less, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) did the very same thing himself back in 1997, and what happened in 1997? What was it, the flood of the century, no less, Mr. Speaker, and what was his position? What was his position at the time? He was the Minister responsible for Emergency Measures. So here you have the man that wants to be a premier, wants to be the next premier of Manitoba, when faced with one of the greatest disasters of the last century here in Manitoba, what did he do? Jumped ship, opportunist that he was, went to Parliament and continued to do what Tories do, I guess, obfuscate and obstruct and so forth. So there you have it.

You know, but let me continue on with my list here. Vic Toews was mentioned. The member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) was saying what a paragon of democracy and what a fine man he was. Well, what was his position when he was in the Filmon Cabinet? He was the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice. What's the record with him? Another Tory convicted in a court of law, a Minister of Justice had to plead guilty to electoral fraud, my goodness, is this the party that wants to

lead this province? Vote riggers, slanderers, smear campaigners, electoral fraud, the list goes on and on.

You know, let's look to the Senate. Everybody's watching that, and Mr. Maguire almost lost his seat because of the fiasco that's currently under way in Ottawa here. The bagmen there, it's beyond belief. You know, Jim Love, chairman of the Canadian Mint, had to recently step down. Nigel Wright, another millionaire, the chief of staff to the Prime Minister, embroiled in bribery and so forth. The fat cats, former journalists—Pamela Wallin touring the country racked up a bill of \$300,000 on—what do they call it? Networking events—networking events—what is a networking event? Well, it's a just another forum to squeeze their corporate clients for as much money as they can.

And speaking of corporate clients, well, let's compare our record here, Mr. Speaker. And I was here in 1999 when the Gary Doer government was first elected and took office. What was the first thing that this—that our government did at that time? The first act through this Legislature was a ban on union and corporate donations. That set the bar—that set the bar going forward, that's one of the main reasons we are still the government today, 15 years later, four terms in office, unprecedented in modern Manitoba history because of that, as much as anything. Because that's what the people want—that's what the people want. They don't want bagmen, they don't want bribery, they don't want convicted fraudsters; they want people who are going to govern fairly and honestly and above board and above the table most of all, that's what really matters—above the table.

And, you know, returning to the bad old days where big companies can donate \$100,000 or a \$1 million, no limit to the amount that they can put into the Tory party coffers. That's where they want to go back to, and then what happens? Well, then, of course, the government of the day, a Conservative government, would be beholden to these big companies, and all laws, all policies, the movement of the province would be geared toward these big companies, and that's not what Manitobans want. And we also banned union donations to political parties as well, to be fair. We said right off the bat that we were not going to be anybody's slave in office, we were going to govern for all people honestly and fairly. And what do you know, we're still here; 14 years and four terms later, we're still here and we will remain here, is what I think, because the people of Manitoba, well, they value things. They value things like Crown corporations,

you know, government-managed utilities, certain things like telephone companies or hydro, for instance, or even highways. These are things that cost money and people need them, utilities such as this.

It's best if governments manage them, that way they can serve areas that are not necessarily profitable. Like, rural areas comes to mind, where, you know, delivering cellphone service in Matheson Island, for example, not much money there, but if it was owned by a government they would deliver that service because it's equal for all. You give it to the private sector, of course, no cellphone service in Matheson Island to this very day.

Where would a future Conservative government go when it comes to Crown utilities? Well, Manitoba Hydro, we're pretty sure about that. But we should also bear in mind that the Public Insurance Corporation, that's where they would really go in my opinion. And again, the Leader of the Opposition very well versed in the sale of insurance and all that, you know, I'm sure that there's quite a few of his buddies would be rushing to the fore.

Privatizing health care, that's another thing they would do. We're talking about a bill—a \$5-billion budget, Mr. Speaker—\$5-billion budget, Tories across the land are slaving at the mouth at the thought of getting into that industry, privatizing it. Oh, they would never do that they say. Well, they tried to privatize Home Care when the Filmon government was in office. They went to the United States—

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

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, the opposition should 'shup' debating this measure and have a vote. We should have the by-election in Morris. Please call the vote.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** What does he—what was—Mr. Speaker, I didn't understand what the—I didn't understand what the member for River Heights was saying. He talked about the opposition not debating this resolution—or this bill. But in the short time I have this morning to discuss it, I want to—

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Selkirk will have nine minutes remaining.

## RESOLUTIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions.

### Res. 2—Failure to Call the Morris Constituency By-Election

**Mr. Speaker:** And the resolution under consideration this morning is sponsored by the honourable member for Steinbach, and the title of the resolution is Failure to Call the Morris Constituency By-Election.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook), that

WHEREAS the Morris constituency has been without an elected Member of the Legislative Assembly since February 12th, 2013; and

WHEREAS the Premier has the sole responsibility and ability to call by-elections to fill vacant seats; and

WHEREAS the constituents have been without representation in this Chamber for over nine months due to the Premier's refusal to carry out his obligation to call a by-election.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba acknowledge that the Premier has been derelict in his duties for failing to allow the people of Morris constituency to elect a representative to the Assembly within a reasonable time of the seat becoming vacant.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable member for Steinbach, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye,

WHEREAS the Morris constituency has been without an elected—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense? Dispense.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Mr. Speaker, good morning. It is regrettable that this resolution has had to come forward. It carries on with a theme from the private members' business on bills about the lack of accountability and the lack of democracy within the NDP government for failing to call the Morris by-election in a timely manner.

We know that all Manitobans deserve to be represented in this Chamber; that is the function of our democratic system, that each of us represent a set

number of people to bring their views to this Assembly. And there are important things that happen in this Assembly and there have certainly been important things that have happened in the last year that would impact the Morris constituency.

We know that the debate around the PST tax increase, for example, Mr. Speaker, is something that the constituents of Morris would have been greatly interested in and certainly would have wanted to have a representative here in the Legislature to discuss those issues. There are sometimes issues that happen outside of this Assembly that impact constituencies that we represent. This morning I heard Shannon Martin, who is the Conservative nominee, on radio this morning talking about some unfortunate issues surrounding the community of Morris. I would say that he spoke eloquently and he spoke well but he did not speak as the MLA because they do not have an MLA in that area yet. And that is simply unacceptable because when there are issues that come up, whether they are positive issues or negative issues, it's important that there are representatives to be able to come forward and speak to those issues.

And that has not happened with this particular government. They have not allowed the fine people of that constituency to have representation. They have not allowed them to have somebody to come to this Legislature and express their views or to respond to things that are happening in the community with the mantle of being the MLA, Mr. Speaker. And that is important and there is value to that, to ensure that somebody is there to represent those views and those issues.

I know that all of us bring here our own perspectives and our own ideas but ultimately we do represent the people of the ridings that we are elected to represent and we try to do that, I think, honourably and try to do that with all the best intentions. I might not always agree and often don't agree with the perspectives of the members opposite but they also have a responsibility and their responsibility is to represent the views of their constituents. And we can have a debate about whether or not they do that in a way that is representative of how their constituents feel and the PST might be one of the primary examples of that, Mr. Speaker, but there are probably other reasons as well that we need to ensure that there is a voice here for constituents.

Certainly, we know that there are people who have issues within government. We call them

constituency issues, constituency matters, and our constituents call our offices and they are looking for some help in navigating government or trying to get a resolution for something that's happening within government, and that doesn't happen when you don't have an MLA, doesn't happen as effectively.

Now, I suppose the government could say, well, we're representing all of those people, and they can certainly call us, but that certainly is not a replacement, and that's the reason why we have 57 of us here elected to represent constituents and to help them with a lot of those issues that aren't always the top-of-the-mind issues in the news and aren't always the things that get the headlines but ultimately need to be dealt with and need to have representation.

The government has brought forward a series of different excuses, Mr. Speaker, in terms of why they have not called this by-election. I think all of them have fallen woefully short; all of them have not proven to be correct. At first, of course, we heard the government say they wouldn't call the Morris by-election because they were expecting a massive flood, either on the Red River or the Assiniboine, and the riding is located on both of those waterways. And, of course, ultimately, that was proven not to be correct. And even during the time when the government was suggesting that these things were going to happen, there were many in those communities, including the mayor or the reeve of Morris who indicated that it was hyperbole and that there was no evidence, whether it was the US weather forecast or the snowpack amounts along the Red River, in particular, that would cause that kind of concern to be happening. So that excuse faded away, and then later on we heard the government indicate that they wouldn't call the Morris by-election because this House was sitting in the summer, and I'm sorry if members didn't get the summer vacation that they wanted, but, you know, there were important things to be discussed. And I know that sometimes government has to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. And I don't think it would have been a difficult thing for a government to have a by-election while the House was sitting.

In fact, we just saw recently the two federal by-elections in the province of Manitoba that took place at the same time that the House of Commons in Ottawa was sitting, and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the time you'd most want to have a representative is when the House is actually sitting, because you'd want them here to be representing your views. But that is not the tack that the NDP

took. In fact, they took quite the opposite tack. They did not want to have somebody here representing the Morris constituents at a time when there was a lot going on in the Legislature and a lot of vigorous debate around the PST and, in fact, that debate is still going on and there still isn't a representative.

Fast forward, then, after the session concluded, the government then shifted to a new excuse and indicated that they didn't want to call a by-election because there were federal by-elections. Now, interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, those federal by-elections were called within a relatively short time period of time, under six months, and the national government was able to fill the vacant seats that were vacant here in Manitoba, in Ontario and in Québec, and already those members of Parliament are in Ottawa and I suppose will be sworn in soon. And yet here we still have this vacancy in Morris and we're not able to have representation for the good people of the Morris constituency, which ultimately leads people to the unhappy conclusion that the government isn't calling the by-election very quickly because they don't believe they're going to win the by-election and they don't want to have representation from another party.

Now, I'm not going to predict the outcome of this by-election or any other by-election. I believe that people have to determine that for themselves and people's votes matter and people will go and exercise their democratic rights. But it certainly does lead one to believe that there are other motives at play here. When all of the other excuses have fallen away, we're sort of left with the idea that the government doesn't want to call the by-election because they don't think they're going to be successful in that by-election. Well, I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it's not about them. The issue isn't about whether or not they're going to win the by-election or not. The issue is about ensuring that representatives in Morris have someone here to bring forward their views. It's not about whether this government is going to be successful in the by-election. It's not about whether we as Progressive Conservatives will be successful or whether the Liberals will be successful or the Green Party. It's not about the outcome of the election. It's about ensuring that somebody has—or that people of Morris have—the a representative here in the Legislature. That is the important part, not the outcome.

So I regret that we've had to put so much attention both through a resolution and a bill on the fact that that seat has been vacant now for almost a

year and will probably go to very close to the statutory limit. We've, in the past, been able to rely on the honour of premiers to ensure that they called by-elections relatively quickly, Mr. Speaker. This one will go longer than, I think, any by-election in about 20 or 30 years. So clearly we're not able to rely on the honour of the current Premier (Mr. Selinger) to ensure that he does the right thing and ensure that people get representation in a timely manner. And so we've had to bring attention forward to it in other ways through legislation and through a resolution.

\* (11:10)

So I would simply say to the government that we are already at the eleventh hour, and I suspect they'd have no choice but to call the by-election relatively shortly, but they need to reflect. They need to reflect on what it is that they've done and what it is they've done to the people of Morris by not giving them a voice in this Legislature, by not allowing them to have that voice. We hear often the—and we've heard it from the Minister of Infrastructure who has trumpeted certain things that are happening in Morris, and he says he's representing them, but, in reality, he doesn't. He represents the fine people of Thompson, and Morris deserves to have their own representative. They deserve to have their own voice here in the Legislature.

And it's a shame that, I think, the government has put partisan politics—and I think they have. I'm left with no other conclusion, although it's an unhappy conclusion, that they have put partisan politics ahead of what is right for democracy and what is right for the people of the Morris constituency.

So I hope that the government will heed these calls. I hope that they will have learned something, and perhaps they'll agree to support the bill that we debated in the earlier hour when it comes forward as an assurance that this sort of situation won't happen again and that real democracy will always be put ahead of partisan politics.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** It kind of feels a little bit like Groundhog Day, that we're speaking about the same thing again in this hour, but I'm pleased to be up yet again to speak on this bill.

I listened intently to the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), and he was talking about accountability. I'd like to know if the accountability extends to his party, Mr. Speaker. Jim Love, being

the member that the Prime Minister of Canada appointed to be the head of the Canadian Mint, who helped move money offshore for the Conservatives to save on tax dollars—\$8 million to be exact. Now I'm wondering if he supports that, that the Prime Minister appointed this gentleman who happened to be involved in this scandal. In fact, if you listen to the university of Laval tax professor, Adrian Laure, he says, if I were the CRA, I would like to have a look at that and analyze all of the transactions that were carried on here. I wonder if the member opposite's going to support that. Is he going to speak out against his own party and his Prime Minister that there's a lack of accountability?

How about Nigel Wright, Mr. Speaker? Is that the accountability he's talking about? Maybe he's talking about Mike Duffy. Oh, maybe he's talking about Pamela Wallin. Maybe he's talking about Senator Brazeau. How about senator Flett that was involved in running their campaign while working as a senator and taking in tax dollars? How about senator Glover who overspent on her campaign expenses? Maybe she's talk—maybe he's talking about senator—or, sorry, he's talking about MP Bezan, who's currently embroiled in a court case with his overspending on his election. Maybe he's talking about the Honourable Mr. Toews, who was convicted of a crime. All of those people that I mentioned—I mean, the list can go on and on, but those are all people that he's talking about accountability, those are all from his party. Whoa, look at that. You want to talk about the bastion of accountability over there on that side of the floor? I think not.

You know, I listened to him talk about the flood, and he said, you know, that we have used it as an excuse to not call an election. You know what, Mr. Speaker? We were busy preparing for a flood. You know what they did when they were in power? The mayor of Morris said they had one sand bag in the flood of '97. They were ill-prepared. Yes, we were preparing, and with the amount of snowfall we had, everybody thought that there was a flood coming. Luckily, we had a great, long, cold spring—unfortunately for us motorcyclists—but we had a long, cold spring that saw a very, very prolonged melt, and we did not see that flood. But had we have called the election and a flood would've happened, I'm sure that the other side of the House would've whined about it too.

You know, they whine when we talk about a short call. When we did it for the Leader of the

Opposition's area, oh, they whined, it's too soon. It's August. Oh my goodness, it's family time. Then they whine when we say, well, you know what, there's a flood. And we're going to prolong it, and then they held us in the House, so now we're going to do it. We're still within the time frame mandated by law, and we're going to do it, and the members from Morris will have great representation, I'm sure.

Now, it seems to be on their side of the House that it's all about negative and complaining. I don't understand it, but, you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has his conspiracy theories about why we haven't called the election. Maybe his views are that, you know, the shooter in the grassy knoll was actually Hoffa wearing a tinfoil hat—I don't know, but he seems to have all these great conspiracy theories about things.

I then listened earlier to this member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) who complimented the great new Member of Parliament for the La Verendrye area and—Provencher area, sorry, Mr. Speaker—and I'm kind of disappointed that the member for Emerson took that stance, because that member for Provencher was in the news saying that he thinks that Evan Wiens fabricated the whole thing. That is shameful. That young man has gone through more than any—most of us in this House have gone through in our lives, and he's not even 18 yet and he's gone through some very traumatic events, and the MP for that area discounted them as that he was just lying and not telling the truth. And the member for Emerson says that he thinks he's a great member. Well, I guess we know where the member for Emerson stands. He certainly doesn't stand with Evan Wiens.

Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, we hear about the member for Emerson always complaining—the cross-border shopping we're going to—the PST is going to raise—the people that will go cross-border shopping. Well, the federal government raised the limit to cross-border shopping to \$800, the federal government, the Conservative government. We didn't hear anything from them complaining about it when that happened—[interjection] No, now, okay, okay, that's been done. It's been done for a little bit of time and everybody agrees that, yes, people are going cross-border shopping because the federal government raised the cap. He's now saying that people are going to drive from Emerson—and I'll give him that. I'll go from Emerson because it's right on the border—and they're going to go to Grand Forks for the weekend to save, get this, \$8; 1 per cent PST on



\$800 is \$8, because you're allowed to bring back \$800. But what he doesn't count in is the fact that unless he has some amazing vehicle, which I'd love to know about, you got to drive there. So there's gas, and I'm betting that it's more than eight bucks to get there. He also doesn't count on that you got to stay for 48 hours, so there's a couple of hotels. Oh, oh, I guess he gets free hotels when he's down there, but Conservatives seem to have things that are on the take all the time. Then you also got to factor in food. You know, they want to talk about going cross-border shopping to save \$8, it's such a falsity. Like I said before, you could sail the Titanic through their arguments and not hit a fact.

You know, the New Democrats love Morris, and we're going to run hard in Morris and hopefully we'll win in Morris because, you know what? Those people deserve a good representative, unlike the representative that wanted to quit. She decided for whatever reasons, but she just walked away from her constituents.

And, you know, they complain about representation, but it seems to be a pattern on their side of the House. We've seen two by-elections—well, we will see two by-elections coming up shortly on their side of the House. Look at our side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're all here representing our people. They decided to walk away, we decided to represent, and you know what? It's not just that time, it's past history. The Leader of the Opposition was the EMO officer or EMO minister at the time in '97 when the flood was coming, and he decides, well, I'm going to quit and run for Parliament and, you know, he wanted to be ambitious, he wanted to be the leader of this country. Well, he didn't win that. He stayed for two terms, got—made sure he got his pension in—and then quit that, then came back to now try to be the leader of this province. Hopefully, that'll never happen.

You know, they talk about all of this transparency, but, I mean, everything that we see goes against that. They voted against the Senate—they voted against the Senate, the very corrupt Senate that they—they voted against it saying that there should be senator reform. And I read this into the debate last time, Mr. Speaker, and I guess, you know, it's such a fantastic article, and maybe the member for Morris, he said that he didn't think that I had any good facts to put on the record, maybe he just didn't understand me. So I'm going to read very slowly for him so—[interjection]—Emerson, sorry, the member

for Emerson (Mr. Graydon). I will read it out very slowly into the record so he can understand me this time, because I know last time he seemed to have some difficulty with the facts: What happened to the independence of the Senate? Then: It is a place now populated with elected party politicians. How would that impact the independent thinking and sober thought of the Red Chamber? Clearly, one should be concerned about that level of partisanship and politicalization beyond what it already is that an elected Senate would foster.

And, if you think that the involvement of the Prime Minister's office in the current Senate scandal is troubling, try to imagine the level of political interference that would be if both the federal government and the majority of senators, as the case is today, belonged to the same party. Fearing punishment, what sort of backroom deals, pressure tactics and horse trading would be going on in the upper house then? According to those who advocate vigorously for elected Senate, should really be careful what they wish for. Elected senators not only fuel unhelpful partisanship and legislative obstructionism, but it also empowers those same senators to act on their legitimacy.

\* (11:20)

So instead of most rubber-stamping body, Canada's Senate of elected parliamentarians would then be in a position to push back against their counterparts in the lower house. Of course, all of that inevitably translates into political paralysis, partisan finger pointing and frequent political crises. And does anyone think that this would be healthy for our democratic process and responsive federal government? Now, I ask them, Mr. Speaker, do they really think that? Do they think that that's the best way to go for Canada? Because they voted against the abolition of the Senate.

You know, I hear the Leader of the Opposition talk all the time that he's a self-made man and that only people who create jobs matter. He waves his finger at me saying, did you ever create one job? You know what? No, I don't create a job. But I welded the bridges that that member drives over, and I work with the nurses who provide his family good health care, and I'd like—and I support the teachers that he wants to cut, that provide education to my children and his children. This—the member of the opposition claims he's a self-made man. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I believe it, because he worships himself. He worships his own creator.

It's unbelievable. The tax burden has been shifted for the first time in Canada onto the taxpayer from corporations. It used to be that corporations paid more. For the first time in the history of Canada, now we are going to be—it's going to be the taxpayer that is paying more.

They want to talk about being champions of democracy and justice. This is what's happening in their party, who's running the federal government right now: Senate scandals, appointing people to plum positions who are involved in illegal offshore moving of money. We're talking about corruption to its core. And they want to talk about democracy, Mr. Speaker? I think that if they want to talk about proper representation, maybe they should stop quitting, and start representing their ridings.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** It's a pleasure to rise and put some words on record in regards to this important resolution.

I would like to thank and congratulate the member from Steinbach for bringing forward this resolution, Failure to Call the Morris Constituency By-Election. The member from Steinbach understands that Manitobans have the right to vote and have representation, and that's exactly what this resolution is about.

I've been listening to the debate on the previous bill and what has been put on record as far as this resolution goes, and Mr. Speaker, it has absolutely no relevance to the resolution. It shows what the members opposite think about the rights of the people, of Manitobans. They talk about everything from the past. They go back to the Stone Age, and they're not looking at what is going on here today. And I'm glad that they're willing to put words on record as to what their feelings are, because it'll show the people of Manitoban—Manitoba what they're really about.

I've been an MLA for two years now, and I know that every day I receive phone calls, emails, from constituents that need help. They ask questions. A lot of them are easy to solve. A lot of them it takes a phone call to one of the ministers, and things get done. But when people don't have that option, where do they turn to?

I mean, obviously, some of the members opposite must not get phone calls, because their constituents probably have no confidence in them. They figure that these guys, there's no use phoning

them, because they don't know what they're doing or they don't care what—the people of Manitoba. You know, Mr. Speaker, democracy is something that Manitobans value, respect and protect. Democracy establishes and protects the freedom of Manitobans as individuals and as a society. I mean, it's something that we all need to look at.

We talk about the Senate scandals, we talk about everything else, but it has absolutely no relevance to what the rights of Manitobans are. And that's exactly what this bill and this resolution are about, is the rights of Manitobans—the rights of Manitobans to be able to express their opinion, the rights of Manitobans to go out there and talk to their MLAs, talk to them and explain some of their problems so they can get things straightened out. A lot of it has to do with financial help. And if they have no MLA, who do they turn to?

The ministers can say, well, we're in government, they can call us. But I'd like to know how many times phone calls aren't returned because they're just too busy to talk about some of these small issues. And as MLAs, that is our job. Our job is to represent the people of this province, not to stand there and talk about the history of the past, not to not help the people, but to do something for the people.

This is the longest delay in calling a by-election in the last 20 years, and I'd like to ask the Premier why. I mean, it's the Premier's sole responsibility to call this election. Does he himself not believe in the rights of Manitobans? Or is he just looking for the right date that'll work best for partisan politics for the NDP? I mean, everybody in this province deserves to have representation in the fastest possible way, and there's been a lot of time to have called a by-election by now.

But this Premier (Mr. Selinger) is failing his duty. He is failing his duty to the residents of the Morris constituency. The Morris constituency deserves representation. By not calling a by-election, the Premier is disrespecting all of Manitobans, not just Morris, or now in the Virden area, but all of them. And a lot of the things that are being put on record here also totally disrespect Manitobans. I mean, the federal by-election that was just—two of them that were just held, you know, three months and five months. They were called, they were put into place, and things happened.

This government of ours, it stated that, well, you know, they want to have both elections at the same

time. But yet Elections Manitoba said it was no difference in cost to have them one at a time or two, but now they can call both of them, but they are not doing that. There's no cost savings to putting them both at the same time, but just another NDP excuse.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a very important one, and I know that the NDP are just going to stand up there and speak it out, but I would ask them to really think carefully of what they're doing here by not allowing Manitobans the right to have a vote and the right to representation. A by-election should have been called a long time ago, especially in Morris to make sure the people there can fulfill their rights.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because I know the NDP are just going to just jump up there and speak it out.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Yes, they're setting the bar real high with this one, Mr. Speaker. The idiocy surrounding this motion is almost physically palpable. To give you the TSN highlights here, one of their folks quit; the last time one of their people quit, they complained we called the by-election too quickly; now they're complaining that when another one of their people quit, it hasn't happened yet. So, whatever.

The more interesting thing to me, Mr. Speaker, and I love it when Conservatives try to talk about fairness in elections. The rot that is at the core of the Conservative Party is something that I always enjoy reminding all Manitobans about, particularly the good citizens of Morris—not their fault that their MLA decided to walk away from her responsibilities to her constituents before her term was up. She went around, door to door, saying vote for me. Oops, I had a different idea; I'm going to leave now. That's not their fault. I think they're going to remember that when we come around in the by-election and we put up a very strong candidate and run a very strong campaign.

Not the fault of the residents of Morris, but the residents of Morris will have a chance to say, is the behaviour of their local Conservatives, whether they be federal, whether they be provincial, or any other level, is that something that really deserves their vote anymore?

When we look at the Senate scandal that the Conservatives in Manitoba have fully endorsed, when we look at the Senate scandal which the lone Liberal whatever he is now—not the leader, but that guy—you know, he fully supported it. What on earth

does that tell the citizens of the country? Everybody knows that the hottest commodity going for Christmas stockings this year is your Mike Duffy political scandal bobblehead doll. I want a complete collector's set, you know, and I imagine there's going to be members opposite who will get their own doll before too long if we don't get rid of the Senate in Ottawa.

\* (11:30)

They may believe, Mr. Speaker, that this supposedly sober and supposedly thinking, second-handedly, Chamber in Ottawa is an appropriate institution. In truth, it's a place for bagmen and bagwomen to go out and raise money for their political parties and to try and influence political events and elections from one end of this country to the other, from coast to coast to coast. And they don't do it using their own resources. They don't do it using their own party funds. They do it using public money that is stolen from the public and funnelled into the Senate chambers. That behaviour is perfectly normal if you're a Tory. If you're a Conservative, taking public money and using it for your own personal good—perfectly okay. If you are a Liberal, taking public money and using it for your own personal good, that is absolutely acceptable. If you're a New Democrat or if you're a normal person or if you're someone who has more than two brain cells to rub together, you look at that situation and you say, that is absolutely unacceptable.

We brought forward a motion calling for the Senate to be abolished, the most obvious policy decision any elected official in this country could make. And we had the remarkable circumstance of both opposition parties in Manitoba opposing us on it. Thank goodness we have a clear majority, Mr. Speaker. Common sense was able to carry the day, two days ago, here in the Chamber.

The scandals that surround the Conservative Party, and also surround the Liberal Party—I—and let's not let them off the hook—are really quite pronounced. And, of course, they aren't limited to this particular time frame in Canada's history. They're not limited to just the Senate. I—can you imagine the communications challenge that the Prime Minister is facing when he finds out that the person he put in charge of making all of our little toonies and loonies for, you know, normal people to use, was actually funnelling millions and millions of toonies and loonies illegally offshore to help—oh, probably Conservative friends not pay money into

the public purse, so that we as a Province do not have the money that we should be getting from Ottawa, because of these people, to then put into the very valuable infrastructure and social services that every single Canadian is entitled?

The elite in this country look at the Senate as a tool to keep themselves as the elite. You knock out the Senate, you will do one of the most important things for democracy in this country as you possibly could. Conservatives over there are perfectly fine with multi-millionaires and the occasional billionaire not paying their fair share in taxes, quite clearly. They are absolutely fine with putting people in charge of public institutions who are then robbing the public purse of the money that we need. I—it's often occurred to me, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, this type of behaviour and the selling off of Crown corporations, the giving away of government assets at bargain-basement prices, it reminds me that voting Conservative is like hiring somebody to steal from you. It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

And we can even—*[interjection]* Yes, black cats and white cats. You know, why not. Let's bring that in here. That's—this is—Tommy Douglas, Canada's most revered Canadian, the reason why all of the members opposite and all of their kids and all of their grandparents, the only reason that they're able to walk into a public health facility and receive the care that they deserve and that they need is because this party's Tommy Douglas fought for, implemented public medicare in Canada. And he had many beautiful speeches. And I would encourage members opposite to do some research on the words of Tommy Douglas—not our only great spokesperson, but one of them. And one of his favourite stories was Mouseland. And the version of it that I heard is he was campaigning in rural Saskatchewan, and Tommy was big on ideas, but not real big in stature. So they asked him to climb up on top of a local piece of farm machinery, it happened to be a manure spreader, and he said, my friends, today's the first time I'm going to deliver a speech from the Liberal platform. And, I mean, I wasn't quite there, so, you know, take this with a grain of salt, but that's the version of the story I heard.

And, then, he told the story of Mouseland. And it was this marvellous little community of mice, the only problem was they were ruled by cats, white cats as it happened. And so the mice would go about and do their work and work hard and try and look after their families, and the rulers, the cats, would do what cats do to mice, and, after a while, the mice got a

little bit tired of this and they called for an election, and they threw the white cats out of office. And what did they do? They elected the black cats to come in and to be their rulers. And this went back and forth and back and forth throughout history, Conservative and Liberal fat cats taking their turns clobbering the country and destroying the public morale, until one day a very brave mouse put up his little paw and he said, why don't we elect a mouse to lead us? And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how you end up with New Democratic governments in majority positions making a positive difference for people all across the country.

Something that all Canadians should keep in mind when we see the Liberal Party, they hadn't changed any. You know, they're voting against measures that would improve the planet, they're defending the Senate in Ottawa just as much as Harper is. That—why do you think our local lone Liberal guy, whatever he is now, why do you think he voted for it? It's because the new haircut, it's the new haircut that the Liberals have that's told them that's the way you got to vote. That doesn't sound very different to me, there's nothing else that's changed in the Liberal Party, they went to the barber shop, they got a new haircut, now they're supposedly all like new and improved and stuff, hasn't had a single policy idea come out yet.

And you know what, we'll have—*[interjection]* Well, there is also that piece.

You know what, there's so much material to work here, Mr. Speaker. With my last 30 seconds, let me just remind Manitobans of a local example of how much Conservatives care about their electoral rights: as many liars, that was what Judge Monnin summed up our honourable Leader of the Opposition's behaviour, his government under former Premier Filmon, when they set up a phony political party to try and split the vote in NDP ridings by lying to Aboriginal people. That is the history of the Conservative party. They can bring forward issues on elections any time they want.

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** It's my pleasure to rise and put some words on the record with respect to this resolution this morning. And I always appreciate the opportunity to follow the member for Wolesey (Mr. Altemeyer) because I know I won't be lacking in terms of any material that I need to draw into this debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, there—I just have to say from the outset how disappointed I am to hear the member

from Wolseley characterize the service of the MLA for Morris by saying she walked away. And I just can't say how disappointed I am, but then if that is what the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) is putting on the record, on the official record of the Manitoba Legislature here, then we have some questions for the member for Wolseley.

If the terminology he's employing is walked away, then we have to say, well, what about individuals like MaryAnn Mihychuk, did she walk away from the Manitoba Legislature? What about the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) who walked away and came back and may very well walk away again? Mr. Speaker, did the member for Elmwood, in stepping away from his seat, did he walk away from his constituents?

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member for Wolseley, did the former premier for the province of Manitoba, did Gary Doer walk away from his constituents, because using this member's own words, those constituents elected that member to be in this Legislature and represent them.

And let's think about the reasons why Mr. Doer walked away. Why did Mr. Doer leave after his service to the citizens of this province? Oh, I forgot, it was a patronage position. He was put there by a sitting Prime Minister and he went to serve his country in another capacity. If the member for Wolseley met Mr. Doer now, would he say with the same conviction as he said earlier, Mr. Doer, you walked away—you walked away.

\* (11:40)

I would caution this member that he is endeavouring to paint a picture when we must understand as legislators—we must understand—that people come here and they come to serve and they come with the best of intentions in the same way that the member for Morris came to this Chamber and represented her constituents for 10 years in this place, and I will not and my colleagues will not stand by while this member tries to mar her record of service.

In the time remaining to me, I want to put a few words on the record with respect to democracy. And I know earlier this week I did stand and I said how important to the enterprise of democracy is a commitment to have elections. We know that this week, Mr. Speaker, because it was only this week that the by-elections took place, the federal by-elections in this province, the by-election in

Provencher, the by-election in Brandon-Souris, and that's democracy at work. We had vacancies created because life goes on.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

It seems like members are in good spirits this morning, which is good to see, and there's lots to discuss. But if I might suggest, for those members wishing to have a private conversation, that they might use the loge to my right or the loge to my left or perhaps another room in the Legislative Building.

I would very much like to hear the continuing comments of the honourable member from Morden-Winkler. So if you'd at least give me that opportunity to hear his comments, then I would appreciate that.

The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, to continue.

**Mr. Friesen:** Thank you.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I was a band director in the public school for 12 years, so I'm used to speaking above a little bit of noise in the background, but for a while there it was starting to sound like trombones in the hands of grade 7s for a while.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, this last week we saw democracy in action. We saw two federal by-elections called because members who had given service to their constituents—life had gone on, decisions had to be made, decisions were undertaken and changes took place and those by-elections were held. And for these members of the other side to somehow sit across the way and fidget in their seats and somehow try to provide a rationale that is in any way palatable that when it comes to saying, well, a 10-month wait for a by-election is no big deal, we must categorically reject that. All Manitobans must categorically reject that. Any Manitoban who sees value in the exercise of democracy must reject the actions of this government to sit on their hands while the constituents of Morris go unrepresented in the Manitoba Legislature. It is not right. It is not just. It is not in the spirit of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week and even earlier this morning the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) got up and he spoke very clearly about the function of a constituency office. He spoke very clearly, and I must say, for a member who's only been in the Legislature, as I have, for two years, the new members have come to understand very quickly how important it is, how important the interface of a

legislative constituency office is to the working out of the democratic office. That is the first front. It is the first point that have constituents avail themselves of to get to government because we must acknowledge at the outset that working with government can be a difficult concept. It can be an ordeal. People do not always know how to get the answers they need. Whether it's a casework issue, whether it's a correspondence issue, we know that those offices and our members serve a function in representing the interests, answering the questions, getting the information, polling down the barriers and helping people access government.

And that's what needed to go on here and it needed to go on here because we are in session. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I don't have to remind you; I don't have to remind the table officers; I don't have to remind the members on the other side that we came out of one of the longest sittings of the history of this Chamber. Wouldn't it be important during that time for the constituents of Morris to be represented? Well, I would suggest, absolutely, because these constituents of Morris, like my constituents, like the constituents of La Verendrye, like the constituents in River East, like the constituents in Tuxedo, had things to say to a government who stood up and said, read my lips, no new taxes—and then raised taxes. They had things to say to a government that proceeds in a disrespectful fashion to mandatorily amalgamate municipalities across Manitoba. They had things to say about a government that suggested that they would address bullying in schools and then wrote a bill and rejected every attempt to strengthen the bill to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say, we know the Premier (Mr. Selinger) has the power, he has the authority. We know it is up to him to do this and that is why it is so important that we had this opportunity today to speak on this bill brought forward for the member of Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). This is an important issue and is important for this government to pay attention to this. This should not be a point of contention for members across the way. This should be one of those occasions on which all members can agree to participate and to proceed.

So do away with the name-calling from this member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau), do away with the condescending comments on the record by the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer). For goodness' sakes, let us stand together, shoulder to shoulder. Let us talk about the need to call a by-election in the spirit of democracy. Let us do

what is right for the citizens of Morris. Let us do what is right in the interest of all Manitobans.

And so I welcome the participation of these members across the way. We stand in one accord as members on this side of the House, calling for the by-election to take place now in a—in the constituency of Morris. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to get up in this House and speak to this resolution that my friend from Steinbach has brought forward. I want to start, of course, by offering—I haven't had the chance yet but I wanted to offer my public congratulations to Larry Maguire, who is the new MP for Brandon-Souris. It is a riding I hold close to my heart. That's where I tested out my fledgling electoral wings in 1997 and, up until a few days ago, Larry and I had the same record in Brandon-Souris. And now he has certainly bested me and I do think he will be a good representative for those people.

It was an entertaining evening, as we watched things go back and forth. I was thinking that evening about my experience running in Brandon-Souris and a few days after the election had been over I heard from a couple of folks who were supporting me out in the rural part of the riding. And they had this experience that kind of shocked them, that they had—the day after the election they'd walked into the coffee shop in town, and people said, oh, there's our NDPers, there's our NDPers. And they hadn't put up a sign, they hadn't advertised their intention and so, you know, they asked the folks there, like, well, how did you know who we voted for? And they said, well, on election night there were two NDP votes and there never had been any before you moved here. So, that—you know, so we weren't peaking too soon in Brandon-Souris, as they say. But it was a great experience for me.

And I also do want to congratulate the NDP candidates in both Brandon-Souris and Provencher. You know, I have heard much punditry and spin about the results of those by-elections, much of which focuses on the fact that it, indeed, was, I think, a wake-up call to the federal Conservative Party. I think this is—House is the only place where I've heard from the members opposite that somehow they were expecting an NDP breakthrough in Provencher, and when it didn't materialize, that must be a shock to us.

I do want to offer my congratulations to the NDP candidates because it is never easy to run in an election where you know you are a developing

riding. And the truth of elections are that more people lose them than win them. And those of us who are fortunate and privileged to be elected should not gloat when we are victorious. We should remember that the people who ran against us also ran hard and also ran because they believed in something, made sacrifices of personal time and family time to do that, and so I think, you know, we can be magnanimous in victory, as well, and thank those people.

\* (11:50)

Now, people, once they get elected—some folks leave before they finish their term, and they do that for all kinds of reasons. I don't know why the former member for Morris left. I enjoyed working with her. She was a very good House leader. She was a very strong woman in her caucus. She was a strong woman to work with. I've heard many stories about why she left. I don't know which stories are accurate. I heard that she just didn't quite click with the new leader and didn't really find that it was a very comfortable place for her, and maybe that's why she left. Perhaps we will never know. But there will be a by-election in Morris. I don't want members opposite to labour under any conspiracy theories. There will, indeed, be one there.

You know, a lot has been said in this House about democracy, and I think that it would be instructive to review some of what has happened in our recent history in terms of democracy in this province.

And I, in preparation for the discussion here today, was looking back at the Monnin inquiry and at some of the things that the chief justice said at the time, and let's remember what that inquiry was into. There were allegations following the 1995 election, allegations that were quite astounding, really, that the provincial Progressive Conservative Party had funded and encouraged candidates to run in ridings where there were large Aboriginal populations under a party named the Aboriginal Voice Party in an effort to split the vote in those constituencies so that they could gain votes.

That is a shocking allegation, I think, Mr. Speaker. It was shocking at the time, and it took some time for people to come forward who had evidence that that is, indeed, what happened, and that, of course, resulted in the Monnin inquiry. And this is not the long past, this is just in the last 20 years that this has happened.

And I think it's important that we look back on some of the things that were said by Chief Justice Monnin at the time that were in that inquiry, and this was a conspiracy that involved highly-placed civil servants, the Treasury Board secretary at the time. In my current role as Minister of Finance, I cannot quite comprehend that the secretary of Treasury Board would be complicit in a scheme to fix an election. That is incredible to me. Just let that sink in for a moment, that that was what was the case in 1995.

So let's look at what Chief Justice Monnin had to say about the rigging of that election, and, of course, the quote that we've heard in here from him: In all my years on the bench, he said, I never encountered as many liars in one proceeding as I did during this inquiry. What else did he say? He said, it is disheartening, indeed, to realize that an oath to tell the truth means so little to some people. What else did he say? A vote-rigging plot constitutes an unconscionable debasement of the citizens' right to vote.

To reduce the voting rights of individuals is a violation of our democratic system. He is talking about the attempt to fix an election, not waiting a few months to call a by-election when a seat becomes vacant, which is within the law, Mr. Speaker. What else did he say? The basic premise of the vote-rigging plot was that Aboriginal people in these ridings had historically voted for the NDP, but the Aboriginal vote would be split if there were Aboriginal candidates running. The attempt here at vote splitting was, in my opinion, clearly unethical and morally reprehensible. And I would concur with that, not only was it unethical, it was highly cynical to believe that—to take Aboriginal people so unseriously that they—their vote could be split by this kind of attempt, to treat their votes with that much callousness, a population of people who more than many populations need strong and effective representation—that, to me, beyond the ethics of trying to fix an election, to do it in this way is what, as in Justice Monnin's words, is morally reprehensible.

And this I found an interesting quote from that report: I cannot ignore the fact that, throughout this episode, especially during the investigation and at the hearings, some of these witnesses exhibited a degree of arrogance or an I-know-better attitude. And who is he talking about as these witnesses? Highly placed staff in the Premier's office at the time.

So I think it's instructive to remember those times, those dark, dark days that are not in our distant past, but are in our recent past. And perhaps the MLAs there don't think that was a dark period in our time, the opposition MLAs. Perhaps for them that was business as usual. I hope that that's not true, but I worry that it is.

What else have we seen just from the member who put forward this resolution, not so long ago brought legislation into this House to suppress voting, brought legislation in this House, legislation that's been discredited in the United States where there has been an attempt by Republicans to suppress Democratic votes by requiring voters to bring ID to the polls to prove they are who they say they are—exactly what the member opposite brought forward—exactly what the member brought forward to do. And for an elected member to bring forward legislation designed to make it harder for people to vote, especially people who tend to be disenfranchised, I don't think that's what any of us are here to do.

That kind of voter suppression is something that we've seen increasingly in the United States, and I fear that those kinds of tactics are slowly infecting the party opposite, and I hope that those things don't come to pass. We will continue to fight against them. We have, since we became government, brought in laws to make it easier for people to vote, to make sure that polls are open earlier, that there are more advanced polls, that now you can vote at the airport on your way out of town. We want people to be engaged. We want them to be involved in elections. We continue to encourage people to do that.

The members opposite have never been about that. They have always been about only encouraging those with power to maintain that power. That is what they continue to be about, Mr. Speaker. I believe that our democracy has seen progress under this government and I hope that it will continue to do so. I know that it will continue to do so, and very soon, I'm sure, we'll be—

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

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to speak in this august Chamber we call the Legislative Assembly, and I waited for a lifetime and a half to exercise my vocal chords and not sing but speak. It is a very important issue that we are now talking about, representation, and we're talking about the democratic rights of people.

The main thing that struck my mind during those first few days when I was missing the presence of somebody from our Legislature, I said, what happened? Why is she not attending our session? And it was really unnerving. I said there must be something really serious that happened. I worried about her health and I worried about her condition at that time because I knew that she would always be here. Every time that there was a session, she would be sauntering in and greeting me with a good morning or a good afternoon. She was one of those vibrant personalities in our Legislature.

But then I found that it's kind of a different situation, that she quit. She quit on the basis of her desire, she said, to help out in the construction business of her sons, which could be true. And I would think—I would think—that I'll do the same thing if I had a chance.

Now, I wish to congratulate a former member of the Legislature who became a Member of Parliament, same role—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Tyndall Park will have seven minutes remaining.

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, November 28, 2013**

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