

First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
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SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 29, 2007

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Dividing of Trans-Canada Highway

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The seven-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway passing through Headingley is an extremely busy stretch of road, averaging 18,000 vehicles daily.

This section of the Trans-Canada Highway is one of the few remaining stretches of undivided highway in Manitoba, and it has seen more than 100 accidents in the last two years, some of them fatal.

Manitoba's Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation told a Winnipeg radio station on October 16, 2007, that when it comes to highways' projects the provincial government has a flexible response program, and we have a couple of opportunities to advance these projects in our five-year plan.

In the interests of protecting motorist safety, it is critical that the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is completed as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to consider making the completion of the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley in 2008 an urgent provincial government priority.

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider evaluating whether any other steps can be taken to improve motorist safety

while the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is being completed.

This is signed by Suzanne Storkmann, Pat O'Meara, Alice Spencler and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Retired Teachers' Cost of Living Adjustment

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Since 1977, Manitoba teachers have made contributions to the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Pension Adjustment Account, or the PAA, to finance a Cost of Living Adjustment, COLA, to their base pension once they retire.

Despite this significant funding, 11,000 retired teachers and 15,000 active teachers currently find themselves facing the future with little hope of a meaningful COLA.

For 2007, a COLA of only .63 percent was paid to retired teachers.

The COLA paid in recent years has eroded the purchasing power of teachers' pension dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider adequate funding for the PAA on a long-term basis to ensure that the current retired teachers, as well as all future retirees, receive a fair COLA.

Signed by Jack Carnegie, Dave Frye, George Brown and many, many other Manitobans.

Personal Care Homes—Virden

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial government has a responsibility to provide quality long-term care for qualifying Manitobans.

Personal care homes in the town of Virden currently have a significant number of empty beds that cannot be filled because of a critical nursing shortage in these facilities.

In 2006, a municipally formed retention committee was promised that the Virden nursing shortage would be resolved by the fall of 2006.

Virtually all personal care homes in southwestern Manitoba are full, yet as of early October 2007, the nursing shortage in Virden is so severe that more than one-quarter of the beds at Westman Nursing Home are sitting empty.

Seniors, many of whom are war veterans, are therefore being transported to other communities for care. These communities are often a long distance from Virden and family members are forced to travel for more than two hours round trip to visit their loved ones, creating significant financial and emotional hardship for these families.

Those seniors that have been moved out of Virden have not received assurance that they will be moved back to Virden when these beds become available.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider taking serious action to fill the nursing vacancies at personal care homes in the town of Virden and to consider reopening the beds that have been closed as the result of this nursing shortage.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider prioritizing the needs of those citizens that have been moved out of their community by committing to move those individuals back into Virden as soon as the beds become available.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by Colleen Gibson, Ardeth Duffield, Audrey Stuart and many others.

Public Meeting—Premier's Attendance

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly:

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Premier (Mr. Doer) has been silent on the issue related to serious allegations with respect to his office.

The Premier is not answering questions related to the said issue inside the Legislature.

There is no indication that the Premier is enforcing Manitoba's code of ethics for political parties.

Based on the 1999 Monnin report inquiry, leaders of political parties are obligated to enforce the code of ethics.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier to consider attending the November 5 public meeting at the Munroe public library, which is located in his constituency.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by E. Tan, A. Ramos and R. Alvaran and many, many other fine Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations First Report

Mr. Daryl Reid (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its First Report.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Meetings:

Your committee met on the following occasions:

Wednesday, September 24, 2003

Monday, November 21, 2005

Thursday, October 25, 2007

All meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2003

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2004

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2005

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2006

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2007

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the November 21, 2005, meeting:

*Mr. Aglugub
Ms. Brick (Chairperson)
Hon. Mr. Chomiak
Mr. Hawranik
Mr. Jha
Mrs. Mitchelson
Mr. Penner
Mr. Reid
Hon. Mr. Robinson
Mr. Schellenberg
Mr. Schuler*

At the November 21, 2005, meeting your committee elected Mr. Aglugub as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings:

*Mr. Dewar for Hon. Mr. Robinson
Mr. Faurschou for Mr. Schuler*

Committee Membership for the October 25, 2007, meeting:

*Hon. Mr. Ashton
Mr. Dewar
Ms. Howard
Ms. Marcelino
Mr. Reid
Hon. Mr. Selinger
Mr. Swan
Mr. Cullen
Mr. Faurschou
Mr. McFadyen
Mr. Pedersen*

Your committee elected Mr. Reid as the Chairperson.

Your committee elected Ms. Howard as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings:

Mr. Jha for Mr. Dewar

Officials Speaking on Record

Mr. Bob Brennan, President and Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Vic Schroeder, Chairman

Reports Considered and Passed

Your committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2003

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2004

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2005

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2006

Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 2007

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:40)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): I'd like to table the First Quarterly Financial Statement for the Communities Economic Development Fund.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Sharoo Modha and Alice Little, who is a constituent of the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), and Bobby Sturby, who is the mother of the honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

I'd also like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today students from the Communications and Media program at Canadian Mennonite University under the direction of Donald Benham.

Also in the public gallery we have with us from Red River College Language Training Center 20 adult English as an Additional Language students under the direction of Debbie Storie. This school is situated in the constituency of the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard).

Also in the public gallery we have from Bothwell School 38 grades 5 and 6 students under the direction of Mr. Peter Heese. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Power Line Reasons for Location on West Side

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Premier has indicated that one of the main reasons for going ahead with the construction of a third bipole line was to enhance the security and reliability for power supply, both for people who are here in Manitoba who rely on electricity in their hospitals, their homes, their schools and in their daily lives, and in terms of ensuring we have a reliable and secure power supply for export markets. The higher the reliability, the better price we get on export markets, the wealthier we are as Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, we learned on Thursday night that one of the factors related to security and reliability is being able to move ahead as quickly as possible, but because of the actions of this Premier and the NDP government, the line will be delayed by four years, two years of delay in the approval process, and an extra two years of delay because of the longer line going down the west side. Four years behind on a matter that the Premier has been saying is urgent.

So my question to the Premier is: Why has he chosen the option that is increasing the risk to Manitobans?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has people in the former Cabinet that had a recommendation in 1990 to deal with the

issue of reliability with the Dorsey station and its vulnerability, and deal with a third line in 1990.

At the committee on Thursday night, the member also learned what we've been saying is true, that the new proposed bipole 3 on the proposed west site, that's subject to environmental hearings, will be able to carry the power that the member opposite has alleged would be cancelled if that bipole 3 was built.

He incorrectly stated that Wuskwatim would be at risk. Well, the Wuskwatim was always going through the two bipoles that are in existence now. Obviously, the sequence is 2012, so therefore it would have to go on the existing lines, and Mr. Brennan confirmed that at committee. He also confirmed that Conawapa could go down the west side and the next potential dam, all subject to environmental licensing, Mr. Speaker, could go on the west side as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, further to that, Mr. Brennan stated that the 2,000 megawatts that would be part of reliability and sales would provide quote, lots of money to Hydro, something the member opposite has never acknowledged.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, we certainly look forward to those deals being concluded. I know that there's work going on by Hydro to increase revenue to Manitobans. The issue, of course, is the difference between the recommended east-side option and the dictated west-side option that the NDP government has imposed on Hydro. One of the factors relates to the risk of a west-side line versus the risk of an east-side line. On that topic we now know about the four years in delay.

Now, secondly, we've got an indication from Mr. Brennan at committee that by virtue of the fact that lines would be located close to highways in remote areas that this also increases the risk. Mr. Brennan says, and I quote, "this is especially true in remote areas." The risk is in remote areas. If you have a highway, you have people shooting insulators and this sort of thing. This is where we have the risk.

So I want to ask the Premier: Given that he has dictated the choice, given that the Premier has dictated a route that is going to involve 19 highways and provincial roads versus a route that would virtually be completely removed from highways and roads, including six provincial highways, 12 provincial roads, the Trans-Canada Highway, No. 16, it's going to have to cross Highway 10 twice on the route, I want to ask the Premier, normally—

An Honourable Member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McFadyen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Normally if you're going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars more on a project, you end up with less risk, but what this Premier is doing is spending more in order to get more risk.

I want to ask the Premier: Why has he ignored the advice of his experts that say that locating the line in the vicinity of remote highways is going to increase the risk of reliability of power that's relied on by Manitobans and which is critical for exports to external markets to increase the wealth of Manitobans?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, anybody that talks about highways in northern Manitoba should apologize to this Chamber. He is the one that talked about—he talks about reliability on Monday. On Tuesday, he's going to talk about stealing the money from northern and remote Manitoba by moving it all to southwest Manitoba, as he promised in the election campaign. He bravely promised that on the fields of Arthur-Virden, that he would take all the money from northern Manitoba and relocate that money and reallocate it as the Tories did the 1990s.

So, Mr. Speaker, his argument on reliability and on Hydro reliability rings hollow on this side of the House, because they don't spend any money in northern Manitoba on any highway, on any side of anyplace in Manitoba with their strategy.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, in committee over and over and over again, the issue and discussion of transmission lines, it was clear, provided by Mr. Brennan, that the whole issue of reliability is subject to the building of converters, the need for conversion stations to back up Dorsey, which is also part of the plan that we're bringing forward. Again, something that's been recommended since 1990.

Thirdly, again, I would confirm that Hydro said that 2,000 megawatts of power that will be available for both reliability and increased sales will provide considerable amount of revenue to Hydro and considerable—and Hydro will make quote, lots of money on this proposed route, something that, of course, contradicts members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I would also point out that the whole issue of timing is subject to environmental licensing. If it takes a lot longer to have an environmental licence or ultimately, if an

environmental licence is not granted on, for example, the east side, his argument will fall like a house of cards. A straight engineering line is not the same as getting an environmental licence, nor is it the same of having major, major delays, if not a full prohibition of building down the east side of Lake Winnipeg, which would put everything he says in risk of going even much later than the 2017 planned in-service date of the transmission line subject, again, to environmental licensing.

* (13:50)

Mr. McFadyen: So the Premier has not even made reference to the point about the four years in delay and the proximity to highways, Mr. Speaker. He's also talked about environmental risk, but he hasn't made any reference to the eight provincial parks and forests on the west side of Manitoba, the marshes that exist at Delta and northeast of Delta, the UNESCO Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve.

Mr. Brennan, I think, made the point very well in committee. He said there's risk on the east side, there's risk on the west side and that it was, basically, there are risks on both sides. We understand that. The issue here is which side has more risk and, clearly, when you look at the risk of highways, the risk of delay, the risk of extra length in line, we have the number of risks on the west side adding up. In addition to the line lost, the added cost, the fact that Mr. Brennan acknowledged in committee that a west-side line requires converter technology that an east-side line would not have required in order to allow for the transfer of power from the existing bipoles to the third bipole, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to ask the Premier, in reference to Mr. Brennan's comments about the inability to transfer load from the existing bipoles to the west side that would have been possible on the east side if they'd gone with the shorter route, Mr. Brennan says, and I quote: "I think the fact that you've got a longer line would create some risk. So I would think, assuming all other things being"—

An Honourable Member: What did he say about the east side?

Mr. McFadyen: Well, wait for it. They want to know what he said about the east side. Here's what he said: "So I would think, assuming, all other things being equal, that the east side, just because it's shorter, you would have more confidence in it." That's Mr. Brennan in committee Thursday night.

So, Mr. Speaker, given that Mr. Brennan says he would have more confidence in an east-side line from a risk and a reliability perspective, why is the Premier spending more money to increase the risk of Manitobans' power supply?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brennan went on to reiterate a recommendation that was made to members opposite in 1990. Of course, expecting Tories to build anything in Hydro is expecting a buzzard to say grace after meals. That's an old Sterling Lyon quote, so I should be careful.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brennan talked about the need for and the recommendation that Hydro's made on conversion stations on either side for dealing with reliability. He goes on to point out in committee, over and over and over again, that that will provide even 70 percent more and greater reliability because of the vulnerability of Dorsey than any transmission line, west or east.

Secondly, dealing with customers, the member opposite, in his cross examination on Thursday night, asked a question about customers. Mr. Brennan said more people are concerned—more people being the customers—some are concerned about the east side. For sure, there can be no doubt about that.

The only person that doesn't doubt that is the member opposite who represents a long line of Conservative Party members that have never developed a customer because they've never sold a megawatt in their life, never sold a megawatt.

Mr. Speaker, on CJOB on Friday morning, arising from the committee, there was a comment made about making more money, and on CBC radio there's a comment from environmentalists. There's a big difference between the east side of Lake Winnipeg and the west side. According to Ron Thiessen, for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness, the east side of Lake Winnipeg is an intact boreal forest whereas the west is not. It is an opportunity to protect the region for global ecological services.

Mr. Speaker, customers in Minnesota say it's a bigger deal, according to Mr. Brennan, a much bigger deal. There can be no doubt about it. The member opposite should lose his doubt and be sure of what side would create more problems for customer relations and the millions of dollars available.

Crocus Investment Fund Release of Receiver's Report

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, far from being a day late and a dollar short, it seems the Minister of Finance is four years late and \$200 million short. The minister flippantly said that he would, in fact, release the receiver's Crocus report that was put before the courts last week.

Does the minister have a copy of the report? Did the government sign a non-disclosure agreement? Or will he make that report public?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I'm just wondering if the member has asked all of his three questions in his first breath today.

The short answer is this, Mr. Speaker. When the judge in the court says that the report is ready to go public, we have said our lawyers will not object to that. The judge has not yet agreed to make the report available for wider distribution. That decision will be made in and about November 7. When the judge rules on that we will respect the ruling of the judge.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the last time I asked the question, the minister did not say anything about the judge releasing. What the question was, simply: Have you got a copy of the report at the present time? Has there been a non-disclosure signed? Or will you release the report? Do you have a copy of the report? Do you have a non-disclosure signed?

Mr. Selinger: Of the three questions he asked, I answered the last one in my last question. The answer to the first two questions is no and no.

And the member should know, just like the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) should know, we don't interfere with the way the police make decisions. We don't interfere with the way judges make decisions. Members opposite have no sense of distinction between the executive and the judicial branch and the enforcement branch of government. They would like to plough over that and implement a police state. We're not interested in doing that.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to my colleague but I have to respond to that. On November 7, this government will be able to petition the court to release that report. Will this minister instruct his legal counsel to, in fact, ask the courts to make that report public. If he does not do that, CTV, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, are asking the courts to

make that public. Will he ask his legal counsel to also ask for that report to be made public?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member should refer to my answer to the first question. We said when the judge is ready to release the court, our counsel will not stand in the way of the release of the report. We've made that very clear from the very outset. We will respect the ruling of the judge. We will not stand in the way of the report being released, and I'm sure that when the judge makes the decision in the public interest on November 7, we will respect that.

Antibiotic Resistant Infections Rates in Manitoba Hospitals

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I'm glad my colleague tried a third time, but he still didn't get an answer even on the third try.

An estimated 8,000 people a year in Canada die from infections that they obtain while they are in hospitals. That's as many who die from breast cancer or motor vehicle accidents a year combined. While the emergence of super bugs which are resistant to antibiotics, there is a greater need than ever to ensure that there is information and education.

Can the Minister of Health tell Manitobans why she sat on the information showing that Manitoba hospitals had a rate of infection for super bugs nearly three times the Canadian average, instead of telling Manitoba the information they deserve to know?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Certainly, issues of infection control are extremely important to our government and extremely important to the health-care professionals in Manitoba. We know that that's why we've been making investments, in addition to working with our people in hospitals and regional health authorities to ensure that this is important. We know that, although infection control has been the paramount concern of individuals in regional health authorities, it really came to light in the public eye after SARS and the development of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

We listened to those recommendations very carefully. We worked together with the colleges of nurses and physicians and surgeons, and we know that the work that's being done for public education in our hospitals is excellent.

* (14:00)

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I daresay the minister lost all of her power on one question.

People have a right to make an educated decision about their own health-care needs. This minister, despite having warnings, despite being given information that some of the Winnipeg hospitals had a rate of infection three times higher than the national average, didn't tell people about the concern for super bugs that they might get in those hospitals. There was no warning. There was no notice. There was no news conference. There was no press release.

Why did this Minister of Health hold back that information that was critical for people's health in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is just incorrect. In fact, Manitoba was one of the first, if not the first, province in Manitoba to develop antibiotic-resistant organism guidelines. These guidelines have been looked at by jurisdictions across Canada. We also note that hospital lobbies, bathrooms, hallways are posted clearly with signs about protocols that people can take about infection control when arriving in a hospital and leaving a hospital.

We also know that hospitals routinely track infection and take particular protocols with those individuals that are, indeed, affected. We want to make sure that everybody continues to know that they can do their individual part when visiting a loved one to ensure that those infections don't spread.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, still no answer, and maybe next year the Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan) will replace the minister on the powerfulness because she's refusing to answer this very, very important question. The NDP Minister of Health, in her answer, clearly believes that she knows better when it comes to people's health than they do. We disagree. We believe that people should have the information that they need to make real decisions when it comes to their own protection of health.

Will she commit today to ensure that the updated infection rates from certain deadly bugs at Manitoba hospitals will be made both public in those hospitals and also on a Web site, Mr. Speaker?

Ms. Oswald: Notwithstanding the member opposite's continued flattery, I suspect I'll be seeing something about it on his self-promoting Facebook site later on this evening. However, what's—

An Honourable Member: Do you read his Facebook?

Ms. Oswald: No. They tell me about it.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, it's critically important that we continue to work with our health professionals and with the public to ensure that they're acutely aware of everything that we can do to be protecting ourselves against the so-called super bugs. We're going to continue with our campaign in ensuring that this information is provided to individuals at hospital doors, at hospital infection control sites, in washrooms. We need to continue to provide that information, and we'll work together with our regional health authorities to even better promote protections that we can take.

Crime Rates Increase in Crimes Against Seniors

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Criminals have been targeting seniors in downtown Winnipeg. One victim was stabbed in a carjacking incident. Others were brutally beaten and attacked while walking downtown.

So I ask the Minister of Justice: Why has he failed to protect Manitoba seniors?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'm very pleased that recommendations made by the previous Attorney General and myself have been moved into bills with respect to criminal culpability, and onerous provisions on criminal sanctions have been introduced and we've supported. In fact, I was in Ottawa last week to support those recommendations and amendments to make it tough in the Criminal Code.

I'm also proud to be part of a government that brought in the senior Safety Aid program, something that's not been in place before that provides aid and advice to thousands of seniors to keep them secure in their homes.

Mr. Hawranik: Every election since 1999, the NDP promised to deliver safer communities. Yet, every year the violence and the criminal activity in downtown Winnipeg gets worse, carjackings, stabbings, personal assaults, robberies, all in one weekend on seniors during Seniors and Elders Month.

I ask the Minister of Justice: Why has he failed to make Winnipeg a safer community as he promised?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, there's a difference between talk and there's a difference between action,

and I suggest—[interjection] Maybe when the member does his notice in his newspaper that he does on a weekly basis, he'll explain to his citizens why he voted against 155 additional police officers, some of who patrol the downtown streets today, why he voted against it last week in the Legislature?

Government's Response

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, since 1999, Winnipeg has had the highest rate of violent crimes among all major cities in Canada. Since 1999, Winnipeg has also had the highest rate of robberies in Canada. The NDP promise of safer communities is really another hollow election promise made in 1999, in 2003 and now in 2007.

So I ask the Minister of Justice: When will he make Manitoba a safer community as he promised each one of those elections?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, consequences in the form of tougher sentences and more aggressive action have been taking place and have been suggested and were supported by members opposite. Preventive measures in the form of 55 schools opened extra hours so kids and youth can have a safe place to go, safer communities that have closed 250 prostitution, crack houses and related activities have been closed under this legislation, copied by Alberta, copied by Saskatchewan, copied by Nova Scotia, and we now—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: Good legislation, Mr. Speaker, that was put in place by this government, expanded police resources, expanded resources to monitor youth, put probation 24 hours around kids, that's what makes a difference and they voted against it all.

Trans-Canada Highway Headingley

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, there continues to be a huge concern about the safety of motorists using the Trans-Canada Highway through Headingley. The latest fatalities have brought renewed attention to the challenges on this heavily travelled undivided section of highway. There is an urgent need for this government to take steps to make this busy roadway safe now.

Will the Minister of Infrastructure tell this House what actions he has taken in the last two weeks to improve public safety on the Trans-Canada between Headingley and Winnipeg?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, we've been making a difference since 1999 on all of our highways, not just for the last two weeks.

Again, we have a plan, a \$4-billion budget over the next 10 years which is being looked at carefully by our engineers in our department. With regard to Headingley itself, we signed an MOU with the R.M. and working closely with the R.M. and many others on trying to improve the safety on that particular stretch of road.

Now, with regard to that particular stretch, Mr. Speaker, there have been divergence of opinions on what should happen there. The R.M. wants to increase the speed and increase more businesses. There's want to not have people move out in that particular area. In fact, members opposite when they were in government they were looking at a bypass going around the particular community of Headingley. So there's been a lot of discussions with regard to what to do with it.

Now we have a median in between Winnipeg and Headingley, about half of it has been done.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, I don't think that the minister should be patting himself on the back when clearly public safety is at risk on this highway.

Mr. Speaker, several days ago an assistant deputy minister from Infrastructure told a local radio station that the government has a flexible response program. I would say that the safety challenges with the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley are one of those situations that merits a swift response.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Infrastructure today commit to making this a priority for 2008 and immediately direct his department to determine what appropriate structures or signage could be used temporarily to enhance public safety on this stretch of highway?

* (14:10)

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, we do have a plan with regard to that stretch of road. We're looking at the divided highway with a raised median. We looked at added turning lanes. We looked at intersections with lights on it. The engineers within the department

have looked at this plan, and they're putting it together.

Members opposite seem to think that these construction projects can take place overnight. We just recently opened No. 1 highway to Saskatchewan, which took a great deal of money and effort to make sure that happened, Mr. Speaker, and we continue diligently every day. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lemieux: It's not me, as minister, that's patting myself on the back. I just want to thank the R.M.s that we work with, municipalities, the cities, towns and villages around the province of Manitoba, also, the staff of the Department of Transportation that work diligently, day in, day out, for the taxpayers of Manitoba to improve the safety on all of our highways.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, public safety is No. 1. There are 18,000 vehicles that travel the Trans-Canada Highway through Headingley daily, and this stretch of undivided highway has, unfortunately, been the scene of several fatal accidents. It's incumbent on the government to be assessing the risk and be taking steps to mitigate the risk. It is uncertain when the dividing will be completed, so other steps are needed to try and help drivers in the interim.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit today to take immediate action with appropriate barriers to improve public safety until the highway is fully divided?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, we all know, in this Chamber, that having a divided highway does not ensure 100 percent safety. There are many reasons why accidents take place. It can be weather conditions. It can be falling asleep at the wheel, and there are many, many conditions for that.

We're certainly, right now, looking at the purchase of land in that particular stretch of road, to look at what we can do with regard to ensuring that it's going to make that stretch of highway safer. I mentioned that we're looking at, in our plan, a median. We're also looking at extra lights. We're also looking at turning lanes and intersection improvements.

It is in our plan right now. The engineers are looking at it. They will certainly give us guidance with regard to when that will be able to take place, but it does take time. This is another one of those projects that, Mr. Speaker, will happen, but we can't

put a date on it right now. We can tell you that it is going happen when—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Trans-Canada Highway Engineer's Reports on Twinned Section

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, that's even a worse answer than the ones we were receiving in regard to No. 1 west in regard to these fatalities.

On October 25, nine days after a head-on collision that claimed the life of a 21-year-old Carman man, this NDP government, at long last, opened the twinned portion of the Trans-Canada Highway to the Saskatchewan border. On the day of that fatal collision, the minister stated, and I quote, safety is a real concern for this government.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Infrastructure table the engineers' reports which advised this government when the twinned section of the Trans-Canada Highway should open?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the section of highway we're referring to is now open and which we're very pleased to see it's open. We invested about \$39 million and the federal government put approximately \$11 million into this stretch of highway, huge amounts of dollars.

What do we see from the MLA for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), the MLA for Arthur-Virden? They talk about the tragedies and, regrettably, they politicize deaths on our highways. It's regrettable, Mr. Speaker. We feel terrible for the families and relatives of the people who have deceased as a result of accidents on our highways.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Arthur-Virden and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), during the election campaign where you set out your vision for the future, your vision for the future during an election campaign, what did they have to say? Yank all the money out of northern Manitoba and put it into southern Manitoba. What that statement means, if the member does not know now, you're dooming First Nations people to lifelong poverty without giving them the opportunity to connect these remote and isolated communities.

So the Member for Arthur-Virden stands up and asks questions with regard to projects which are completed. He should look at his leader that sits right beside him and get—*[interjection]*

Mr. Maguire: The same minister, Mr. Speaker, who doesn't want a road down the east side of Lake Winnipeg to help people, but on October 16, the Minister of Infrastructure admitted and I quote, the same thing as he said today, it's regrettable that someone died on this stretch of highway.

Mr. Speaker, this death did not have to occur, and as others have reported this death was avoidable. What changed? Was it another terrible tragedy? Where are the engineer's reports? Will the Minister of Infrastructure table those engineer's reports today that gave the go-ahead to getting this sorely needed twinned section open?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, the section of highway we're referring to is open. We opened sections of Highway 75, Highway 6, Highway 10. There are many projects in this province since 1999 that we have done and we completed. They did nothing. We did the renovations and fixing up a lot of those highways. It's regrettable once again, as I mentioned before, with regard to politicizing the deaths on our highways, whether it's in Family Services or on our highways, they raise issues like that in the Chamber. It's regrettable to politicize something like that.

But, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely proud of the fact that this government, with a 4-billion, 10-year plan, it's the first time in our history a historic amount of money has been dedicated to transportation and infrastructure in our province.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it's about priorities. All the money in the world isn't going to help those people that have been killed on those roads that should have been open. It wasn't a priority of this government. Manitobans need to be able to trust that their government is looking after their best interest when it comes to matters of safety, such as maintaining and renewing our highway system. The government is trying to blame engineers for the delays in getting the twinned section of the Trans-Canada open. They've blamed those engineers. They have no reports.

Will the Minister of Infrastructure table the engineer's reports that gave him the advice as to when that twinned section of the Trans-Canada Highway should have opened? It's a very simple statement, Mr. Speaker. Just table the report.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker—
Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There's a question asked, and the honourable member that asked that question has the right to hear the answer.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, in the 1990s, gas tax was raised 2 cents a litre, and that money was not reinvested. That money was put into general revenue, most of it. It wasn't reinvested on twinning the Trans-Canada west.

Second, Mr. Speaker, we promised to complete the twinning of the highway west by the end of the fall of 2007. We kept that promise. The timing of when something is open, whether it's the west highway or the east Perimeter or any other crucial infrastructure, highways tells us when it's going to be open because they're the ones responsible for the safety.

Child Welfare System Jordan's Principle

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier. I understand that Eileen Apetagon was told that she should look at having her child be taken into the care of Child and Family Services if she wanted her child to be attending school in the St. James School Division.

Mr. Speaker, it's outrageous that a child would have to be taken away from her family and put into care in order to go to school. Surely, this is contrary to the concept of Jordan's Principle, that the child should be considered first and is contrary to our belief that a child should not be taken away from parents or grandparents in order to access basic health care, special needs or education services.

Will the Premier explain how this can happen and what he's doing about it?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, my concern is that the child is in school. We will ensure that the child is indeed in school and that we'll deal with the policy issues that have complicated this issue, we'll deal with those policy issues after.

We will be reviewing this situation as I've asked staff to do. We'll certainly look at the issues of concern, and we will make the changes that are necessary to ensure this child is looked after in the school system.

* (14:20)

Mr. Gerrard: My follow-up to the Premier. I understand there are now close to 8,000 children in care in Manitoba. In a recent report from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation, the number of children in care was used as a proxy for the number of children being maltreated in order that they be taken into care. But Manitobans are now wondering how much of this huge increase under the Premier's government is due to rules which require children to go into care unnecessarily in order to access basic services.

Can the Premier (Mr. Doer) tell us why it is that, under his government, all too often Jordan's Principle is being abused and children are being pushed into care in order to receive basic health care, special needs, or educational services?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Well, I think, first of all, it should be noted that the reason we are relentlessly pursuing the implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba is because, specifically, this member opposite was complicit in ensuring that Manitoba is suffering with two-tier child welfare.

He made a decision, Mr. Speaker, when he actually had his hands on the wheels, and he had the ability to do something—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River Heights, on a point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the minister is making wrong accusations. I have been a very strong supporter, right from the start, of making sure that Jordan's Principle was implemented as fast as possible.

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I suggest the member does not have a point of order, in fact, is getting quite confused because he was part of a government that cut services to First Nations.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before I make a ruling, I want to remind members that points of order are very serious matters. They should not be raised for the purpose of using them for debates.

The honourable Member for River Heights on his point of order does not have a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: So, Mr. Speaker, it is this government and this province that is leading efforts to bring the federal government to the table. We are now cautiously optimistic that we can work towards a resolution mechanism that will bring Jordan's Principle to the benefit of Manitoba children. We're bound and determined to take whatever efforts we can as a province, recognizing that we need the participation of the federal government.

I remind the member opposite that children who are taken in care are under The Child and Family Services Act, and there is a test as to whether, an investigation as to whether, there is maltreatment. Mr. Speaker. That's the trigger.

Crime Prevention Ankle Bracelets

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the public as a whole is concerned in terms of the action, or lack thereof, of this government's performance in dealing with crime.

Trying to use and capitalize on technology, in particular with regard to the ankle bracelets, GPS is something which the government has talked about doing, bringing into the province of Manitoba. There still is no sign that we will see it this fall. There are other forms of ankle bracelets such as the radio frequency ankle bracelet. These are tangible actions that could make a difference in terms of fighting crime in the city of Winnipeg, in fact, throughout the province.

Would the government not consider having a more encompassing ankle bracelet policy that would help facilitate fighting crime in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): As I explained to the member at Concurrence, there are other forms of monitoring such as radio frequency. Often I'm advised by probation officials, individuals who are the ones that would have to be monitored, in fact, don't even have a telephone or access to a telephone. Often they report in to their probation officer from a phone booth or something like that, and one wants to be very careful.

If you have the choice between hiring a police officer and using an untested form of technology, we would go with the police officer. The member opposite said publicly that he did not think we need more police officers. We disagreed with him. We put in place more police officers, and we're also putting in place ankle bracelet monitoring. But I would rather have a person on the ground before anything because they are the ones that deliver the service, that make the arrest, that convey the person, that carry out their duties, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Alice Little

Ms. Jennifer Howard (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the presence in the gallery of a remarkable woman who has made a unique and impressive mark on our province, Alice Little.

Alice started working at the age of 12 and received her Bachelor of Arts at age 19. For over 30 years, she inspired high school students, teaching English, French and history, as well as any other subject that was required in the rural schools where she worked. She has travelled all over the world, including six trips to Europe, the most recent taking place this past year.

A lifelong advocate, Alice has worked with organizations such as the Manitoba Society of Seniors, the Provincial Council of Women and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. She is a sought-after speaker to student nurses and other groups for her expertise on seniors' issues, as well as patient safety.

Alice is a respected voice on the need to constantly improve and protect our health-care system. I know that every Minister of Health in the last 20 years has come to know the name Alice Little, and every one of those ministers knows the value of her advice.

Mr. Speaker, this formidable woman will be turning 78 shortly and will be celebrating with a birthday party which I'll be honoured to attend. She has much to celebrate. Her spirit and enthusiasm over the years have touched more Manitobans than one could ever measure. In her own inimitable style, she has stated that a fitting epitaph would be the Shakespearean description of her as "a lass unparallel'd." Her influence will be everlasting.

I ask that all honourable members join me in congratulating Alice Little and wishing this great Manitoban a memorable 78th birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Richardson Family

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Manitoba is privileged to count among its citizens many generations of the Richardson family.

Last Thursday, I had the honour of attending an event where the Richardson family was conferred the Words and Deeds Leadership Award by the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, or CCIJA. This award recognizes several generations of the Richardson family for their roles as outstanding humanitarians and conscientious leaders.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus and all Manitobans, I'd like to congratulate and sincerely thank the Richardson family.

The Richardson family has deep roots in Manitoba, beginning back in the 1880s with James Richardson. Each generation has left a lasting legacy that Winnipeg and Manitoba will never forget. The Richardsons have made a profound difference not only in our province but across Canada. They have provided exemplary leadership in the business community and demonstrated continually the benefits of corporate philanthropy.

Reflecting on the charitable work of all generations is truly inspiring, Mr. Speaker. The Richardson Foundation, formerly the Century Fund, will continue their important work far into the future. The Richardsons, and in particular I want to mention Kathleen Richardson, are profound supporters of the arts community, providing both financial support and recognition for the Manitoba Opera, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, to name just a few.

A recent charitable initiative from James Richardson & Sons Limited, generously provided fiscal donations to 150 communities, many of them in Manitoba, to help support cultural initiatives. It was fitting that the Richardson family announced Thursday evening that half the proceeds of the CCIJA event be directed to the Human Rights Museum.

Mr. Speaker, I could talk for hours about the Richardsons' vision, enthusiasm and dedication for our province. The Words and Deeds Leadership Award is a well-deserved tribute. As well, in

November, the Winnipeg Chinese Cultural and Community Centre will honour Hartley Richardson at its Citizen of the Year Award dinner.

But one truth I know about the Richardsons, Mr. Speaker, is that they do their work with true modesty. The Richardson family has gifted us with their lasting legacy which has touched so many lives. For that we thank them and I urge each of us to follow in their fine example and in their footsteps. Thank you.

United Way Day of Caring Event

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise before the House today to recognize the great work accomplished through the United Way of Winnipeg's Day of Caring event. This annual event provides workplaces with the opportunity to get involved in their local communities by volunteering with a non-profit, community-based United Way partner agency.

I would like to specifically recognize the efforts of the individuals from the Winnipeg branch of EDS Canada Incorporated, who volunteered their time on Saturday, October 13, through the Day of Caring program at the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre in my constituency of St. Norbert. Through their combined efforts, they were able to assist the Resource Centre by painting the new office space donated to the centre by Manitoba Housing. I was pleased to join these volunteers to help make light work of a job that would have taken the centre's staff much longer to complete on their own.

Mr. Speaker, the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre is a cornerstone in the St. Norbert community. It offers a wide variety of services to support women from all walks of life. I would like to thank them for their service to the community.

* (14:30)

I would also like to thank the employees from EDS Canada Incorporated, including Steve and Sue Pazdor and their daughter Jennifer, Aaron and Caitlin Kowall and their children Matthew and Bronwyn, Cathy Nieroda and her daughter Stephanie, Joyce Drul, Judy Law, Janice and Wayne Malo, Courtney Edmundson, Helena Grantham, Michelle Martynuk and Carissa Jaworski. These 17 people volunteered their Saturday morning to ensure the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre was provided with the painting skills and the tender loving care to improve their surroundings for the

workers, for the children and for the women participating in the programs at the centre.

On behalf of the members of this House, I would like to thank these individuals, all the other Winnipeggers who gave so generously of their time during this year's Day of Caring and the United Way of Winnipeg and all its partner agencies. The dedication these individuals have shown to this city and to your local communities is an inspiration to us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Reverend Harry Lehotsky

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity last week, along with the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), to attend a Legacy Dinner in honour of the late Reverend Harry Lehotsky and the New Life Ministries. New Life Ministries, the inner-city church founded by Reverend Lehotsky over two decades ago, hosted this event. The evening was a chance for people to come together in support of causes very dear to Reverend Lehotsky's heart. His son Brandon spoke eloquently about his dad's work.

Reverend Harry Lehotsky called Winnipeg home since he moved here from New York in 1983. He founded New Life Ministries and spent much of his life working to improve the lives of inner-city residents. Tragically, his opportunity to fulfil these goals was cut short. Last November, at the age of 49, Reverend Lehotsky passed away as a result of cancer.

Despite his absence, however, the success of New Life Ministries is continuing Reverend Lehotsky's goals and it is truly inspirational. The church recently announced that donations have reached \$270,000. The ministry has never before raised funds of this amount, and these funds are being channelled towards most admirable causes.

These generous donations will be focussed on three special causes close to Reverend Lehotsky's heart. Lazarus Housing is a non-profit group that buys, renovates and resells derelict houses and Nehemiah Housing rents fixed up apartments. Currently New Life Ministries owns seven buildings with 100 rental units. In addition, Ellice Café and Theatre was established as a place for inner-city residents to meet, and it has required extensive repairs and renovations that will now be possible to complete. The positive effect from these donations will be felt in the area for years to come.

The continuance of Reverend Lehotsky's legacy is clearly illustrated by the generous donations and hard work of countless individuals. They are improving the lives of many inner-city residents and I have no doubt that Reverend Lehotsky would appreciate everyone for it.

Last week, Reverend Harry Lehotsky was posthumously awarded the Order of Canada with his wife Virginia and sons Matthew and Jared present at the ceremony in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, Reverend Harry Lehotsky will be sorely missed by all and fondly remembered.

New Immigrants

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is a great place to live, work and play and the most recent population figures prove that Manitoba's successes are known around the country and around the world.

For the first time ever, our province now welcomes the greatest number of immigrants per capita in all of Canada. Over 10,000 new Manitobans have arrived in the past 12 months, including people from such diverse lands as the Philippines, Germany, India, China and El Salvador. Manitoba is seeing immediate benefits from this influx of newcomers both in terms of filling the needs of employers and in complementing the rich cultural diversity of the province.

Manitoba is a leading destination for newcomers to Canada, thanks in large part to the ever-evolving Provincial Nominee Program together with increased resources for settlement services and English as an Additional Language programs. According to a 2006 Statistics Canada report, recent immigrants to Manitoba have the highest employment rate in the country.

This government has pledged to increase the number of immigrants coming into the province by 1,000 people annually until 20,000 newcomers are coming to Manitoba each year.

Despite the continuing boom in the oil patch, out-migration from the province has slowed to a trickle as the Manitoba advantage draws young people from Alberta and the other western provinces.

Manitoba's overall population growth is at the highest level we have seen in several decades. Our population growth is far ahead of the stagnation of the 1990s. This government is committed to and is

enjoying success in attracting people to, and back to, this great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): On a grievance, Mr. Speaker.

I realize we have but one opportunity to grieve in regard to points that the government has failed to address.

I stand this afternoon on a number of points which I believe this government has indeed failed to address the main concern.

The first point that I would like to bring forward is in regard to Mayfair Farm in Portage la Prairie and dealing with unionization of the migrant workers who are employed on the farm.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

My greatest disappointment is that the migrant workers did indeed hold a bona fide vote. Democracy did take place; however, what happened was that this government, through its own legislation, decided that that democratic process and the results of that vote were totally disregarded. What has taken place is that the migrant workers were approached on an individual basis and asked to sign a document, a document that was written in French and English. The migrant workers are from Mexico. There was not one single migrant worker that signed the cards that were placed in front of them by union representatives. Not one of them, Madam Deputy Speaker, had a working knowledge of either French or English. They relied solely on the interpretation of the language written coming from the interpreters that the union provided. These interpreters, it is known now, used the wrong language as far as wording in describing what was written on the union sign-up cards that they were asked to sign, so, in fact, they were misled.

But what has happened with this government? They have not allowed the democratic process to take place. They have not allowed the migrant workers to voice their opinion and to count their ballots. I wonder why a party that has democracy, democratic process within their own party name comes and denies the migrant workers the democratic process. But what has taken place is in fact that the vote and the ballot have not been recognized. Should this government count those

ballots, I think they will find that there was a travesty of injustice here as it pertains to UFCW Local 832 and the endeavour to unionize the Mexican migrant workers.

In addition to this, I am sorely disappointed with this government's reaction to the information provided through numerous letters emanating from young women that are trying to complete their early childhood educators program at satellite campuses operated by Red River College. They have been confronted with a tuition bill that is more than four times greater than the tuition that they would be asked to pay had they been taking the program on the Winnipeg campus rather than the satellite campuses throughout Manitoba. Indeed, this shows that this government is not listening. They are treating people differently, and that is based upon where they reside, asking persons to pay \$6,150 for the same program that a Winnipeg resident taking that program in Winnipeg would only pay \$1,500. This is, indeed, beyond my comprehension as to how a government can treat citizens of Manitoba in so vastly a different way and to discriminate against those that want to take the program and then carry on with their new professional experience to provide for our young people in our child-care facilities in rural Manitoba.

* (14:40)

Further to that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we had just two short weeks ago, a demonstration on the front steps of the Manitoba Legislature provided for by the retired teachers of Manitoba. The Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) did—and I will compliment him on attending and speaking; however, he was met with a round of disgruntled boos when he stated that he was not prepared to recognize that there was a difference in the pension plans between the civil service and the retired teachers, and that the retired teachers had indeed been paying more money toward their pension plan in order to provide for full cost of living allowance.

The honourable members opposite always want to recite what happened in the '90s but not in this case, Madam Deputy Speaker, because all through the '90s, the retired teachers received their cost of living adjustment in full. That is why this government, on this occasion only, will not refer to the '90s, and they continue to go on and not allow the changes that are necessary to provide for cost of living adjustment equal to the inflationary rate.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I for one am looking to this government to make certain that they recognize the teachers that provided for most of us in the Legislative Assembly, our education. We owe it to our retired teachers to recognize and show them the respect that they deserve.

Further to that, Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to the topic of taxation which has been discussed quite extensively in the last week with the government bringing forward the money bills that all governments require in order to meet their obligations in providing for the goods and services that residents require and demand. But, on the point of taxation, it was mentioned time and time and time again that this government through its personal taxation regime does not recognize those persons in poverty. This government believes that impoverished persons should be taxed. Why? I have yet to find that answer. But yet this government as a whole continues to have one of the lowest personal exemptions of any jurisdiction in Canada.

I ask the question why this government believes that someone earning a paltry \$8,000 should be paying income tax. That answer has yet to be forthcoming, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this government has to address the situation of those persons living in poverty and this is a very, very small step.

It might not mean a lot of dollars back in the individual's pockets, but what it will do by raising the personal exemption to \$10,000 and perhaps even higher, it will recognize that a government should not have to demand of those in poverty to pay personal income tax. That recognition is important. I know that this government does not want to acknowledge those persons in poverty because they believe, and they continue to tax those individuals making approximately \$8,000. They talk about it but they don't act on it.

These four topics are reason enough to re-evaluate their current positions and to address these individual problems that I have stated in my grievance time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to rise. I hope that the honourable members on the government side of the House have taken some of the information, which I've provided, to heart and to act on them immediately. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Emerson, on a grievance? On a grievance?

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I rise today on a grievance in respect to the east-west debate that has just recently been talked about in the last day or two in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the east side is a much better route for a number of reasons, and I'm going to try and point them out to the members opposite. Hopefully, they'll take some notice of what these reasons would be and maybe make some adjustment to their way of thinking.

The security and the reliability of the east side versus the west side, or for that matter, down with the last two bipoles, Mr. Speaker. We could refer to the extreme weather conditions that have happened naturally over a period of time in our short history, or at least in my short history and my short memory, and I'd like to point out that in 1978, we had an ice storm in southern Manitoba, much similar to the ice storm that was in Québec in 1996. However, it was confined to the southern portion of the province. If that was to move north and if the lines were together, we could end up with a severe blackout at a time when we were at our peak usage for power. So, in pointing this out, I believe if the lines have a decent distance between them, the chances of that taking place are a lot less.

The west-side line, of course, Mr. Speaker, for security reasons, as was pointed out earlier today, runs by a number of highways and is exposed to vandalism by possibly anyone that has nothing else to do other than maybe shoot off insulators and those type of things, causing a lot more maintenance on these lines. So I would suggest, that for the reliability and the security, that the east side would be a much better approach.

There's also, on the west side, the economic factor versus the east side. It's clear that even though our honourable members on the opposite side of the House seem to try and convince people of Manitoba, the people of Manitoba, that a longer line is going to cost less money, I don't know how that can possibly be, but they seem to say that that's the most economical way to go, Mr. Speaker. In saying that, that \$500 million in added debt, which would probably compute to about \$30 million a year in extra carrying costs, could well be spent in, for example, twinning the highway through Headingley and making it a safe highway.

Perhaps we could use that money in a lot better fashion than paying interest to the bankers. I would say the money that you save not paying the interest

on unnecessary loans could be better used rather than scalping the money off of Hydro when it does have a profit. In that situation, I have to agree with our members; you shouldn't take that money. It should be used for development costs alone.

* (14:50)

However, that added \$500 million in debt on a 400-kilometre longer route, Mr. Speaker, is merely a guesstimate. It's merely a guesstimate, and because the NDP have a track record of underestimating costs on all of their projects, and I guess we could probably look at one that's near and dear to all of us, that would be the legacy that's being built in Winnipeg today, the Hydro building that's being built in Winnipeg. That certainly had some trying times, so to speak, and being somewhat underestimated for the cost of it. That cost has escalated. We could build two buildings actually with what we could save by going down the east side.

I would like to point out that the NDP have committed to the worst possible route on the far west side of Lake Winnipegosis. It would cost approximately \$500 million more. Depending on who you talk to in today's world, what we would lose in power and what they call slippage on the line, whether that would be 70 megawatt or 50 megawatt; however, that is a huge, huge cost not only to Hydro, but it's a huge cost to the environment where we sell our product. It's a huge cost to that environment as well because they are now serviced with coal-fired units.

It's also a loss to the province of Manitoba inasmuch as we have invested in the facility to generate the electricity. We've invested in the lines to carry it. We've invested in the property to run the lines, and now we're throwing that away, unnecessarily, I might add. The costs of the substations, when they get to Winnipeg, that's going to be the converter costs. It's going to be another added cost, Mr. Speaker, that really isn't necessary if we come down the east side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I strongly suggest that, with the economics that have been put forward, even the NDP would understand that that money isn't going to just fall out of trees. The federal government is helping to fund the initial stages of an east-west line. I would suggest that it would probably make more sense to bring the power down to the converter stations you have and if there is a need for an east-west line, then by all means, go from that converter station. I don't see that we have a large issue right now going to the

west, but by the time this gets built, we may well have a market there. However, we do have a market in the east. So, if we're going to use that 50—I just get the numbers right, but I'm thinking that we're getting \$40 million that would be federal money coming to our jurisdiction to help fund the east-west line, that that would fund and be a great help to fund the line going to Ontario rather than cutting across from Conawapa to no place and losing control of your line and control of your product.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that that would be a much better investment if our friends across the way would pay attention to economics. However, it hasn't been one of their strong points in the past, and I doubt that it will be in the future. They seem to be not taking advice, at least in the near term. Hopefully, we can change that.

Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at economics, and we talk about strictly dollars, that's cold, hard cash and sometimes that just doesn't have the right feeling to it. But, however, the social impact of not coming down the east side on the reserves, and I might say, in the economic part of this as well, they have neglected to take advice from their CEO. I would suggest that he probably is one of the people that best knows what is good for the corporation and best for the corporation and best for the people of the province. They have not taken his advice to come down that east side.

They have not taken the advice of the past member of this House, Mr. Harper, whose comment would be leaving the east side in poverty in perpetuity. Mr. Speaker, that's a serious, serious allegation. I would suggest that the east side has been in a poverty-stricken situation, and, certainly, from the social standpoint, needs to have any boost that they can possibly get. This here would certainly do that.

Had the First Minister (Mr. Doer) not made an arrangement with 16 chiefs and given them a veto on the east side, I think we would be moving ahead.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time is up.

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call report stage for Bills 3 and 14, followed by third readings of the motions for 6, 8, 10 and 16?

Mr. Speaker: Under Orders of the Day, we'll deal with report stage for Bills 3 and 14, and then we'll move on to concurrence and third reading for Bills 6, 8, 10 and 16.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Bill 3—The Healthy Child Manitoba Act

Mr. Speaker: So I'm going to call Report Stage Amendments to Bill 3, The Healthy Child Manitoba Act. The first amendment.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 3 be amended in Clause 15(1) by striking out, "At least once every five years" and substituting "Each year".

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the intent of this amendment is to change the report on the health of children in Manitoba from every five years to every year. Clearly, the health of children should be more important than just to be reviewed every five years. Five years is far too long a period to have to wait for a report on the health of children in Manitoba. If you look at the large majority of bodies who report and provide reports to the Legislature, I think you will find that the large proportion of those report annually.

Mr. Speaker, it seems a real anomaly that, when it comes to the health of children, the report should be every five years and not every year. Five years is a long time in the life of a child. Five years is way too long to wait to see whether measures being taken by the government or the regional health authorities are actually making a difference.

I would remind MLAs that, when I was elected in 1999, this government was—on the very day the Cabinet was named, I had brought forward the problem of the huge number of dental caries in children in some parts of Manitoba, a problem which is entirely preventable. It was very clear that, when we did the report in the Healthy Child task force six years later, there had been virtually no progress in this area. This is the sort of thing which can happen if you only report every five years. Not good enough. We need to be making much more rapid progress than that. After all, these children who had the severe problem with dental caries, a large number of them were needing surgical procedures by age 2 or 3. These were children, when we did the Healthy Child

task force, who had not even been born when this government came to power. We need to be acting on a much shorter time frame than five years when we're dealing with the life and the health and the well-being of children.

* (15:00)

It's not just with respect to dental caries. It is with respect to, for example, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Sadly, after eight years of this NDP government, we still don't have a solid figure for the incidence of FASD children born in Manitoba.

Where is this basic information which should be there to be able to guide policy perspectives? If we ask only every five years, at the rate they've been going, 15 years from now, we still won't have it. We need to be able to ask every year. We need to have a report every year. This is far too important to wait five long years. Anybody who has young kids knows that five years is far too long.

Let us look at issues of immunization. Things change a lot in five years. We need to make sure we're up-to-date. We need a report every year.

Let us look at something like Jordan's Principle, very important for children in making sure that children are considered first and that the Province and the federal government argue later. Let's make sure the child is considered first. This should have been the case right from when this government was elected in 1999, but it wasn't. That was the year that Jordan was born, the same year that this government was elected. In fact, Jordan was born only a few weeks after they were elected. Everything that happened in terms of the good or the bad care and the government arguing happened under this government when it came to Jordan.

We need this annual report annually, not a five-year report.

It has been two years since there was a major article in pediatric journal, a medical journal, about Jordan and the need, the desperate need under this government to have children considered first. I say desperate because, obviously, it has not happened, and everybody here knows the story of Jordan, that, sadly, he was never able to go home because the Province and the federal government were bickering over things as small as a showerhead. Well, it's two years since that report came out in a major medical journal, and it's two years in which we still have not had Jordan's Principle fully implemented in Manitoba.

We need a report every year, not a report every five years.

Just recently, Dr. Fraser Mustard was here in Manitoba and he was talking at the Canadian Club. He was talking about why it is important to be able to have supports for children so that they can do well in their homes and their communities, and why this is so important, not only to have those supports put in place—and there have been some improvements, let's acknowledge that, but to have some measurement of outcomes because, if you're not measuring outcomes, you may be off-track. You may not be accomplishing what you're trying to accomplish. Fraser Mustard was very clear when I asked the question about outcomes, and he was very clear when he was talking about the importance of measuring outcomes.

We need these outcomes reported every year, not every five years. There is no reason to wait for five years, and that is why my colleague from Inkster and I have stood up and moved this amendment to make sure that we do all that we possibly can to ensure that there be a report every year. I hope that members of the Doer NDP government, members of the Conservative Party will stand up and join us in pushing for this amendment which would bring the practice when it comes to the reports on the health of children into line with most other reports which we receive in this Legislature; that is, once a year. We badly need those yearly reports. We should have them if we're going to be able to do our job and so, Mr. Speaker, that is why we are moving this amendment.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): Mr. Speaker, I stand to oppose this amendment.

I think that there seems to be some confusion about the purpose of this report. Really, what's envisioned here is a comprehensive report that's going to cover a wide range of determinants and outcomes regarding the well-being of Manitoba's children.

I think that it's going to be—well, it will be based on sound research and information that is gathered from a number of sources. I think it's pretty impractical, if not impossible, to produce such a comprehensive report each year as many important federal data sources are collected only every two years.

I think that, as we collect the data, we need to have opportunity to analyze it and also ensure that we're reporting accurate information to Manitobans. Reporting publicly every five years is a reasonable time frame for a comprehensive picture of Manitoba's children. This time frame is similar to other legislation. I think it's very important for the members opposite to know about the number of reports that have been released in the last five years and to also confirm that there is an annual report that is released through Healthy Child Manitoba.

The last five years Healthy Child Manitoba offices released four public reports on early childhood development as per Manitoba's commitment to the First Minister's ECD agreement. Three of these reports include comprehensive information on Manitoba children's outcomes mostly from national longitudinal study of children and youth which is collected every two years.

Healthy Child Manitoba has released two public reports, 2003 and 2004, on Manitoba children's school-readiness outcomes in kindergarten year as measured by the Early Development Instrument which began province-wide, phased in, in 2003. The 2005-2006 ED report is forthcoming. As of 2007 the EDI will be collected every two years. The Healthy Child Manitoba office will continue to release public reports every two years.

During his presentation to the legislative committee, Dr. Fraser Mustard referenced EDI as a valid outcome measure now being applied in countries around the world.

As of the 2005-2006 fiscal year, as required by Treasury Board, Healthy Child Manitoba reports publicly on several outcomes on Manitoba's children in its annual reports, including alcohol use during pregnancy, parent and family outcomes, as well as the EDI results.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that through the investments that we make through programming, as well as policy development around Healthy Child Manitoba, we are making a difference and our reporting does show that. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, just want to put a few words on the record. I listened to the Minister of Healthy Living, and the most obvious point I think that really needs to be emphasized here is that—and maybe approach it in two ways.

* (15:10)

One is that we within the Liberal Party recognize the importance of our children and believe that there needs to be more accountability. The Leader of the Liberal Party talked about a critically important issue of fetal alcohol syndrome disorder, something which we have attempted to get the government to address in very tangible ways. My leader has constantly brought up the issue of Jordan's Principle and the government's inability to assure Manitobans as a whole that, from a government perspective, it's child first, that they're putting children ahead of politics. This government has not demonstrated good will in doing just that, Mr. Speaker. I want to make that point.

The second point is how convenient it is that the first report that we will see coming out, as a result of this legislation, will come out at a time which we know will be after the next provincial election, Mr. Speaker, and to have accountability on the issue of children, we talk about annual reports, in most part, are virtually standard policy for many ministries and many different projects that are out there, many different organizations providing those annual reports. Well, I would ultimately argue that, given the very nature of the subject of the report, if government was really committed to the children of our province, I don't buy the arguments as to why it is this government believes that it's not doable on an annual basis. One has got to question why it is the government could not provide that annual report. I find it very interesting that the first time we will receive a report chances are the NDP will not even be in government.

I find that it is most unfortunate that the minister has not recognized the value of a positive amendment that could have ensured more accountability in reference to our children inside the Manitoba Legislature, and it's with regret that I see that the minister has decided not to support a progressive amendment to this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment therefore is lost.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will move on to the second amendment in the name of the honourable Member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 3 be amended as follows:

(a) in Clause 21(2), by striking out "and" at the end of clause (a), adding "and" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) appear before the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs at least once each year to report on child health in Manitoba

(b) by adding the following after Clause 21(8) and before the next centred heading:

Meeting of legislative committee to consider child health

21.1(1) The President of the Executive Council must convene a meeting of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs at least once each year to hear from the members of the advisory committee and consider their report on child health in Manitoba

Meetings of committee

21.1(2) To carry out its responsibilities, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs may meet during a session of the Legislature or during a recess after prorogation.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 3—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the intent of this amendment to Bill 3, The Healthy Child Manitoba Act, would be to require that the Healthy Child committee, the child advisory committee comes before a committee of the Legislature and provides a direct report, but also provides the opportunity for legislators, MLAs from all parties, to be able to answer questions related to the status of the health of children in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have, as all MLAs know, had some problems in recent times with regular reports from Manitoba Hydro to legislative committees. We're grateful that we had one last week, but I think it was several years before that, that there was not. I would say that when it comes to things like the Forks North Portage Corporation, the Deputy Premier, I think it was in 2002 or 2003, promised to have the Forks North Portage organization appear before the Manitoba legislative committee, and now some four or five years later, it still hasn't happened. There is a real problem in terms with the frequency or lack of frequency with which areas in which we should be following up are being followed up by appearances before a legislative committee.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

In this instance, there can be little that is more important than the health of children in Manitoba. In our view, as Liberals, we should make sure that at least once a year there is a legislative committee meeting dealing with the health of children, with the outcomes or lack of change with the situation, with the health of our children. Once a year is a reasonable length of time to do this. The lifetime of a child is only a few very precious years and so we cannot afford to wait and do this less often. We cannot afford, because children are so important to all of us and to our future, not to do this.

We need to have the health of children discussed at a legislative committee for MLAs to have an opportunity, just as we do in other areas which are important to government and to the province as a whole. We need to have this legislative committee meeting and discussing what we consider as one of

the most very important and very urgent matters that can be discussed by MLAs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am reminded of the Healthy Child task force and the sad situation which was revealed at the time of the task force travelling around the province. Children were crying because their teeth were in such bad shape because the dental caries had not been prevented. We had tragedies of children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, a preventable condition.

How odd it is that a preventable condition like FASD may be one of the most common mental health problems among children in Manitoba. How sad it is that there has been so little action taken. How sad it is that we don't even know whether the incidence of FASD is going up and down, or up or down, because we don't even have an accurate measure of the incidence of FASD in Manitoba and in Manitoba communities.

* (15:20)

That is why we need this legislative committee meeting on an annual basis. That is why the health of children should be discussed in this Chamber on an annual basis. And that is why when we have one of the most important areas of all to be considered by this Legislature, the health of children, it should be given proper treatment and analysis, discussion and debate in a legislative committee at least every year. There is just no excuse not to support this amendment and to ensure that there is such a committee of the Legislature to deal with the report, which should be annual, and to deal with questions of the health of children on an annual basis.

When it comes to the health of children, when it comes to the implementation or lack of it of Jordan's Principle, when it comes to the situation of children around our province, it needs to be central to what we do here in the Manitoba Legislature. Yet, sadly, instead of annual reports, such annual reporting has been rejected by the Gary Doer NDP.

We hope, at least, they will support us in our efforts to have debate and discussion in a legislative committee on a regular basis so that this matter of the health of our children can be looked at, analyzed, discussed and moved forward, because when it doesn't appear before a committee, it doesn't get the attention that it should be getting, it doesn't get as much action as it should be getting. It is time to change. We all know that children don't vote, but that's no excuse, Madam Deputy Speaker, for not

having the health of children on the agenda of a legislative committee on a regular basis.

This is a matter of which should concern every one of us. This is a matter of which there should be absolutely no hesitation in supporting this amendment, to have the regular discussion of the health of Manitoba children in a legislative committee. So I would hope, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the government and the Conservatives will support our amendment, and that we can have more attention to the health of the children of Manitoba in this Chamber than we have had over the last eight years. Thank you.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yet, again, there seems to be a misunderstanding about what this bill is intending to do and what the role of the advisory committee is, in section 21.

It's important to know that this committee is a voluntary committee, except for the committee chair who may receive an honorarium. The committee is unpaid. The committee has no legislative or executive responsibilities that might rationalize its reporting to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs. It is not responsible for carrying out programs, producing research, or handling public funds. It's inappropriate to place upon a voluntary advisory body the inordinate and onerous burden of producing reports on child health to present annually to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Responsibility to produce such a report is more appropriately placed with the government body, as in Section 15, which requires Healthy Child Manitoba office to prepare a public report on the status of Manitoba's children in relation to achieving the outcomes of Healthy Child Manitoba. The roles and responsibilities of the advisory committee in section 21 are consistent with other advisory committees enacted in legislation such as multiculturalism.

Therefore, we will not be supporting this amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, again, the minister downplays the importance of having stronger discussions and dialogue and debate within the Chamber. If the minister was wanting for this group to be able to have even that much more authority or have the ability to have more influence, one would think that we would be giving it more strength by recognizing that the value of having—whether it's the Chair, or whoever—be more of a

participant in the process of what's taking place inside the Legislature.

If the minister is not wanting this advisory group to have that additional strength, one could question as to why it is the minister then is bringing it forward. Is it being brought forward more of an attempt to score political points or is it being brought forward to try to deal with an issue that's at least important for some members of the Legislature because the minister hasn't been able to demonstrate that the issue is that important to warrant further debate inside the Chamber or to assist in facilitating more discussion and dialogue on what we believe is a critically important issue?

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

So we're disappointed that the minister has taken the lead in representing her caucus by instructing that this is not an amendment that should pass. I suspect, unfortunately, because of the minister's position on it, that it will likely not pass. Having said that, I think that the legislation and the advisory group would have been that much better and, in fact, ultimately, children would have benefited much more by the passage of this amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

An Honourable Member: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment has been lost.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to the third amendment, amendment No. 3, in the name of the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 3 be amended in Clause 21(3) by adding "and one of whom must be chosen from a list of persons recommended by the board of the Manitoba Institute of Child Health, a division of The Children's Hospital Foundation of Winnipeg, Inc." at the end.

Mr. Speaker: For the amendment, the honourable Member for River Heights, when you said the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba, you said Winnipeg. Would you agree to a correction of the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba, as written? Would you agree to that?

Mr. Gerrard: Yes.

THAT Bill 3 be amended in Clause 21(3) by adding "and one of whom must be chosen from a list of persons recommended by the board of the Manitoba Institute of Child Health, a division of The Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba, Inc." at the end.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. So it's moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster,

THAT Bill 3—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise with regard to the importance of representation from the Manitoba Institute of Child Health on the Children's Hospital Foundation as it pertains to the Manitoba Institute of Child Health on the Provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee.

* (15:30)

There are a variety of reasons for believing this is an important step forward. At committee stage, we heard this very measure was recommended by Mark Gale, who is with the Children's Hospital Foundation. Certainly, from a perspective of the health of children, the Manitoba Institute of Child Health and the Children's Hospital Foundation have been front and centre in not only supporting improvements in the health of children, advocating for the health of children, doing research to improve the health of children, and working closely with people who are involved in the care of children.

Indeed, there are many who are with the Manitoba Institute of Child Health who are very involved directly in the care of children, physicians or nurses or others, as health-care professionals involved in the health of children and looking directly after the health of children.

The Children's Hospital Foundation has been a major force in Manitoba for many, many years. The Children's Hospital Foundation has raised and contributed large amounts of money, many millions of dollars, over a long period, to improve the health of children. They are, without question, one of the most important organizations in all of Manitoba when it comes to the health of children. It is important that the Children's Hospital Foundation and the Manitoba Institute of Child Health be represented on this provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee.

There are many reasons for this. They are involved in educational efforts with regard to the health of children. They work with health-care providers all over the province to improve the health of children. They are involved in research to assess how children are doing. They are strong advocates for the health of children.

Manitoba Institute of Child Health, an important organization which needs to be represented at this level, the provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee, to give it an important link in the community in Manitoba who is involved with improving the health of children. The Manitoba Institute of Child Health has been front and centre in looking at research and science as it applies to the health of children. They need to be there around the table with the others who are on this provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee so that there is a good dialogue back and forth and so that the aspects which relate to scientific assessment of outcomes, that these are well incorporated every step of the way.

We'll be able to save a lot of time down the road if we involve individuals from the Manitoba Institute of Child Health right at the beginning. This is an important and necessary step, and I would hope that the government would see its way to trying to support our amendment, to making sure that there is representation from the Manitoba Institute of Child Health on the provincial Healthy Child Advisory Committee in the interests of having the best possible committee and the best possible efforts

throughout Manitoba to support the health of children and to improve the health of children.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Our advisory committee is comprised of various individuals that represent a variety of sectors that are committed to early childhood development across the province. They have been very effective in providing us with information and support.

I need to put on the record that, yes, I am familiar with the Manitoba Institute of Child Health and the great work that they do and how they contribute to our province. I must say, though, that identifying one particular group through legislation to be represented on the advisory committee isn't required. What I do need to let the House know is that a letter of invitation has been sent to the Manitoba Institute of Child Health inviting them to participate on the advisory committee, which they'll be receiving soon. Therefore, we will not be supporting this amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment has been lost.

Bill 14—The Government Purchases Amendment Act (Responsible Manufacturing)

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll now move on to Report Stage Amendment, No. 14, The Government Purchases Amendment Act.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I have a proposed amendment to Bill 14, The Government Purchases Amendment Act (Responsible Manufacturing).

I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese),

THAT Bill 14 be amended in Clause 6 by striking out "a day to be fixed by proclamation" and submitting "the day it receives royal assent".

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, when reading your amendment, you used the word "submitting" instead of "substituting." Is it okay if we introduce the amendment as printed and use "substituting" instead of "submitting"? Is it okay?

Mr. Maguire: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

THAT Bill 14 be amended in Clause 6 by striking out "a day to be fixed by proclamation" and substituting "the day it receives royal assent".

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll move on.

It's been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Ste. Rose,

THAT Bill 14—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the indulgence on this amendment. This is a pretty straightforward amendment. I got the idea basically from the minister. I would certainly ask for his support on this.

Really, Mr. Speaker, it comes about because the government's already following the procedure that the bill is outlining that they want to do, and that comes from my discussion with the minister. I appreciate the discussion that we had on the bill briefing on this particular bill. As it is stated, this bill is to deal with the purchase of government goods, in this case particularly the purchase of clothing and outerwear even to the point of not including footwear.

So I would ask the government's indulgence that because the minister has indicated that they have already had—his department indicated to me that there are a couple of contracts that have already been out for over the \$5,000 in purchases of these particular contracts that I think amount to

\$1.3 million, roughly, in total value in purchases for a year by the provincial departments, that we would be able to see no harm in moving and changing the bill from being implemented on a day fixed by proclamation and substituting that with the day it receives Royal Assent.

The certification, I just want to clarify the process that you would go through in order to purchase these clothing items in the various departments. Of course, Intergovernmental Affairs and Transportation is one of the major ones, government services, along with Justice and some of the others. These are the major ones where this kind of government clothing is to be used, Mr. Speaker, and there is a certification process where the successful tenders or anyone applying to the tenders for successful bids would have to certify that they are not—well, that they are complying—let's be positive—that they are complying with International Labour Organization regulations.

*(15:40)

One of the concerns I had was the regulatory aspect of this particular bill in regard to whether it would be everyone equally applying. The minister assured me that whether unionized or non-unionized, that would be the case. That was a major concern that was brought forward to me, Mr. Speaker, so I presented that to the minister in the bill briefing period that we had. Also, in the committee that we had, I was assured by the government that this was not the case, that it would be open, that they are using the International Labour Organization's standards and regulations in regard to the purchases of these items. That deals with making sure that no sweatshops are used or other poor working conditions in the manufacture of the clothing that has been put into the bill—into the manufacture, pardon me, of the clothing items.

The International Labour Organization conventions and recommendations cover a broad range of subjects concerning work employment, social security, social policy and related human rights, which include matters such as child labour; wages, proper wages for the work that's being done acknowledged by our International Labour Organization standards; the working hours that this clothing was made under; the maternity protection, just to name a few that these clothing items would be made under. Under those circumstances, our side of the House has very little concern with this bill moving forward, subject to the concern that I've raised and,

of course, any regulatory issues that the government brings in that might not be obvious in this bill at this particular time.

Our concern has been raised a number of times on this particular issue, and the minister has provided me with enough information to satisfy some of those concerns that there is no intent to limit anyone that can apply for these purchases of these goods, that they are merely supplying a certification process that the tenders would have to go through when they're applying and making sure that all successful tenders comply with that type of format. It can be attached to a lowest price contract where it has to be tendered to the lowest price, or otherwise it would be on a scale of a number of issues, areas that would be used in regard to this bill and the purchases.

If that's the case and it meets the criteria of a package that the government has put together on those tenders, then we would move it forward. We would look forward to the government passing this bill and moving it forward, Mr. Speaker. If that's the case, then, because it was indicated to me that a few tenders have already been let out and that the tendering has been issued on a process, it does raise the question of why we need the bill if we're already moving forward. But, just for clarification, I understand the amendment side, so I would recommend that, if that's the case and we are having purchases already made, they are being certified and the companies that have been making those bids that government has indicated to us that they have been satisfied with the certification process, then perhaps we could move forward.

Now, I don't have the names of the contracts or the numbers of the contracts, and I wasn't provided with the names of the companies that applied, it might be normal procedure. So I haven't been able to ask specifically in regard to whether it was just two or whether it was a few more contracts that this bill has already applied to. But certainly the straightforwardness of it would allow where it's only for the purchase of clothing is an opportunity to be able to move this forward and make it implemented on the day it receives Royal Assent. That's clearly what the amendment that I've put forward, the proposed amendment to Bill 14 is. Perhaps, you know, if the government is convinced that they are going through the proper formats, that minimum fair labour practices are being met on those contracts that are out there under the ILO, perhaps they would have no problem in moving this amendment forward as well.

I would reserve some judgment perhaps, Mr. Speaker, as I've said earlier in regard to the regulations, but virtually, as presented to us, we see very little detriment to this amendment. I don't think it would cause the government any concern or having to delay the purchases of any items because they are already doing that.

So I'd just like to say as well that there's been a lot of reporting in the media over the past few years about instances of child labour involving some very well-known suppliers of clothing and footwear. We've seen more of those in the last few days as well, and we would all want to make sure that we would want to not have that in the situation here in Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that this is a circumstance where the items, and as quoted by the minister himself, that the vendors must certify that they are not supporting or dealing with businesses with sweatshop practices.

There was an issue by some of the companies that came up around enforcement of this type of legislation. The minister assures me that they will be doing this basically on priority basis with—on an honesty basis with the companies that are there. Having to sign the certification though, is a signal that the companies are willing to admit any—well, to authorize that they are meeting and complying with the standards that the government has pointed out.

So, with those few remarks, I would request the support of the government and the independent members in this House on this particular bill, or particular amendment, and look forward to its passage. Thank you.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): The amendment brought forward by the opposition to The Government Purchases Amendment Act, the government intends to bring the amendment into force at proclamation, because the act requires the drafting of the regulation to identify the category of commodity that is applicable to, in this case clothing and apparel.

If this bill is given Royal Assent at the end of this session, we will not have sufficient time to draft the regulations, as we've stated before. People certainly need that time. In addition, the labour standards with reference—we reference the International Labour Organization—need to be identified in the regulation.

So I don't want to take too much time at this time, Mr. Speaker, to put our points of view forward, but I just want to state that we intend to bring it into force at proclamation for the reasons that we stated. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment brought forward by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment has been lost.

Okay, we'll now move on to Concurrence and Third Readings.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 6—The Adult Literacy Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 6, The Adult Literacy Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Any speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I've put a number of comments on the record already in regard to Bill 6, The Adult Literacy Act, so I certainly won't belabour all of them again, but I do want to raise a few other points related to this bill.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'm a strong believer of the importance of literacy. Ever since I became an MLA in February during I Love to Read month, I have spent a lot of time at all of my schools reading to children and donating a book to each school. At that time, I try to instil enthusiasm in children for reading. We talk about the value of reading, the benefits of reading, and I am pleased to see how many students are excited about reading and how much they do love to read.

* (15:50)

It's certainly important at a very young age that students have these opportunities because it certainly makes a difference to them as they progress, get older, move into higher education, move into the job force and, you know, even into community and family life. It is very important in order for them to move ahead at various levels to have a good literacy level.

Unfortunately, what we've seen in Manitoba is a lack of progress in that area, where only 40 percent of working Manitobans do not have literacy skills that will allow them to access new opportunities or respond effectively to changes in their work.

Now, it even goes back to high school, when we need to start looking at the whole issue of literacy, and there remains on our side a high concern about the high rate of high school drop-outs and that is a very, very big concern of ours. It is something I don't think this government has grasped well enough and gone after as aggressively as they should, to address our high school drop-out rates in Manitoba which are too high.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) have fallen asleep at the switch on this area, and I think that, while we're looking at an adult literacy act and a strategy, part of that strategy needs to incorporate a look within that strategy as to what's happening in our high schools and to address the issue of our very high, high school drop-out rate.

So, certainly, I would hope that this government in moving forward its strategy, including in that strategy a forced collaboration of various ministers and groups to look at what we need to do. I would encourage that part of what this government needs to do, is to get its act better together and start to talk among the different departments about how we can address high school drop-out rates.

I would also like to indicate that the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), not long ago wrote a letter to the editor in the *Brandon Sun*, and I will quote one part of his letter: When the Doer government assumed office, we declared education to be the foundation of Manitoba's economic development strategy.

Well, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that indeed, what all of the numbers are currently showing is a lack of progress by this government, whether it's in high school drop-out rates or actually in the area of economic development, where we see this government sputtering along and do not have a strong economic development strategy in Manitoba. If they do have a strategy, it certainly is failing in terms of what this province needs. So, again, if that truly is the belief of this government, that they are going to move in the direction of developing this strategy, this government also needs to look at their economic development strategy which right now is seriously failing this province, and it does all tie in to some of the areas around The Adult Literacy Act.

Again, I think literacy is very important. The statistics are not very glowing. It is interesting that this government has been in power for almost 10 years and yet we don't see any progress in terms of improving literacy rates, and now they bring forward a bill that forces them to do what they should have been doing in the first place.

So it's going to force some level of accountability, and I do believe accountability is important. I believe transparency is important. My concern certainly is around this government dragging its heels around the whole area of education, whether it's post-secondary education, adult literacy or even high school graduation rates.

I do want to give credit to the Literacy Partners of Manitoba, who did come to committee and did make a presentation there. They have indicated their willingness to continue their good work, their passionate work, their dedicated work to trying to strengthen literacy in Manitoba. I do commend the Literacy Partners of Manitoba for the efforts that they are making.

However, there was one other presenter that did come to committee and it was a response paper that was presented from the students and staff of the Elmwood GOAL Adult Literacy Program. Basically, this group, along with other groups that are out there, has stated some concerns, and I have raised these

concerns in committee and in second reading, and I will reiterate because I think that there are some serious concerns that this legislation is open to interpretation. I'm hoping the minister has really listened to these concerns that have been put forward through me for some other groups and through the people that actually presented at committee. So they raised some very, very serious concerns and I certainly encourage the government when they are looking at developing this strategy to take into some of strategic development, some of the concerns that have been risen.

Certainly, the person, also, that was making a presentation in that response paper from the Elmwood group did raise some interesting issues. I won't go into all of them. They have been recorded in *Hansard*, but they do raise some very, very important issues around the area of English, EAL, English as an Additional Language. As we are looking at a strategy, because of the number of people that are now starting to come forward expressing concerns about where this government is not going around EAL which is probably contributing to our problem with literacy in Manitoba, I hope that that is all taken into account once the government starts to move forward in looking at developing regulations around this bill.

We are not going to oppose the moving forward of this bill, but we do find it curious strange that the government had to bring in legislation that would force them to do something that I certainly wish they had been doing for their almost 10 years in government. We are really putting a lot of Manitobans at a disadvantage and our province's economy at a disadvantage, because this government has not had the ability to move forward in areas it said it was going to move forward and improve literacy and improve our graduation rates and improve our economy.

So, all in all, when we do look at the estimated annual cost of low literacy to Manitoba being \$375 million, then it certainly does indicate we've got a big problem here because \$375 million on an annual basis, because of low literacy, should not have been something this government has ignored for almost 10 years. This could have done an awful lot in terms of health care, education, infrastructure, any number of areas, child and family services in dealing with some of the horrible issues we're hearing about with children falling through the cracks.

So it's such a shame that we see one of the pillars of what needs to happen to have a strong economy is crumbling under this government. I do encourage the minister that once she brings forward this act that forces her to do something about it that, indeed, we will see an improvement of literacy rates in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:00)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise at third reading to talk to The Adult Literacy Act.

First of all, let me make it clear that Manitoba Liberals support this measure. We believe, in part, that there needs to be solid funding for this area and that it is the funding, as well as the way in which the program is run and supported, which can make a difference. It certainly will make it a bit more difficult for a government to neglect this area in the future, as we've noticed over the last eight years that the outcomes in Manitoba do not appear to have shifted very much, and that must be a big disappointment to the NDP members of the Legislature because this is an area of which they have talked a lot about, but we haven't seen the improvement in outcomes which Manitobans need and want.

We can debate why this has occurred or not occurred. We clearly need something better than we've had over the last eight years. We can debate whether there were some problems for part of this time under the Conservatives at the federal level in terms of funding of adult literacy, but certainly what is needed here is improvements in adult literacy in Manitoba. What I would suggest to the Speaker and to the MLAs assembled here is that we need to make sure that there is change and improvement here. There are a variety of reasons for this, but at least it is a step forward.

One of the things that I was pleased to see in The Adult Literacy Act was the section 10(1). This section says that there will be a report on the adult literacy strategy every year. Adult literacy, at least, is getting five times as much consideration as child health. It deserves a lot of consideration, but we would argue that child health is at least as important as adult literacy, and it's rather disappointing that child health only has to report every five years.

However, the NDP has already defeated our amendment to have child health report every year and, unless there is some sort of eleventh-hour

conversion and unanimous consent from everybody else in this House, which seems very unlikely, we will be left with a bill with child health which will mean that there is not a report until 2012, at which time it is unlikely that there will continue to be an NDP government in this province.

I think that there are some areas which warrant attention, and I will speak to them. First, if we're going to change the outcomes, we need to have a solid strategy working with businesses because some 85 percent of those who are not literate are actually employed, and we need to make sure we are working with businesses to make sure that people who are employed, and who are not fully at adequate level of literacy, are getting the advantages and the opportunities and being able to advance themselves and, of course, improve as a result, not only themselves but their capabilities and their abilities within a Manitoba context.

Next, I would comment that one of the areas where there's been quite disappointing outcomes is in individuals who are marginalized by society—people who are having trouble, people who are struggling in school, sometimes because they have a learning disability. They're not getting the kind of attention that they need to. People who have mental health issues are struggling. People who come into contact, for one reason or another, with our criminal justice system. One of the major reasons, we know, that individuals come into contact with the criminal justice system is lack of adequate literacy, so here is an area where there is room for improvement, and yet there is not action being taken to make sure that individuals who come in touch with the criminal justice system have the effort and the supports made to make sure that they can improve their own literacy skills, decrease their chances of re-offending or getting in trouble with the criminal justice system again and be able to improve.

It's logical. I have had this brought to me. A young person gets in trouble with the criminal justice system, immediately put in the remand centre, and most of the time there is no effort to have some continuing help. The concerns that I have raised from people is that when an individual comes in contact with the criminal justice system, and they end up in the remand centre, there should right away be supports to help them improve their literacy because we know that once an individual's literacy is improved, their chances of re-offending are decreased.

Their opportunities to contribute and to participate in our wonderful province are increased, and there is less likelihood that they will get into trouble. There is a whole variety of ways that we can improve literacy, and we need to make sure we are focussed on this. I would have liked to have seen not only a report to the Assembly but a debate and report to the legislative committee.

I would have liked to have seen that there were more details in terms of the outcomes that must be reported in detail in the report. In that report there should be an annual assessment of where Manitoba stands for literacy and numeracy, where the gaps are, how these can be addressed, and some real forward momentum and planning. Hopefully, this will happen. We're not persuaded that it will necessarily, based on the track record of this government, but we know, as Liberals, we want to keep this government paying attention and accountable.

That's why we need to not only have this act, but we would have preferred to have some additional changes. But, for the moment, we're certainly ready to support this, and we're pleased that there will, at least in this area, be an annual report. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 6, The Adult Literacy Act.

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

Bill 8—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Regional Vocational Schools)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the minister of continuing education, that The Public Schools Amendment Act (Regional Vocational Schools); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (écoles professionnelles régionales), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Attorney General, seconded by the honourable Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 8, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Regional Vocational Schools), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I'd like to put a few comments on the record in regard to Bill 8. Again, as we know, it was originally introduced as Bill 12 on December 4, 2006. The bill then did die on the Order Paper because of the election of 2007, was re-introduced as Bill 8 on October 1, 2007. Since then we've had the opportunity, October 23, we had the opportunity to take the bill to committee. Previous to that, it was discussed on October 16 in this House.

*(16:10)

So it has had the opportunity to have a lot of discussion in regard to what the bill actually does. It is more of a housekeeping bill. It is a bill that has been asked for. In fact, I received a very nice letter from Jacqueline Field, chair of the board of the Pembina Trails School Division. She wrote a letter to my colleague from Tuxedo, who happened to be the Education advocate at that time for the PC caucus asking that this bill be moved forward because, again, on an administrative side it was something that was necessary to move things forward.

The bill, as it reads—I know we've had this read into the record several times—enables the Province to get into discussions with school divisions, into partnerships, to administer and fund regional vocational schools and is a necessary act that has to come forward. With these amendments, the minister will be able to name voting members to the governing board and participate in school governance of Winnipeg Technical College.

Again, one of the concerns that I've raised, I raised back on October 16, we know when the government starts appointing board members, what kind of difficulties the government tends to get into. To mention but a few, there was the entire fiasco that took place in the Seven Oaks School Division, Crocus, and on and on the list goes. There's always a concern when the government appoints members. We want to caution the government to be very careful, the kinds of individuals that they do appoint, because we don't want to see problems happening in the wake of this government and their appointees.

We've spoken in the past that this allows the parties to an agreement to enter agreements with each other or with regional vocational schools regarding provisions of supplies and services.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do not see this as a problematic piece of legislation. We see this as generally housekeeping. It was unfortunate that it died on the Order Paper. It is something that I know

the school divisions are looking forward to, are waiting for, and so, with those few comments, I would like to see this piece of legislation move forward and this House deal with other matters.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, I wanted to add to some of the words the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) has put on the record, just in recognition of regional vocational schools and the important role that they play in terms of the whole concept of learning as a lifelong experience. We look forward to the passage of the bill. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 8, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Regional Vocational Schools).

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

Bill 10—The Family Maintenance Amendment and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 10, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire et la Loi sur l'établissement et l'exécution réciproque des ordonnances alimentaires, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, this bill and its amendments will—and I appreciate the comments, advice that have been offered by members of the official opposition in this regard—will amend our act to provide for significant—not significant, but for continuing changes to keep Manitoba in the forefront of helping parents and families deal with their obligations, specifically in regard to the issue of the project dealing with automatic recalculations which can allow for more smoother form of transition for individuals involved and has been a project co-operated with by the federal and provincial governments as well as the continuing efforts to deal with interjurisdictional matters as they relate to maintenance support, something that we have been

in the forefront of and by virtue of this, in support of all members of the House, continue to do so.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I commend this Legislature and I commend this bill to the House.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'll put a few, just a few comments on the record with respect to Bill 10. We have supported this piece of legislation in second reading, and we also supported it in committee last week, recognizing, of course, that this particular piece of legislation will certainly help spouses, those who have custodial orders, those who have maintenance orders against their spouse, in particular for children, will enhance the ability of spouses to be able to collect maintenance orders from a non-custodial spouse. So it's important, I think, from that perspective, and I know that the Manitoba Bar Association, the Family Law section and the Law Reform Commission have, as well, supported these amendments.

Everyone, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that everyone has an obligation to support his or her children, whether they have the children in their custody or joint custody or whether it's in the custody of their spouse. No denying that there is an obligation to support children in particular. This bill creates a presumptive income level for the non-custodial spouse. I know that, speaking with several members of the legal profession, in particular, there are some difficulties without the provisions of this bill to obtain financial disclosure, financial information from some spouses, particularly, if they leave the province, flee the province and try to get out of their obligations for support, or whether, simply, they're neglecting to provide the financial information because they feel that they're out of province and they don't necessarily have to provide it and ignore their obligations in that respect. By creating a presumptive income level, whether it's through inflation or whether it's through circumstances that's brought forward in court in terms of new income levels that aren't fully substantiated, this bill itself creates that presumptive income level so that, at least, children are looked after and there is no problem in terms of maintenance.

I think from that very point of view, it's important, the presumptive income level then creates, of course, a different obligation in terms of the amount of support that's payable for the children to the custodial spouse. Having said that,

Mr. Speaker, though, there was some concern, you know, there would be some concern, I think, by non-custodial parents, that the presumptive income levels would be too high, but there is provision in the bill, as I indicated before in second reading, there is provision in the bill for an appeal by a custodial spouse with respect to the presumptive income level that's imposed as a result of this legislation.

So there is a right of appeal. There's a notice provision to give to the non-custodial spouse, and they do have the ability then to dispute the presumptive income level in case their incomes aren't high enough. Of course, if they have that ability to do that appeal and, therefore, there's no real hardship, I don't believe, on the non-custodial spouse.

* (16:20)

With that provision though, Mr. Speaker, it really takes away the benefit, so-called benefit, by a non-custodial spouse that they may appear to have by non-disclosure of income levels. I think from that very point of view it's worthy of support.

It also improves the interjurisdictional co-operation, Mr. Speaker, between a jurisdiction to Manitoba and perhaps Alberta or Saskatchewan or wherever the spouse has gone to seek a job, a meaningful job that may not be here in Manitoba. For instance, if they left for Alberta, and there are many Manitobans that are leaving for Alberta these days, many people who want long-term meaningful jobs which aren't, to a great extent, available in Manitoba because our economy isn't doing so well, but—in relation to other jurisdictions, that is. I don't think there's any denying that our economy's doing better than it did, say, last year or the year before. There's no doubt about that. But, in relation to other jurisdictions, our economy is not doing that well and, as a result of that, people are fleeing the province in search of hope and opportunity elsewhere. We see many, many Manitobans leaving the province, particularly to Alberta. There are many children of my constituents, brothers and sisters, grandparents even, who are leaving the province in search of hope and opportunity elsewhere.

Certainly, we have to do everything we can to, in fact, try to improve the ability of custodial parents in particular to be able to—and the Maintenance Enforcement department of the Department of Justice—to try to give them the tools, an extra tool, to deal with parents who have fled the jurisdiction in search of hope and opportunity elsewhere and perhaps either through neglect or perhaps even

intentionally, refuse to provide the information that's necessary to increase maintenance orders and maintenance for children.

So it clarifies also the jurisdiction of the Manitoba courts to modify support orders and it clarifies the fact that Manitoba courts will—court orders with respect to maintenance provisions—will have effect outside the province of Manitoba. I know that the family law lawyers in particular, the family bar association has been asking for more tools and authority as well as the—not only lawyers who are acting on behalf of custodial parents, but also the Maintenance Enforcement people of Manitoba Justice. There's not a week goes by, Mr. Speaker, that I don't get a complaint from someone who has a maintenance order against a non-custodial parent that they don't believe that the Maintenance Enforcement is doing enough to collect the maintenance that they need and require for children. Giving them more tools to deal with particularly those people who flee the province and flee their obligation, or neglect to provide the information on a timely basis, is not a bad thing and it's something that we would support.

I know that in many cases the people, those who are asking for maintenance for children, in many cases they're single parents and they may in fact not even have enough income to hire a lawyer to collect from a non-custodial parent, and therefore they depend entirely, Mr. Speaker, on the Maintenance Enforcement people of the provincial government to do their job and to have the tools in order to collect on maintenance orders. They, too, would like to see that authority expanded so that they can more easily collect on behalf of their children.

But one concern I have, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to Legal Aid to a certain extent, particularly when it comes time for family maintenance orders. The Legal Aid system, of course, is there for people who cannot afford to hire a lawyer, and I've noticed in the last couple of years in particular constituents coming to me as an MLA, and they may be on social assistance and they may have no maintenance order, for example, against the non-custodial parent. I'm finding the social assistance department requiring that the custodial parent, even though they are on social assistance and perhaps even the non-custodial parent being on social assistance, requiring as a condition precedent, as a condition to obtaining further social assistance to maintain themselves and their children, requiring them to see a lawyer and apply for a legal aid certificate to get a maintenance order against a non-custodial parent.

I've even had instances where spouses have come to me, they have the custody of the children of the relationship or the marriage, and telling me that a social assistance worker has told them that, unless they proceed to obtain a maintenance order against the non-custodial parent, their social assistance itself will be cut off or reduced even in instances where the non-custodial parent is incarcerated in prison, Mr. Speaker. Now, obviously, that seems to me to be a total waste of money to go after someone who's already in prison, incarcerated, perhaps, even for the long term. But to ask someone on social assistance who has custody of children to require them, before they get further assistance, to go after a non-custodial parent who's incarcerated or him or herself on social assistance, to me it's kind of a waste of Legal Aid resources at a time when Legal Aid's already under pressure, in situations where people who want to get legal aid certificates and cannot afford to hire a lawyer, where they are, in fact, waiting for assistance through Legal Aid and cannot get it.

That's the type of situation I believe that the minister should address and should look at in terms of policy for Legal Aid and in terms of policy for the Child and Family Services, because it's a waste of resources that are available, the limited resources that are available from Legal Aid. In terms of saving of funds, most certainly that would be a way to save some funds for Legal Aid.

Mr. Speaker, with those brief comments, I would indicate, of course, that Bill 10—we have indicated our support both in committee and at second reading and we continue that support. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did have the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 10. I thought I'd take this opportunity just to reinforce in principle the bill itself is yet another step toward trying to ensure that ultimately minors are not being taken advantage of in the sense of when there is the unfortunate situation where break-ups occur in our society that both biological parents in most part are taking their responsibilities by ensuring that money is flowing to assist in the growing up of that youth.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of legislation that comes before us that moves us forward in a progressive fashion, as Bill 10 does, I believe, merits the support of all members. But it also raises the issue, as the speaker before me, where we can talk about some of those unique situations. I believe it was in second reading, at least I trust or I believe, if not I'll say it

now, I had the opportunity to talk about some of the frustrations that have come out of my constituency, which is somewhat, I think, unique, but, in general, there are quite a few people that I think that it actually applies to. That's the individuals that have children and then, for whatever reasons, there's an international border that tends to get in the way of maintenance payments. You know, I'm not too sure in terms of exactly what it is that we can do and to what degree Ottawa needs to get more directly involved, but suffice to say that we do need to recognize the inequities that are there and what it is that we might be able to do ultimately, as legislators, to try to ensure that these people are, in fact, being held to account for their actions.

*(16:30)

It wasn't that long ago that I was talking to a constituent who actually came to Canada, and the spouse decided to stay in their homeland. In this particular case, the individual expected nothing in terms of support from their spouse. It's almost to the point where it's just conceded that there is no way that I'm going to receive any support. There's very little that the government is able to do.

I wasn't too sure in terms of what to suggest. Many would say that what I should have suggested is just go and hire a lawyer, but you go to hire a lawyer that has international family law background and the chances of being successful is very difficult at best. There's a substantial cost in order to receive any sort of monetary gains for the children who should be provided for from a responsible parent, who should be a responsible parent abroad.

I know that there's a great deal of frustration even in the local area. We all have, no doubt, constituents that have expressed the frustration of not receiving their payments in timely fashions, the confrontation that occurs in terms of, well, how is it you drive this, yet this is how much you say you make, questions of financial accountability, and this bill does attempt to deal with that, Mr. Speaker.

But I've had it raised on a number of occasions where one individual questions the amount of money that they're receiving because that amount of money is being received based on an income that their partner, or their ex, used to have. They look at it, and they say, well, my ex might say that he or she makes \$30,000 a year, but given where he or she is living and what he or she is driving, it's hard to imagine that that is all the money that that individual is, in fact, making. Quite often the way in which our taxes,

our tax structure is set up, at times I believe that people are very creative by which they can come up with ways in which they can make their annual income appear to be lower than maybe what it is in a very real way. As a result, I think what happens is the children end up paying.

I always found it interesting, I have known individuals that have gone through the courts process, and the cost of getting a divorce, especially if it's contested, is where you'll spend \$10,000, \$20,000 in terms of going through the courts. I often wonder is there more that government can do to try to assist in the prevention of these break-ups from having to go to courts, because if you can afford the opportunity of avoiding the courts through other forms of mediation, what you might find is that there's more harmony in the relationship after there's a split. I believe when that does take place, that you get a higher sense of co-operation, and the biggest benefactor, I believe, is the children of the parents, the biological parents in particular.

What is it that government might be able to do? I think that there is a need for maintenance enforcement in the branch that we have, because there are some that, under no circumstances, want to provide a dime, don't even recognize that they have a responsibility, period, end of story. Unfortunately, those individuals have to be made to live up to their responsibilities. That's the reason why we need legislation and why it is that we need to have a maintenance enforcement, but there are some areas, as have been pointed out, that do need to be addressed. That's why, you know, when we see legislation of this nature, I suspect that there's no one that's going to actually oppose Bill 10, and it's because the principle of what it's trying to accomplish is very admirable. Anything that we can do as legislators to take it another step, I think we should do. But further, I believe that we need to be more creative in terms of how it is that we can try to assist in those break-ups, Mr. Speaker, so that they're done in such a fashion in which we minimize the involvement of our courts.

We need to explore. What can government do? I would suggest to you that one of the things that government can do is through the promotion and encouragement of different forms of mediation, whether it's government-direct mediation to a third party; what about outside organizations that might be able to participate, whether it's seed monies or whatever else that it might take. Ultimately, what we want to be able to see is more harmony out there in

the breaking-up of relationships, and I do think that the government can play a more significant role as opposed to standing back and just using the weight of law to ensure—and again, I'm not saying that we don't do this; we have to do this, but I think that there's more that we can do and we look to the government over the next period of time to give it more serious thought.

You know, I'm very interested in knowing from the Department of Justice, are there any other initiatives that they might be looking at as alternatives? To what degree does the government look at other provincial jurisdictions? To what degree do we have divorces, for example, occurring in the province of Manitoba that are weighted going to the courts compared to other jurisdictions? Do other jurisdictions do something differently that we could maybe do or participate in that would make a difference here in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, we're prepared to see the bill go to the committee and we're encouraged that it does take some positive steps. We would like to see the government come up with some creative ideas on other issues related to break-ups of that family unit and how we might be able to better mediate. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, thanks for the opportunity to put a few words on the record on this particular bill.

The bill certainly enhances the ability to locate individuals in child support, and it's certainly laudable that this type of legislation comes forward. However, if I look back at some of the history of this particular government, they had an improved enforcement of support order payments act introduced in 2003, Mr. Speaker. It was let die on the Order Paper and it was reintroduced in December of 2003; it got Royal Assent in 2004 and dragged its heels until March 2005. It makes one wonder just how sincere this government is at enacting and carrying out this type of legislation.

* (16:40)

I believe that it's a good thing that we have this type of legislation coming forward. However, it's very important that that gets dealt with and carried on further to where it actually is used in today's real world. I'm not sure that, as Manitobans, we can believe that this legislation that's making headlines today will actually be used in a way that it was devised to use. Unfortunately, the children are the

pawns. The children are the ones that suffer, and they suffer unduly because of either a delinquent mother or a delinquent father, whoever happens to be the person responsible for the child support.

I have seen, in my own area, where an individual who could well afford to pay the child support neglected to pay it. The individual that was receiving the child support, the custodial person, was forced to go to court, and being on social assistance found this very, very difficult to deal with, had no type of transportation, depended on the neighbours to see that she got to court and, in the end, this happened year after year after year until the court finally had the payment down to \$25 which really wasn't worth going for.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we move ahead with this. I certainly would support this type of legislation. I would like to see that we are able to find the people if they move outside of the province, and in Manitoba we have a number of people that are leaving this province in order to find employment, and gainful employment. However, it also affords them the opportunity to elude the payments that they required. Again, I support this bill, but I have reservations that this government is going to carry it through the way that it's supposed to be and the intent of it. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on this.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Family Maintenance Amendment and Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act.

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

Bill 16—The Statutory Holidays Act (Various Acts Amended)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 16, The Statutory Holidays Act (Various Acts Amended); *Loi sur les jours fériés* (modification de diverses dispositions législatives), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I'm pleased to speak again in the third reading of the Bill 16, The Statutory Holidays Act. Because of this act, we are all going to be enjoying a holiday in this next coming year, a new holiday in February. I think it's February 18 that we'll be looking forward to this holiday.

Certainly, this was something that gained a lot of support in the community. It first started out by a local radio station, I believe, that purported the idea of a holiday. Certainly, it was well received in the public. When asked about if it was a good idea, our leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), did say yes. He thought it was a great idea. We do think it's a good idea. But there are some things that need to be addressed.

First of all, when our leader supported the idea of a new holiday in February, he also said that he recognized the imposition that it would pose on small businesses and the extra cost that they would incur, so it needed to be accompanied with some meaningful tax relief for small businesses and for the business community. So that, I think, could have been addressed with this legislation or in conjunction with some of the fiscal policies which the government chose not to do and not to recognize that for small businesses in our province. We know that the Louis Riel Day, as it will be called, was a name chosen by a number of students that were canvassed and they came up with this day. So I do want to commend them for their input into the naming of our stat holiday.

I know that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurouchou) has been a huge proponent of this holiday for many years now after he has been travelling to Alberta to visit his family out there and recognizing that there is a family day in Alberta. He was very vocal about this in his speaking in second reading, saying that he welcomed the idea, but he thought it should be called family day. The idea I think is when you have another holiday that families can spend some time together. That is, of course, what families would like to do when they have some time off, but we also have to recognize that there'll be many people that will be working on this holiday. They will not be able to have a holiday because all of us who are going to not be working on that holiday will still want to have the services available to us: shopping, theatres, restaurants, and all of these things we'll want to have available to us.

Certainly, that's going to be a cost to the business community because they're going to have to

pay people to work on the holiday in additional rates and they're also going to have to provide alternative days in lieu of the holiday. I believe it was estimated by Shannon Martin of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that the addition of another statutory holiday would cost local businesses \$157 million in lost productivity. Certainly, Mr. Martin presented at the committee hearings last week and did stipulate this again and stressed this, that this was going to be a great cost to the business community who already have payroll taxes, who already have business taxes, and who already have corporate capital tax, Mr. Speaker, that we have here in Manitoba that other provinces do not.

Certainly, when we look to provinces like Saskatchewan who reduced their PST by 2 percent and when they announced that they were going to do that, that gives the businesses a little bit—it has to be a give and take. So, when you're taking away the productivity by giving a stat holiday for people, there has to be some kind of agreement that you'll be able to provide for businesses when they are going to be hit negatively with extra costs.

So, certainly, that's where we would want to go. We supported the idea of a new stat holiday with the codicil, I guess, that there should be some tax reductions and meaningful tax relief to businesses who were going to have an extra burden put on them because of this legislation.

I think that when we talked about this before in Estimates and in committee we recognized, and certainly the number of people that support the bill, but it was quite strange that the minister, when first asked about the bill said, no, this was not something that they would be discussing, not something that they would be looking at. In fact, Mr. Martin brought that to the minister's attention in the committee hearings, that this was something that they said that they would not be wanting to support, but, in the end, the minister flip-flopped very quickly on that and presented the idea of a holiday in February, which went against what she had been told by the business community would be in the best interests of everyone.

* (16:50)

I think that's what we need to do, is we need balance. When you do something like this, you need balance so that if you're going to allow a holiday on one hand, you need the balance to offset some of those additional burdens placed on the business

community because of that. That's what our party recognized was necessary, that, yes, the idea of a holiday was highly popular, and it would be very difficult to say otherwise, because when asked if people would like to have a holiday in February, not too many people would say, no, they wouldn't like to have a holiday. But they would also say, I want my services and I want to be able to do the things I need to do with my day off, so there are going to be a lot of people that will work on this holiday and have to take an additional day instead of that day.

So those are the kinds of things that we saw as the bill not going far enough to cover these kinds of things. The presenters, well, there were no presenters in favour at the committee, which was odd. Nobody came and said, I love the idea of a stat holiday in February, but we know that people often don't come to support positive things. They come out when things are not going well.

But, certainly, Mr. Martin did make some points in the committee and we welcomed his input. I think that we're going to have a new holiday. It's going to be very nice for some families. It's going to be very nice for some of us here, but I do think that businesses are going to, again, be hit by this with the imposition of extra costs accorded to them.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I do say that we support the bill and hope that the government will take the opportunity in the next budget to address some of the issues that are important to the business community, whether that be payroll tax or business tax or some meaningful tax relief that will offset the \$157 million in lost productivity that's going to be incurred to our businesses in Manitoba.

With those few words, I will allow my colleagues a few comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to put a few words on the record, having been in the committee as the bill passed through and listening to the presentation on the bill at the public stage and also having the opportunity, I guess it would have been last year, witnessing the response of the government when the Leader of the Liberal Party back then suggested that we should have a half day in celebration of Manitoba and the response from the government.

First off, I think, going back to the committee, it was interesting to hear from a business perspective how the presenter talked about the Labour

Management Review Committee and the fact that this legislation did not go through that particular committee. Why I find it especially interesting is for years now, I've heard the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan) talk about how important it is that the legislation that she has always brought forward to this Legislature came out of the unanimous support or consensus through the labour-management committee and how she passionately believed in it. Just the way it was presented in the committee, what I thought was good is the way in which she tried to give the impression that even this bill had received that support from the labour-management committee. I really did appreciate the presentation. I think it's a bit of an eye-opener in terms of how it is the bill ultimately came before us.

We're all aware of how the bill came and, contrary to what the Minister of Labour tries to give the impression of, that this is a day which, ultimately, was being talked about; the need for another statutory holiday. Initially, the only real resistance, from best I could tell, from the bill, was actually the government of the day, the Minister of Labour. It was interesting in watching her performance over the issue where she almost gives the impression that she feels bad because she kind of caved to the issue, Mr. Speaker. I just thought it was somewhat interesting in the way in which she's talked about the bill inside the Chamber and inside the committee.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing the need for a statutory holiday is something in which the Liberal Party over a year ago had acknowledged through the Leader of the Liberal Party. We talked about a Manitoba-type of day and we see that the government ultimately has responded. It was actually the third party in on the issue. At the end of the day, we're glad to see that it's going to happen. It's in keeping with what's happening in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and I think that for many people, no matter what the actual name of the day is, I believe that they're going to spend extra time, I hope and trust, with families. I know in my mailer that I'm putting out I'm indicating the acknowledgement of calling it Louis Riel Day, and I appreciate that. But, having said that, I'm going to be encouraging my constituents to recognize that day as a wonderful opportunity to be with family.

Mr. Speaker, I say that because I think that we need to see more focus on families. Alberta and Saskatchewan both called it Family Day, from what I understand, in recognition of the importance of families. This is in part the reason why it is that, even

though it's going to be called Louis Riel Day—and I respect that; I know my leader was quite excited about that particular day being called Louis Riel Day—but I think it's upon us all to share with our constituents how we would like to see that day developed. I'm hopeful that it won't just be another long weekend where the line-ups go to the U.S.-Canada border. I'm hopeful that we'll see more of an emphasis on learning a little bit more about our wonderful province; to put more of an emphasis on our families and, in short, for Manitobans to really enjoy that day in February because it is something that we recognize as a positive thing.

I understand that there is a will to see the bill pass this afternoon from third reading, so who am I to deny that opportunity?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to be able to say a few words.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 16, The Statutory Holidays Act (Various Acts Amended).

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

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the hour being—no, I wonder if you might call it 5 o'clock.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The hour being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned—it is. It is 5 o'clock.

The hour being 5 o'clock, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 29, 2007

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