

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
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DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
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JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
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MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
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WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, August 22, 2013

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, good morning. I seek leave of the House to move directly to Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act, brought forward by the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister).

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to proceed directly to Bill 205? *[Agreed]*

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

**Mr. Speaker:** So we'll now call Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson, who has nine minutes remaining.

#### Bill 205—The Election Financing Amendment Act

**Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson):** It's really a great pleasure that I continue speaking on this very important bill, and as I mentioned last time, I took a minute—I see this particular act to support democracy. We're talking about democracy, Mr. Speaker, and this is all political parties. This is not a particular act that supports such and such party by such and such group. It talks about democracy. It talks about choice, and a democracy is people's choice, elect the government by the people, for the people, so it is the people that we are talking about. And I think the democracy, as I was about to mention last time, we have seen in Canada the voters' neutrality towards participation and it is a big challenge. I think we—we have all heard about this last time we were in one of the committees that the

new chief election officer mentioned about voter turnout that are not really something that I feel very encouraged, that we need to really get more people to participate in the election process.

One of the things that this act provides is to attract people to run for office. And I think that when you look at how we have been doing the funding, financing of our political parties, in the world, I would say we have one of the best systems here in Canada, and particularly in Manitoba, because if you go to countries that have multi-multi-millionaires that they elect—superficially call election, but they don't elect. They really take power because it's the money strength that works. And I don't think that is something, it's for the people or by the people. It is by the wealth created by someone or group that wants to use that, wants to take control of the society which is not something that both sides—I'm pretty sure that members from the—that side are equally passionate about democracy and I think it is something that we have to work together to find out why such an act is important.

And I would like to draw the attention of my friends here looking at the world today—so scary scenes you see in Egypt, in Iran, in Iraq. You feel really nervous about the next generation of the world. Will it be safe if the dictatorship and if the military powers start taking over countries because of the mighty power that they earn by whatever means? So, I'm very, very concerned that we have not understood yet how valuable, at any cost, the democracy is to this country and to the world. And I would say, looking at the wars we have been fighting over centuries to free people, still today in Egypt, lots of people give their lives because they believe that their particular party or cause is important.

Violence is something that I hate, Mr. Speaker. I will never, never, ever support that kind of movement. Like Gandhi said, I'm prepared to die but not prepared to kill. So, that is my doctrine. I would never go for violence. But yes, there is—last time when I spoke about this young girl, Malala, I'll say, the power of pen. And I think we can make the world better by working together through a democratic process. Question is, how do you do that. Let's see where the cash comes, in terms of financing. So, we—I am very happy to see here, and when I see that the

party, NDP, has banned union donations and corporate donations, that is something that has not been seen as—in a debt—that is so valuable to us, that we do not support a particular group or an interest group that finances you and you are vowed to support that.

The question has come in the past about—and I can give examples of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who was the Prime Minister of India, became very popular, Mr. Speaker, and she was like—almost becoming dictator. She dismantled institutions and she started taking power in her hands by saying that, no, we will not follow the certain things. And, guess what? People from that country who are not highly educated or well-to-do, the majority of them, it was a massive vote turnover and she was thrown out of the power. She lost her seat. She was not even a Member of Parliament. So, people power is very, very important.

Now, how do we protect that, Mr. Speaker? How do we protect that people participate and we get good candidates to run? I don't think that we should, all of us here, we have gone through election financing ourselves; some of us had to mortgage our houses to get the financing loan to our elections and get paid back by fundraising. But it's a process. You don't want to really get good candidates recruited from both sides, Conservatives, Liberals, NDP and tomorrow a new party may be born. So, all these movements need support from the public and people. How do you do that?

\* (10:10)

There are two ways. We get election rebates, but that's not enough. And when the last time people are asked, why do you need more money? Because the political movement is not only—you fight elections and you are in debt. But there is a limit, and if you try to find out how much, then you don't want to go to your pockets, say I've got to pay money from my pocket. That will distract some of the people who have been very interested to run in politics. And most of us here are with a passion. Both sides, we are all here to serve our constituents. And I, for one, have taken a serious set-back on my financial wealth by being here, but I must tell you, for the last 10 years I've enjoyed every day of being here in this Chamber, working with all friends here, and I feel myself fulfilled in my heart that, yes, I'm contributing something. And I stood for my people and I did, as you know, Mr. Speaker, when the hog plant issue came, I sided with my constituents, and

guess what happened? I have been increasing my votes over the last two elections because they believe I represent them. That is the best satisfaction I can have with the ideals of my party, ideals of the values that I have felt here. I'm extremely happy and satisfied that, yes, I'll continue that.

But the election financing is extremely important, and I would encourage, because if you get more votes you get more people participating in elections, you get funding from that. Calling it a vote tax is not something that I'm happy with. It's not a vote tax. You call it a democracy tax, yes, I would buy that idea. We have to see how we make the financing of elections not a personal issue, but a social issue, and that way, if you get X number of people supporting a party, a new party may be emerging, Green Party is emerging. If they get more people supporting them, naturally they will be able to get the financing for their party to prosper and get into more acts. And look at their own ways, how they can make our country, Canada, which is God's country, I call, much better by more participation of people, young people, brilliant people, good people, participate in the process.

So I think the act is not something that we should be calling a vote tax or funding a party act. It is an act that will finance, that will help finance people who want to run for seats, and which will run the course of time. You will see how the democracy will flourish more, more people participate and more things will happen to our province and our country.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act, brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister).

I think it's unfortunate that this bill is actually necessary in this Manitoba Legislature, but it is necessary, and I do thank the Leader of the Official Opposition for bringing it forward because I think it makes the point that members opposite, the NDP government, is a lazy—the NDP party is a lazy party that doesn't want to do its own work, doesn't want to go out to Manitobans and fundraise in a regular fashion, that they need to rely on the taxpayers who fund their party. And I think it's unfortunate that this bill has to be brought forward, but it is important that it is here, and it is important to debate this in the Manitoba Legislature. And again, I want to thank the

Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) for bringing it forward.

Of course, we, on this side of the House, have chosen not to take this vote tax because we believe in working hard. We believe in asking people and earning the trust and the support of people in the regular way, Mr. Speaker, in the honourable way, and we believe in going door to door and asking for people's support. We believe in their right to support a political party. But what this NDP government has done is that they have relied on taxpayers to fund their political party, and those taxpayers don't necessarily support their political party. And I think that's unfair.

We believe in democracy, and I know that members opposite don't. They run this province in more of a dictatorship way, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's very unfortunate the way the NDP has chosen to run this province under their watch. Of course this bill is necessary because I believe that the NDP has made a mockery of democracy in this province. We see so many instances of things that they've brought forward, bills in this Manitoba Legislature that they brought forward that are taking away rights of people. One example, of course, is their bill before the House now that is calling on—taking away people's right to vote on a PST hike. And we know that Manitobans came out to committee and they came out and they've—they came out and rallied at the—on the front steps of the Legislature. They've sent us emails and they've called us. And we've spoken to thousands of Manitobans who are very upset about this NDP government taking away their right to vote when it comes to a PST hike.

But, Mr. Speaker, back to the vote tax. I think that members opposite should really reconsider their position on this and they should not take this vote tax. I think there are so many other things out there that—where this money would be better spent.

I know a couple of weeks ago I asked a question of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Ms. Marcelino), Mr. Speaker, and I asked her about the Manitoba Book Awards. And we know that it's just under \$9,000 a year that goes out for these book awards, the Isbister prize and there's others as well. But I asked a question about that. Why would they take away that money for these very good book awards in Manitoba that—they promote literacy and they encourage writers in our province and artists in our province to excel. And I think what's unfortunate is just for under \$9,000 a year—that would only be

two members opposite that wouldn't have to take their vote tax. Only two members from that side of the House—if they didn't take their vote tax, then those Manitoba Book Awards could continue.

And I think what's unfortunate, of course, is that members opposite, they are more concerned about lining their own political pockets than doing what's right for Manitobans and standing up for Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

I know each and every day colleagues of mine and myself have been standing, reading petitions on autism in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we know that children are aging out of the much-needed ABA services because this NDP government chose to take away those services from Manitoban children who are in much need of those services. And we know what those services do for them and what they can do for their future. And it's very important for those services to continue, but, unfortunately, the members opposite are more concerned about putting money in their own political pockets rather than money for children who are aging out of these ABA services with autism.

So, again, this is about priorities, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's unfortunate that members opposite, their priorities are more with lining their own political pockets rather than doing what's right for Manitobans with autism, rather than supporting the Manitoba Book Awards. There are so many things that they could be doing with this money rather than putting it in their own pockets.

We also know, of course, that rural ER closures, there's been 18 of them and that's climbing, Mr. Speaker, under their watch. It's deplorable what's happening in our rural communities, where people can't get access to the health-care services that they need, want and deserve in those communities, while, at the same time, members opposite are taking this vote tax and putting it in their own pockets, when, again, that could be better spent on—in areas of recruiting doctors for ERs and nurses for ERs and making sure that those ER services are open for people in those communities who deserve to have access to those much-needed services.

So for these reasons and for many more, Mr. Speaker, we believe that members opposite—all members of this House—should support this piece of legislation. It is an important piece of legislation. It would send a message to all Manitobans that we're not—that members opposite are not concerned about taking money from them to line their own political

pockets if they supported this piece of legislation. They can always reverse their decision there. They don't need to take this vote tax. And by supporting this piece of legislation they would be sending a strong message to Manitobans that they're putting Manitoba's interests first and not their own.

So I encourage all members of this House to support this piece of legislation. It is a good and necessary piece of legislation.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development):** It is my privilege to stand in this House today along with many honourable members. And when I reflect about the road or the journey that has brought me here, I have to continually pinch myself.

Many of the members know that I am a farm girl from Saskatchewan, didn't do very well in 4-H, but I do have a red ribbon now. The honourable members from across the way provided me with one—very generous of them to share their ribbons with me here in this House.

\*(10:20)

But I reflect on—how does a farm girl get to be the Minister of Housing and Community Development in a Manitoba government? If you would've told me that 40 years ago, I would've laughed. I knew that there was many opportunities for me out in this bright, wonderful world, but I never really understood that this could be an opportunity for me.

And I look across the way, and I know that we all come from very different backgrounds, different philosophical, different values and we need to cherish those differences. But how did we end up here?

I ended up here because I took a chance. I was asked if I was interested in running and, never once, because of the system that we are in, did I ever wonder, do I have enough money? That didn't come past my mind at all. I knew that I had an opportunity here, when I was asked if I was prepared to take that risk and put my name on that sign and to meet the neighbours of Fort Garry. And as I met with city members at that time, they encouraged me that, if I was interested and I was prepared to work hard, that this could be an option for me. And yet again, there was no conversation about, well, how many millions do you have.

I reflect on this story, because, as I meet with schoolchildren from across the province, I will tell them there's a chair in here for you, too, if you choose to take that path, and that's important. And I always reflect that our system is different than many other countries. You don't have to be a multi-millionaire. You don't have to have multi-millionaires that back you. If you have a desire to work for the public good, to commit to working diligently all—every day for people to make a difference, if you want to make Manitoba continue to grow and to be strong, you have that opportunity.

If we were to pass Bill 205, that opportunity would be wiped away, so, because of that reason, I'm not able to support it, as many other members have spoken. I can't support it. I need to ensure that we still have a system within the province of Manitoba that is equitable for everyone—that everyone has a chance—that farm girls from Manitoba and farm boys from Manitoba can have that opportunity as I have. This is something that we need to cherish and we need to honour.

We've had the privilege of listening to members speak, that have experience in the Philippines and in India, and they spoke very eloquently about democracy and about the importance of maintaining that fairness and equity and transparency and the consequences if we don't. So, as we reflect about why are we here today and what are the options that we have and what are the options for Manitoba and for the young people, I am going to always land on the side of ensuring that there are those opportunities. And we have been very successful over the last 10 years of working towards setting up a system that is fair and transparent and is equitable for all Manitobans.

So, I'd like to talk—to speak today about some of the things that we've done. Not only have we banned corporate and union donations—that was our first step—we have taken other steps to ensure that individuals have this opportunity. We've introduced the independent commissioner to enforce the act—The Elections Act. We've also made the redistribution and boundary changes truly independent and reflective of the whole province. That is happening with a committee of Manitobans that come together and look at the population distribution and also have a conversation with community members about how they see those boundaries being set. We've set a date that's been established for elections. Our government has also acted to provide greater access to voting. Our recent

amendments now allow open—now allow polls to open an hour earlier at 7 a.m. on election day to allow voters more time to vote on their way to work. We've added an additional day for advanced voting on the second Saturday before the election, as well as improved access to advanced polls in rural and northern areas so that residents in a community will not travel more than 30 kilometres to an advanced poll. Those are significant changes that we've been able to make.

And they also—they build on previous amendments that we've made, where we've removed restrictions for advanced voting so that anyone can vote in advance for any reason. We've increased the number of locations of advanced polls. We enabled super polls in malls so people can vote in advance in convenient locations. We've extended absentee voting to students and public employees who are outside the province. We've placed voting stations in apartment complexes with a hundred or more units, where practical. And, as I said before, we've reduced the travel time for rural people.

We're taking actions and supporting citizen choice. That's what we have been able to accomplish as we have moved forward over the last 10 years—and making these amendments. We do not want to go to a system where there is no fairness, where there has to be an inquiry. And in these inquiries, there is astounding findings.

I think by going forward with our initiatives and our plan of making sure that this, our political system, is open for all Manitobans, for everyone to participate—and I think that public financing plays a role in that. It supports all parties, whether they're large or small.

And parties are made up of citizens, and those citizens deserve to have that opportunity. If they want to take that risk, as I did, and put their name on a sign and take—have that privilege, if the constituents choose to have them represent them. And they get this feeling every day when they walk into this building that, I can't believe that I'm here.

I'm a long way from Viceroy, Saskatchewan, I must tell you. And we have—in our family, we had opportunities that we spoke about politics. And politics weren't necessarily a huge part of our life, but there was lots of teasing that happened with bumper stickers, between individuals in our community. And I think that was my first introduction. I know that my parents are in awe of the opportunities that I have had. They might not

support the same political party that I do, but they're in awe. I thought the honourable members would like that; they all know. But they continue to be in awe that their small-town farm girl is having this opportunity.

And I want to ensure that for the future, as we move forward, that all individuals, whether you are a new Canadian, whether you're a farm girl, whether you grew up in North End, Manitoba—North End, Winnipeg, or in the suburbs of Winnipeg, or northern Manitoba, that you have that opportunity to put your name on that ballot, to put your name on that sign and have the opportunity, if the constituents do so choose, to walk into this building and to take one of these magnificent seats and to participate in making Manitoba a better province.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and it's indeed a pleasure to be in the Legislature this morning.

I would like to start off by congratulating the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister) on Bill 205. I think it's important to have this debate, seeing as neither Bill 205, neither the premise nor the intent, was ever debated in the previous election of 2011.

And that's why I think it's probably a little bit troubling for members on this side of the House. Not just was Bill 205 not debated—nor the intent, nor where it's going—the fact that we are now going to subsidize political parties. Matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, neither was the PST increase or, that matter, any tax increase was not debated in the last election.

So there were a lot of omissions from the last election campaign, and I don't believe that this Chamber or the NDP party, for that matter—the government—has a mandate to implement a vote tax. It was never mentioned. It was never referenced. I've looked at various brochures, I've looked in—I've even googled it. I don't see any reference to it in the last campaign. There is no mandate that the NDP government has to implement a vote tax. So they actually do not have a mandate or the authority from the electorate to do this, and I think the electorate is very sensitive about these

\* (10:30)

And what's further interesting—this has been mentioned before by the member for Fort Whyte, the Leader of the Opposition—that never was this

referenced in the last, say 10 years, it was never brought up as long as the NDP was ahead in fundraising as a political party ahead of all the other parties. As soon as they realized that they were falling further and further behind, and that's what happens when you're government for a certain length of time, you become more and more unpopular and people don't want to give you money. And it is really a telling sign. Parties who have been in power for the length of time that the NDP have end up not being as successful at fundraising because the fundraising tends to decline with popularity.

So what we know is that the NDP never ran on this as a platform. They have not brought this forward and are, in fact, taking a subsidy which they never told the electorate they were going to do. And what's interesting is that the NDP did not fail to get in their application. You have to apply for it and you get your subsidy. Unlike, if I could take this Legislature back to a different time, for instance October 4th, 2005; \$225,000 was paid to the TCN First Nation for a sewer and water system—was never built. The deadline was never met. But when it comes to \$200,000 for the NDP party, they did not miss that deadline. They were there on time. They were there as the doors opened at Elections Manitoba handing in their form, saying we need that cheque.

I take the Legislature back to a future question—a previous question; September 6, 2006, \$225,000 was paid by Manitoba Hydro under the leadership of the NDP for a sewer and water system for the TCN First Nation that was never built. It wasn't built in 2005 and it wasn't built in 2006. But, Mr. Speaker, never did they miss the opportunity to get their vote tax when it came up. They didn't miss that deadline.

September 6, 2007, another \$227,000 for a sewer and water system for the TCN First Nation. Was it built in 2007? Nope, they missed another deadline—2008, \$3,251,000 for a sewer and water system. Was it built? Nope, deadline's missed. Since 2005, they have missed every construction deadline.

But when it comes to collecting their vote tax, which they never ran on, which they never got a mandate for, there, they never missed that deadline. They've never missed—they didn't miss one penny of that money. They made sure that they were first in line, they were first up for it, took their money because we now know that they've got declining revenue because of their unpopularity, and I would suggest to members far for me—be it for me to give them advice, you know, maybe, maybe the actions of

the PST, the fact that they weren't truthful about raising the PST, maybe it was because of the tax increases the punishment that they meted out on the lower middle class and middle class, the punishing taxes that they've brought in, maybe that has something to do with the fact that now they can't do fundraising and now they have to go to those very same people that they've punished for these taxes and take some of that money for their own political party.

But I'd like to move on. March 30th, 2009, \$2,382,900 was paid by Manitoba ratepayers for a Keeyask Centre at the TCN First Nation and, you know what? In the 2009 construction season, they didn't meet that deadline. Mr. Speaker, 2010, another \$2,423,409 paid by Manitoba Hydro ratepayers to the TCN First Nation. Was that construction deadline met? No, it wasn't; that one was also bypassed. But when it comes to the NDP getting their subsidy, they never, never miss that deadline. But when it comes to sewer and water projects for the TCN First Nation, when it comes to Keeyask Centre for the TCN First Nation, well, those deadlines, there's all kinds of reasons why they can't be met. And my counterpart, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, has put on the record, I think, almost 170 times—or if you will, Mr. Speaker, he has put 170 excuses on the record why they couldn't meet the deadline of the sewer and water system and the Keeyask Centre, 170 and counting reasons why he couldn't meet that deadline.

But they couldn't come up with one reason why they shouldn't meet the deadline for taking their vote tax, which they don't have a mandate for, which they didn't run for, which they don't have a right to, which they're not entitled to. They should have gone to the people and made it part of their platform, just like the PST and just like all taxes. That's what they should have done.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have seen all kinds of instances where the NDP have not been able to meet a deadline. They cannot meet deadlines. They cut the ribbon once, then they cut the ribbon the second time. By the time they're done, there's only about an inch, maybe an inch and a half, of ribbon left for their cutting ceremonies, and they cut ribbon after ribbon, over and over again, announce it over and over again. But, when it comes to getting the vote tax, they don't even do the ribbon. They don't even get the pair of scissors. They're at the front door with their hand out, with their application saying, we are entitled to our entitlements. That's how far the NDP has dropped.



And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, we would have never have seen this under Premier Gary Doer. He would have never have put up with this kind of thing. He said, you go out and you raise your own money, and that's what he would have said to them. He would have indicated to each and one of the members opposite, go out and do your job and do your fundraising.

Oh, but I know they would have had an excuse for that, and I'm sure the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, who can't meet any deadline when it comes to sewer and water and Keeyask Centre for the TCN First Nation, he would have said, oh, but you know, the people don't want to give us money anymore. You know, the people don't really like us that much anymore. And the answer back should be, you know what? You should reflect on your policies. You should look at what you're doing. This is a direct condemnation of the NDP and the way people feel about them, Mr. Speaker, and then trying to make up for it by forcing people to pay a subsidy to your political party is shameful.

It's harmful to the electoral system, and my good friend from Radisson talked about voter turnout. Well, you know what, Mr. Speaker? This will not encourage voter turnout by going to the very people that you said you wouldn't raise taxes on, raise taxes on them, although you didn't tell them the truth, and then take that money and transfer it to your political party. And I—but the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Jha), very honourable man in this Chamber, but on this one, I believe he's wrong. This is not the way to raise voter participation. Go out, raise your money. I'd say to the member for Radisson, go door to door, ask people to give money to his political party. That's the way to do it. Do it the right way. I ask members of this Chamber to support Bill 205.

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Mr. Speaker, it's an absolute privilege to rise today to speak on Bill 205, and for a number of reasons. Today we are commemorating a number of events. It's the second anniversary of Jack Layton's death and, also, today is International Black Ribbon Day. And this morning, as I was driving to the Legislature, I was listening to the CBC, and it kind of reminded me of my roots as they were interviewing a woman who was talking about her life beginning in a displaced persons camp in Pocking, Germany. And it struck a chord with me and it brought back memories, because a good friend of mine who has since passed away was born in

Pocking, and I remember when we did a pilgrimage to the area to visit the place that she was born prior to her family emigrating to Canada.

\* (10:40)

And so, for me, democracy and the ability of anyone to participate in the democratic process, regardless of their financial position, is essential. And I thank my colleague from—the member from Fort Richmond for her words as the farm girl from Saskatchewan, because, certainly, my roots are in some ways very similar, in that I marvel that I am here as someone who's a first generation Canadian. And to be able to represent the citizens of Rossmere to me is an absolute privilege, because I know, certainly for my parents, this is quite something remarkable. And that—for someone growing up in—or not growing up but starting life in the inner city of Winnipeg and experiencing poverty—and thankfully we had a good church that we were going to that was able to support my mother. My father had been diagnosed with tuberculosis and spent three years at what is now the St. Amant Centre battling the disease and my mother had to go work in a sewing factory. And, thankfully, our church was very supportive and had the resources to make sure that as a family we were able to live and flourish.

And being a first generation Canadian meant I grew up in a household where there was a constant reminder of how absolutely fortunate we were to be living in Manitoba, to be living in Canada. That—certainly, the stories that my parents shared—sometimes I think of it too freely about what life was like living in Ukraine and what they endured under the policies of Stalin was sometimes a little bit too much to bear. However, it did create a sort of foundation, I think, for myself in terms of an appreciation for the importance of living in a democratic society and where everyone is allowed to have an opportunity to succeed. And, you know, certainly, for my parents to engender that in me was really, really important. And so there was a constant reminder from them about how important it was to appreciate the kind of democratic principles that we have.

And I—and it's really quite funny because when election day came, regardless of whether it was civic or provincial or federal, that was quite an honoured day for them because it was quite a process of, you know, today, we are going to vote. And my dad would come home, we would have dinner and then the two of them would go off and cast their ballots,

and for them that was a very significant and important thing to be able to do.

I know that when I got involved in public service, whether it was through teaching and then getting involved with the teachers' association and the Manitoba Teachers' Society, I know they weren't very, very pleased because, again, they were reflecting on their history coming from Ukraine. And one of the things that I still remember—sixteenth birthdays are supposed to be quite wonderful events. I remember that we sat in tears at my—at the dinner table that day because for my father it was a reflection that when he turned 16 he became the head of his household because the Stalinists had come in and taken his father during the Stalinist pogroms.

And one of the things that I learned which I hadn't known, but my dad kept saying that he had been the leader of the collective. And so as the leader of the collective at age 40, as the soldiers came through and he was the first one who was taken. So as I became more involved in teacher politics, I know my father wasn't exactly too pleased because in that culture, in that society to be—to speak out, to represent your people, to, you know, to present options—anything was seen as being subversive and was obviously punished, and from my dad's 16th birthday on, they had no clue what had happened to him. There was never any information on what had happened. So as I got older and as I got more involved, I know my dad kept saying, oh, you're more like your grandfather—because, obviously, I've taken on his traits of wanting to represent and see that there's equality and fairness, and that's always been one of the principles that I try to adhere to, is that to make sure that whatever decisions are made are fair and balanced and are there to promote the well-being of everyone not just a privileged few.

So one of the things—even though my father has not had the privilege of seeing me be elected into this position, I know that my mother—actually, when I approached her and said that I was thinking of running for elected office, it was the very first time I'd ever heard her say the words, well, what would you like to do? Because usually she was the first to offer advice in terms of what I shouldn't be doing. And I think that she's very, very proud of the fact that in our society here, that there's the ability of someone from poor means has been able to achieve something that is significant. I mean, for us all to be in this room is an incredible privilege and one that we should respect and remember each day that we

stand up to speak, that we are here to represent our citizens, our communities, and that we are not here to self-promote and move ahead in—you know, in unseemly ways, I guess.

So, I guess, in concluding then, what I would like to say is that it's hard to support something like this that wants to change the playing field and tilt it in such a way that those who have deep pockets and well-to-do friends and are able to generate resources, and I—then, obviously, the American system comes to mind as well. But I think it's important to preserve our democracy.

I mean, that is why we attract so many people from across the world who come here because they recognize that we have something that is unique and special and it needs to be treasured and maintained, and that it shouldn't be something that is part of the elite. And I actually encountered that not too long ago when a new Canadian had commented on the fact that I took a photo of them outside the Leg. And he remarked that, you know, this is quite something, you know, you're not someone who sees yourself above and beyond anyone else. And in the country that they came from, elected officials were there by privilege and financial access and not because they represented the ordinary person and were there as—coming into the position as an ordinary person, there to work on behalf of their community.

So, I think it's really important that we preserve our democracy and not allow the financial gains of others to determine who becomes a representative.

Thank you.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 205, The Election Financing Amendment Act.

And, you know, when the vote tax was brought in, I was quite surprised, being newly elected. I've donated to candidates and political parties for several years, and then when we went out with the election to raise money for the election, I was humbled and surprised by the amount of money that people will donate to you when they believe in you. And that that amount should be available from people with, you know, nothing necessarily in return, but they do, indeed, believe in the candidate and they donate to the candidate and they donate to the party, and it's very humbling to see that. Not only the money, of course, but also the volunteers had a greater effect on me even with the amount of time that people would put into your election campaign, because they want

to be part of a team. They enjoyed being part of it, and, indeed, as there was a hint that we might have some success in Brandon West, that more people came on board. And the work that those volunteers did was—I'm—continue to be astounded by, Mr. Speaker, and very, very humbled that those people worked so hard to help me become elected and donate their time and their money. Indeed, I do see those people from time to time, and I really do miss getting together with them as a group. We had a lot of fun during the election, and just astounded by the work that people would do.

But then we see legislation come in that means that the NDP doesn't have to go out and talk to people, they don't have to go out and fundraise. And it just shows me, Mr. Speaker, that it's another disconnect by this party that's tired of its time in office and it's showing its age. And they're thinking that, well, we're not—we don't want to work that hard and, you know, go and ask people or have to meet people and have them donate to us, and it is, indeed, a disconnect from the public in Manitoba.

And I think it is a danger for the NDP, frankly, and I hope they see the danger that this is a further disconnect from the voter in Manitoba for their party. And there is an inherent danger there moving forward, Mr. Speaker, what that will mean or may mean for their vote.

\* (10:50)

We have seen, of course—over the past years, we looked at the numbers in the elections and the committee on the elections, and the numbers that had declined precipitously, Mr. Speaker. And people are not voting as they once did in Manitoba.

And as some previous speaker said, I don't have a belief that this will engage the voter. In fact, it will disconnect them from us even more, from politicians even more. Of course, our party has said we will not take this voter vote tax and, indeed, it's something that we do believe that we should go out and talk to the voter, ask them for their support, and if they deem us worthy of their support, perhaps they will deem us worthy of a donation as well. And that is something that has been successful in the past, obviously, and it does give you a great connection with that voter.

But, you know, the NDP now sees that they don't—they don't need that connection. They don't want to do the work anymore, and Manitobans

should just give them money to run their operations and away they go.

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that that's—that's what should happen, and I am surprised that they did bring this in, but, again, Manitobans have been surprised by many things this government did. This government promised them during the election, each and every candidate, each and every NDP candidate went to the door and they promised, like their leader, that they would not raise the PST, that that was not in the books, that was not possible, it was not going to happen, and of course what do we see? Not only the broadening of the PST in last year's budget, but this year the increase of the PST by 14.3 per cent on Manitobans, and some of the most vulnerable Manitobans are the ones that are paying the price for this government's excesses. And they're still running deficits. Even with this huge increase in revenue that they've seen over the last couple years, and the revenue increases that they've seen over the past several years from the federal government, they're still running deficits.

And here they go looking for more money from the taxpayer, just taking it out of the taxpayers' pockets. And, indeed, we heard several times at committee that people are very upset about what this government is doing. They're upset about the tax increase, and that tax increase will go into the NDP's own pockets in this vote tax.

Manitobans are having to make very, very difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker. And now we're coming into a school year and we're seeing that Manitobans have to go out and of course they have to buy everything to get ready for the school year and they're worried about how they're going to finance that. They're worried about how they're going to pay for that now with this sales tax increase. And that sales tax increase, as I said, goes—some of it's going directly into the pockets of each and every NDP member over there, and I think that's quite sad to see that disconnect from the public.

So the public's seeing it at the till as they're going and buying school supplies. Indeed, we saw today that some people are having to delay their retirement plans, Mr. Speaker, because of the cost of post-secondary education and the time and the money it takes to get your child through post-secondary education. They are delaying their retirement plans, and, again, recently now, today, we see that banks are raising interest rates. So all of these things factored together, it's dangerous out

there, being a taxpayer in Manitoba, because every dollar counts and this government is taking more of those dollars into their own pockets in this vote tax.

So, Manitobans are trying to deal with their own situation, and the government is just taking more and more from them, so they're paring down what they're able to spend on themselves, on their families, on their children's education, enhancing their child's education, but they have less money because the government's taking it away.

And what's the government going to do with it? Some of it they're going to take, as I said, put it into their own pockets for this vote tax, because they don't want to go out and ask for voluntary contributions as opposed to mandatory. If you had a voluntary contribution you could go out, you could ask people, and they could decline, Mr. Speaker. They could turn you down as a contribution. And people, then, have that choice. What this government is doing is taking away that choice, not only on the PST, but they're also taking away the choice on people's ability to vote on that tax increase. So the government likes doing that, it seems, taking away people's choice.

And, indeed, there is a history, Mr. Speaker, of how we have funded our election campaigns in the past. For me, as I said, it was out with volunteers fundraising, and I was shocked and humbled—very humbled by how much people would support me and how much they believed in me. And, indeed, then, after the election as a—history does show us, there is a rebate from taxpayers, and each and every member in this Chamber did receive a rebate from Manitobans during the election, after the election. Some of them are quite substantial. You know, we look at some of the members opposite and the 'subsidiary'—the returns that they did get. It's—they should have enough money in there, and in going out and speaking to Manitobans and asking them for their support.

They shouldn't have to force Manitobans to support the vote tax. It's something that they—if they don't believe in themselves anymore, Mr. Speaker, then that's a very sad way to indicate it. If you don't believe in yourself enough to go and ask people for their own—their support, well, maybe it's—maybe you don't belong in this Chamber. I—as I said, that was something that was very surprising to me, how much people believed and wanted to believe, and, apparently, the NDP doesn't believe in that process anymore. They are disconnected from Manitobans,

and we see that time and again in the legislation that they bring forward. And this is one of those examples, a prime example that they don't want to talk to taxpayers about raising money for elections, they just want to take it from them and run a deficit and increase taxes and it's all going to go, part of that money, into the pockets of each and every member of the NDP across the way.

A very sad statement, Mr. Speaker, in this time. If times are so tough, this is one piece of legislation that this government should look at changing. Thank you, I hope that they do support this, and we'll see them moving forward and be more engaged with Manitobans. So thank you.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** It's always fun to speak to a Tory bill where they kind of reveal their true colours. You know, in the last election—I mean, we're speaking on Bill 205 here, the elections finances amendment act proposed by the Conservatives—and in the last election the voters were a little confused because the Conservatives were trying to out-New Democrat the New Democrats. It didn't work out very well for them. I can understand that they would be a little reticent to head into the next election and, my goodness, given their track record on democracy in this province, I think I have to start my speech today with the well-known phrase that those who don't know their history are destined to repeat it.

For the, literally, you know, thousands of people who will be reading this speech in Hansard afterwards—or maybe, at least, my parents, perhaps—you know, a slight history lesson might be in order. I'm going to take us all the way back to the dark, dark decade of the 1990s, the 1995 provincial election. Now, most political parties, I would imagine, head into an election looking for a hard fight, but a clean fight and a fair fight. Not the governing Conservatives, not the Filmon Conservatives which the current Leader of the Opposition says is the—oh, I'm not even going to repeat it; it's just dumb. But he really liked that era, and you can understand why. He was sitting around the Cabinet table when this very interesting idea was proposed. It was called the Independent Native Voice.

Now, what is that? For all of us students of Manitoba history, what is that, Mr. Speaker? It was a scam. It was a sham. It was something the Conservatives conceived of in secret and launched in several targeted ridings trying to deprive people of

their democratic vote, trying to split the NDP vote in separate ridings. It was absolute racism. I'm very glad we can say that word in this Chamber and call a spade a spade. That is precisely what it was, and now, the Tories are here to try and claim that they know something about democracy and elections.

What did the judge, when they were exposed, what did the judge have to say about all of these nefarious activities? He said he had never seen as many liars participate in one hearing in all his years on the bench. So if there was an independent native 'voi'—maybe I need to get ready in the next election; I'm going to have to beat not just a Tory and a Liberal, I'm going to have to beat the granola party, you know. Maybe my honourable colleague, here, from Gimli, he's going to have to beat the fishing party. I grew up in Fort Garry—

\* (11:00)

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

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) will have seven minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions, and today we are considering the resolution Manitoba's Road to Economic Recovery, sponsored by the honourable member for Emerson.

## RESOLUTIONS

### **Res. 34—Manitoba's Road to Economic Recovery**

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I move, seconded by the member from Lakeside, that

WHEREAS the Manitoba economy benefits from trade with provinces to the west, including Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia; and

WHEREAS the New West Partnership is a strong economic partnership between the governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, encompassing trade, international co-operation, innovation and procurement; and

WHEREAS the combined gross domestic product of the New West Partnership's members is more than \$550 billion; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba economy would benefit through a strong association with those strong economies and other provinces of—in Canada; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is experiencing high rates of outward migration under this provincial

government, as well as higher rates of taxation and inflation compared with other provinces; and

WHEREAS the official opposition believes in a strong economy based on a beneficial trade agreements; and

WHEREAS Manitobans have ultimately paid the price in unemploy—in employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has proven that it is unable to enter into the kind of trade agreements that will grow and strengthen the Manitoba economy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to acknowledge its failure in partnering with the 'prov'—governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the provincial government's mismanagement in growing the Manitoba economy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to reverse its decision not to join the New West Partnership Agreement.

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable member for Emerson, seconded by the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler),

WHEREAS the—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed in today's Order Paper? [Agreed]

*WHEREAS the Manitoba economy benefits from trade with provinces to the west, including Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia; and*

*WHEREAS The New West Partnership is a strong economic partnership between the governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, encompassing trade, international cooperation, innovation and procurement; and*

*WHEREAS the combined Gross Domestic Product of the New West Partnership's members is more than \$550 billion; and*

*WHEREAS the Manitoba economy would benefit through a strong association with other strong economies in other provinces in Canada; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba is experiencing high rates of outward migration under this Provincial Government, as well as higher rates of taxation and inflation compared with other provinces; and*

*WHEREAS the Official Opposition believes in a strong economy, based on beneficial trade agreements; and*

*WHEREAS Manitobans have ultimately paid the price in employment opportunity; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has proven that it is unable to enter into the kind of trade agreements that will grow and strengthen the Manitoba economy.*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to acknowledge its failure in partnering with the governments of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the Provincial Government's mismanagement in growing the Manitoba economy; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Provincial Government to reverse its decision not to join the New West Partnership Agreement.*

**Mr. Graydon:** It gives me great pleasure to rise today in the House to sponsor this resolution. I think it's very important to the future of Manitoba and I believe that it is part of the road to the economic recovery of a great province that we have here and that we're so very fortunate to live in.

We, on this side of the House, believe that—we believe in co-operation with our neighbours and we believe that that co-operation will lead to economic benefits that all Manitobans will enjoy, which would make life a lot easier and we would be able to better utilize the natural resources that we have at our disposal in Manitoba.

We—some of the things that would be big benefits, I believe, from this type of an association and one of the highlights I suspect most people aren't aware of—but the bond rating for Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia is a AAA bond rating.

It's unfortunate the Manitoba has not reached that level of bond rating. And at the rate we're going, Mr. Speaker, we'll be probably looking at a downgrade in the bond rating. That's why we're raising the PST; that's why we're not paying our bills at this point. We deferred the debt payments from 2009, we deferred the debt payments from 2010—that's on record. We were told that we didn't have to raise taxes here to cover any of that debt, that we were just steaming right along.

And what we're doing now is raising the taxes to a tune of a half a billion dollars a year and we're running a deficit of a billion dollars, which is just doubling our debt. That's what the NDP government have done in the term that they have now been in.

What we need to look at is what's happening to the west of us, to our neighbours, to the province of Saskatchewan who has had the—on—I guess you would say it was on the unsavoury—the unsavoury recognition of being the province that was referred to as the have-not province, who are now steaming along with a sales tax of 5 per cent, and we're looking at raising ours to 8 per cent. What has changed out there? What has changed? And I know the opposition members will have all kinds of reasons for this but it's actually the management; they paid their debts, they pay their credit card.

And with this type of a partnership, and having these people as partners, we can actually benefit from the co-operation of R&D, the research and development, that's very, very necessary in today's world to move forward. To also be able to look at the technology that's available in other areas that are allowing them to become more economically viable. That moves them ahead, that moves them down the road to recovery and employment, and enjoy the benefits of both of them.

But we also would be looking at, or should be looking at, is the common procurement advantages that are there by working in a larger group, a large group co-operatively. You can buy in volume and—whether that's in medicine, whether that's in any other commodities that we need, you can negotiate.

You can also negotiate trade. Trade is an important thing. It certainly wasn't important though to the NDP. They were definitely opposed, and their benchmark was they were opposing free trade, and they have opposed it for many, many years. And that's an example of the ideology that's harmed this province for a long time and was just part of what

has grown our debt; it has doubled our debt since they've been there.

This agreement could encourage people to come to our province to work rather than leaving it. And we have been a net exporter of workers. We have not been able to attract and grow this province the way that it should be.

So I—when this government had an opportunity to help the Manitoba's economy, in the short, medium and long term, they said no. We've had the lowest interest rates that the country has seen for many, many years. We've also had the highest transfer rate from the federal government that we've had for many, many years, and yet our debt continues to grow 'expodentially'. We're looking at a half a billion dollars a year, year over year.

And you can blame it—you can blame the government for—the federal government for this, you can blame the government for this, and blame them for that, but standardization is another benefit that we could get working with these other provinces. Standardization in the transport industry. Standardization in the grading industry.

And, at this point right now, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that there's a federal slaughter plant being built in this province, and that no thanks, I might add, to this provincial government. But it is due to the tenacity and to the foresight and vision of some very, very entrepreneurial individuals in the province, who recognized that there is a need and an opportunity to tap into a market outside of this province.

Up until now we have not been able to further add, or value add, to any of our cattle industry. We've had to ship our cattle outside of the province, whether that was east, west, south. We had to ship them somewhere else otherwise we had to eat everything here.

If we have, and we'll—and we will have, by the end of the year, an opportunity with a federally inspected plant in the province of Manitoba to access markets in Saskatchewan. We will process Saskatchewan cattle as well. We will be bringing more industry into the province just by one individual who has a vision. And he's doing this, basically, on his own. This is private money, basically, going into it. A very, very small amount of provincial money involved in it. In fact, I'm not sure there's any involved in it at this point. But that's it—for another day, Mr. Speaker.

But it's an example of one individual who has seen an opportunity outside of our province. Had he had the opportunity to work with our other provinces, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC, he could probably move this forward two, three, four years ago, and we could have been accessing markets that we have been eliminated from. So that's just one example.

\* (11:10)

They've said no to the future revenue and to the future trade, and no to easier investment in the province, and no to Manitoba's future business people and leaders. And that's really what has taken place with the rise in the PST. When we look at the 5 per cent PST in Saskatchewan, we see that the NDP government is going at 8 per cent, we're—there is no interest of businesses moving here. They still have to market. After they have manufactured they have to market, but they're paying a PST on the input, and if people that are buying their product is also going to have to pay the PST it's a detriment to the expansion of our businesses, and, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, without the businesses you don't have employment. It's just no question about that. You need to attract the businesses to attract people. We need to have the environment that we can grow in.

We're seeing how 8 per cent increase in our hydro power—the 8 per cent increase in this last year has been affecting the bottom line of many businesses. This is our crown jewel and it's—and the proposal of 3 and a half per cent increase for the next 20 years is a big disincentive for businesses to move here. They don't see an environment that is conducive to them making a profit. Why is a profit a dirty word to the NDP government? Why is that? Why can they not see that the government cannot give to someone what they haven't taken from someone so the more people that you have contributing in our economy the less you have to give?

People want to go out and work. They want to go out and maintain their dignity, hold their head high. They want to go out and make some—make their own money. They don't want people to give it to them. They'll build what they need if they have that opportunity, and what we see is a net migration from this province year over year over year. For 13 years there's been a net migration from Manitoba. That's the only province in Canada that holds that terrible, terrible record.

So competitively in the economic world we're not competitive. What we've seen is we're not—it doesn't seem that they want to change that competitiveness at all, and I'm saying that they should support this resolution. It is a good resolution and we will certainly help them move down the road to recovery for the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade):** I'm absolutely delighted to put a few words on the record today with respect to this particular resolution as brought forward by the honourable member from Emerson.

I'm—I don't know where to begin. I mean, he started by talking about things that we as a government have said no to, and I thought that was rather curious, what he suggests we said no to, when we as a government have been saying yes to all kinds of initiatives to support industry, to support small business, to support investment, to support trade initiatives in this province and to help this province grow.

But if they want to be reminded about what they said no to over the last 10 years, they said no to the floodway. They said no to improvements in the floodway to protect the people that call Manitoba home. They said no to Hydro. They're opposing hydro, and we know that if we don't build hydro that we're going to see that we won't have that competitive advantage of the most affordable electricity rates in North America, Mr. Speaker, which is one of the things that does attract businesses here, contrary to members opposite. They said no to the MTS Centre, and what has the MTS Centre meant for the SHED district, the Sports and Hospitality and Entertainment District where they're expecting between 500 and 800 million dollars more investment in that area?

And it's not all public investment, yes, there's a partnership with the federal government to expand the Convention Centre right now. And I know with somebody who—very close to me who works at the Convention Centre who always says, you know, people are always asking, when is that human rights museum opening up because we can't wait to bring our convention to Winnipeg. Oh, yes, and we support that human rights museum, and I don't think they actually took a position on that. I think they questioned the funding of that particular facility, but I'm not sure they actually took a position on that.

They opposed the new stadium, Mr. Speaker. I know—I see some members from the Conservative Party at the football games. We're all sharing the agony of defeat at the football games of late, but they opposed the stadium. They opposed it and, you know, people are often saying what a fabulous stadium. In fact, Sir Paul McCartney—I know the member—the Leader of the Opposition was citing a bunch of Paul McCartney songs, and Paul McCartney's people chose Winnipeg because of that new stadium. And, of course, that new stadium now is going to bring the FIFA women's soccer cup here to Winnipeg. But what did they do? They opposed it. So, you want to talk about saying no? They say no to anything and everything that has helped grow the economy here in the province of Manitoba over the last 12 years.

Oh, what about apprenticeship and training, Mr. Speaker? They didn't say anything about apprenticeship and training. We're the only party that has stood up, time and time again, election after election and said, we're going to invest more in apprenticeship and training for the province of Manitoba, because we know that the projects that we have been supporting here in the province of Manitoba have required skilled tradespeople to come and work in this province of Manitoba. And we know that our investments that we are going to make with the increased revenues of the PST are going to add another 10,000 jobs a year in the province of Manitoba.

You want to talk about economic growth? We have a plan that will make that difference, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to make a difference each and every day for families all over the province of Manitoba.

So, I'm not sure—they're called the PC Party but I think maybe it should be the DG party, the doom-and-gloom party, or maybe the RCS party, the regressive cut services party. I don't know, because their plan for economic growth is half a billion dollars in cuts. How is that going to grow the economy? Because we saw what the cuts were in the no-growth '90s. I know they don't like referring to the '90s. They don't like when we refer to the '90s, but I know the Free Press recently referred to the 1990s and they talked about the no-growth '90s. In fact, I was talking about it just the other day with somebody when I actually had bought a house here in Winnipeg when I was going to university and what I paid for that house versus what I got for it 10 years later. And the appreciated value of the home



was something like \$7,000, because there was no growth. There was no growth in the economy in the '90s, Mr. Speaker.

I mean, let's talk about growth in the sense of population growth. To hear the member opposite talk about the fact—or to talk about migration from the province of Manitoba—when was the worst net migration in the last 20 years? I believe it was in the 1990s, over 3,000 people on average every year left this province of Manitoba. So when you go to that football stadium, which you opposed, and you sit in there among 32,000 people cheering on our Bombers, as hapless as they might be right now, but I'm still sticking to—sticking to the blue and gold—when you see those 32,000 people sitting there cheering for our Bombers, think about that as the number of people who left the province, net, when you guys were last in office. Or, as I said, when you go to that MTS Centre for a hockey game, if you do that—and I know many members opposite have done—we don't know where they got their tickets; we've dealt with that, but they won't talk about that. But if you go to that Jets game, think about the 15,000 people that are sitting in that arena, which you opposed—think about that—that represents roughly the amount of population growth in this province the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker

So, let's talk about visions for this province of Manitoba. Now, as minister responsible for Trade, I was really curious to hear the members talk about lost opportunities in western Canada. I thought, well, this is a province that has 42 per cent, I believe, of our trade with western Canada. There's no lost opportunities there. Our trade continues to grow with our provinces to the west, to the east, and, of course, being the least dependent on the United States for trade, that is why our entrance into the recession a few years ago was mitigated because of our least—being one of the least dependent provinces on trade in the United States. But that doesn't mean that we're not looking for other opportunities. We're still dealing with about 62 per cent of our trade to the United States. But we're still looking for new opportunities and new markets, and we've made that commitment. And the First Minister has led delegations to China; he's led delegations to India; he's led delegations to Brazil. And we have seen tremendous benefit from those delegations, Mr. Speaker.

And maybe the doom-and-gloom party, the DG party over there, should like at what the RBC is saying about what's going to be happening in

Manitoba. They are talking about manufacturing being on the rebound here in Manitoba and being one of the sectors that's going to field growth here in Manitoba. So it's really fascinating. So we talk about economic growth—they don't like to hear 5.5 per cent is the third lowest unemployment rate in the country. They don't like to hear that—they don't like to hear that—they think that having a 5.5 per cent unemployment rate does not necessarily reflect a healthy economy. They seem to discredit that. And they also say, oh, well, if there's jobs growing it's because it's private sector. Well, no, that's not true—14,000 positions, a 3 per cent increase compared to 1.7 per cent nationally over the last 12 months for private sector job growth in the economy. And where are they being employed? Apparently they're being employed at the businesses which the member opposite seems to think are moving elsewhere. But we have 14,000 more private sector jobs here in the province of Manitoba over the last 12 years—or 12 months, I should say.

\*(11:20)

The Conference Board of Canada—now, I know they like to quote the Fraser Institute and a whole bunch of other right wing think tanks, but let's talk about what the Conference Board of Canada has to say. Manitoba's real gross domestic product will grow by 1.5 per cent, the fourth highest in Canada. That's pretty substantial, Mr. Speaker. Household disposable income is forecast to increase by 3.8 per cent. That's above the Canadian average. Retail sales are forecast to increase at 2.5 per cent. That is above the Canadian average. Private investment is forecast to increase by 6.3 per cent. What's the Canadian average? Point four per cent. Manufacturing, construction and agriculture are all forecast to grow faster than the Canadian average. So it's really curious to hear the members opposite stand up and talk about what we need to do to grow the economy because that's what we've been doing for the last 14 years in government. That's what we have been doing and our plan works.

And members opposite say, oh, we're going to cut half a billion dollars. We're going to cut half a billion dollars from government. Where's that going to go? We're going to see more cuts to health care like we saw in the '90s. We're going to see cuts to education like we saw in the '90s. I don't know if they could cut training any more, but they certainly didn't plan on investing in any in the last three elections. They've said nothing about investing in training in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

So it's really curious what members opposite are proposing.

And it just—it defies all logic, Mr. Speaker, when they say that Manitoba is not a growing province. There are 135,000 more people living here since we've been in government; 135,000 more people. And they say the province is not growing. I cannot for the life of me understand how they don't reconcile that a province that has grown by—did I say it, 135,000 people—is not growing. I don't get it, but again, they are the doom-and-gloom party. They are the regressive, cut services party.

And if we went back to their plan for economic growth and we cut funding to services that are important to Manitoba, we would be back in the '90s when over 35,000 people left this province while they were in office, while their leader was sitting at the Cabinet table, Mr. Speaker, and I think the year that he actually left for federal politics was the year that we saw the biggest out-migration of people in the province of Manitoba. Perhaps that's just a coincidence. We grow the economy.

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

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** It's an honour to stand in this House and have the debate, and I know that, you know, the member from Gimli put on the record what that crystal ball looked like, what we opposed, what we bad Tories have done, you know, back in the 1990s. Well, I can tell you, back in the 1990s when I owned a business called Prairie Farm and Ranch Supply, I was a manufacturer, a retailer, a distributor, and I can tell you very clearly that a large part of my business was in the western part of Canada, and I took a good hard look at what other provinces had to offer. I was proud to be a Manitoban that was distributing products out to those other retailers.

In particular, Alberta was a large portion of my distribution, and I can tell you very clearly I had a lot of barriers to get through. Number 1 of those things was in regards to trucking and weight restrictions and load restrictions between the province of Manitoba, the province of Saskatchewan and the province of British—Alberta. I didn't have too many dealers in British Columbia so I can't talk about that to the knowledge that I probably should be able to, but I can tell you very clearly that the barriers were huge for us just in the trucking sector.

And I, in my role since I've become an MLA of this great province, I can tell you that meeting with

the trucking association, this is important, an important issue to them that we are part of the New West Partnership. And I can tell you very clearly, we're not harmonized yet. We have a long ways to go. In fact, there's legislation in—right now before this House that we have some concerns about, some amendments we want to bring forward through consultation with the Manitoba Trucking Association, and whenever we deal with any of this legislation we bring forward, which is very important, the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) brought this forward. And we brought forward in other forms as well, through bills, but I can tell you I'm proud to stand up and debate this piece of legislation and this resolution, and I would encourage the government to have another look.

The member from Emerson also talked about processing. Processing livestock. We don't—we have one. We have one that's on its way to becoming federally inspected. Now, when livestock is processed, they can take that product anywhere within Manitoba. Now, if we were part of the New West Partnership, we could export all those processed meats to the western provinces without a problem, because we are then part of the New West Partnership—opens up a new market for us—another market. Right now, 43 per cent—43 per cent of our exports go to Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Why would we not want to make that opportunity available to our processors? Create more jobs, what a novel idea. Why would we argue about not wanting to be part of the New West Partnership? We're saying this is a clear indication of how to grow the economy, grow jobs, standardize things like employment, banking charges—there's a whole host of other initiatives—mining and whatever.

The member from Gimli was talking about trade. I remember very clearly back in—again, coming back to my days as a business owner, I took part in a number of trade missions open to—trying to increase new markets for my business, which I think almost every new—every business owner wants to do is grow their business, and I can tell you I was a bit taken aback at the barriers that's in the way when you're trying to break into new markets. And I know even when I started growing my business into the northern states it was a bit of a challenge as well. But the first step would be recognizing what we can do as neighbouring provinces. What can we do to see that grow?

We in this Assembly all agreed just a few years ago CentrePort was a great initiative, and we

supported that and we still support that. I'm very proud of the fact that it's in my riding. I'm very proud of the fact that we have some hurdles that we're still trying to overcome. One of those is the water. One of those is the rest of the infrastructure we're trying to get put into place. We're prepared to work with the government on that. But what we also need to do is look at what are opportunities that we can gather from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan—bring those into CentrePort, whether it be taking them to the north through Churchill, which we know is going to grow and prosper. The Prime Minister has made it very clear they want to see growth in the North. Here's a prime opportunity. Why would we not want to go to those member provinces and say to them, what can we do to work together to make CentrePort grow and prosper, again, creating more jobs, more opportunities, economic growth.

You don't have to go to the taxpayer every time you want more money and say, oh, we're going to raise the PST by one point. That'll give us more money. Let's look at what we can do by a simple thing called the New West Partnership. So by that we grow our economy, grow our jobs, increase manufacturing, increase growth, and as a result of that what we're going to have the opportunity to do is be able to say to those provinces, we got a jewel here called CentrePort. We want to see it grow and prosper.

And whenever we're looking at the trade between the provinces and—which we know, it's growing. It's just a natural part of growth. Without it we're going to be going backwards. But what we haven't done is be able to stay as competitive as we should be with those other provinces, and that worries me because I know that, you know, yes, we've seen some growth in the province of Manitoba. But we've seen growth in other parts of Canada as well. Saskatchewan has just boomed, as we know, that the growth in Saskatchewan, partly through the oil industry. We have that same going on in Manitoba—in the western part of Manitoba, and we've seen a significant growth there as well, but it's not keeping up the pace with our neighbouring provinces.

So now, coming back to what I've been trying to get through to this government is clearly the fact that whenever we look at these opportunities, whether it be through banking, whether it be through the oil industry, be it through mining, potash—we have potash opportunities sitting here waiting to grow and

prosper. What have we done? What have we done to sit down with Saskatchewan and say, how can we make that business grow and prosper?

And I want to just close on a couple of other things before I run out of time, because I know that whenever we're looking at resources, natural resources that are so plentiful in the province of Manitoba—we haven't seen the growth from Manitoba that we have in those other provinces, and that is a bit of a red flag for me. And I want to make sure that whenever we're talking about seeing those natural resources grow—one of those is in the North. We haven't seen the North develop to the level I'd like to see it done, and I know that maybe we can learn from Saskatchewan, from British Columbia, from Alberta.

\* (11:30)

What we can also learn as part of this opportunity is the fact that whenever we're looking at growth, one of the most interesting things that we haven't really tapped out yet, and that's tourism, and we've seen a downturn in that, and that concerns me as well. Then when we're looking at tourism, what have we learned whenever we're bringing people into Canada? I mean, everybody talks, when you—no matter where you go in the States, they say, well, you're from Vancouver or you're from Toronto. Do you know so and so from Montréal? Do you know so and so from Vancouver? They're forgetting about the rest, the rest of us in the middle of Canada, and we have an opportunity to see tourism grow. We can work on those initiatives together, and part of being in the New West Partnership will give us that opportunity. I'm asking the government to support this initiative and vote for this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Finance):** I appreciate following the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler). I get to do that every now and then in this House, and I always listen very intently to what the member has to say, Mr. Speaker. The honourable member for Lakeside, you know, he makes some good points, you know, over and over again because it seems to me that I've seen this resolution here before. It was under a different title. I would encourage members opposite to maybe come up with something new once in a while, something different. This is the same old refried message that they've been peddling to us and to the people of Manitoba for quite some time.

If only the government would sign the New West Partnership, Mr. Speaker—if only, if only, if only. If only the government would sign the New West Partnership, the Blue Bombers would make the playoffs. If only we would sign that New West Partnership, we'd bring that Grey Cup home. If only the government had enough sense to sign that New West Partnership, the Winnipeg Jets would make the playoffs too.

If only this government would sign that New West Partnership, we would harmonize rules in the trucking industry. Wouldn't that be fantastic? Oh, Mr. Speaker, we've done that without the New West Partnership. We've done that. We've met with the folks in Saskatchewan. We've met with that. We've harmonized rules so that that would help the trucking industry, but we hadn't signed the New West Partnership, I don't believe, in the meantime.

But only if we had done that we could sell meat to other provinces—if only we signed that New West Partnership, we could sell things to other provinces. We do that too. As the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) said, and he's quite right, 43 per cent of our trade is to the west. Mr. Speaker, 43 per cent of our trade goes to the west; 57 per cent of our trade goes to the east. That's pretty balanced. We're not saying we don't want to trade with our friends and our partners to the west of us or to the east of us, or to the north or to the south. We're doing that. We're doing a lot of trade with Saskatchewan and Alberta and British Columbia, and it's working pretty well. We're open to ideas on how to improve that, and every minister led by our First Minister does that all the time. When he has the Council of the Federation, he talks with the Premier in Saskatchewan, the Premier in Alberta, the Premier in British Columbia. We talk about ways to enhance trade. If only we'd sign that New West Partnership, though, those premiers would just open their borders left, right and centre, all of over place, we'd pave the Trans-Canada in gold right from Winnipeg through to Victoria.

You know, I don't mind having discussions in this Chamber about ideas that come forward. But let's try something new. Let's hear something from our friends across the way that is different, that is practical, that is real, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'm not going to hold my breath for that. I've been here for quite a while in this Legislature. I think that members opposite, with all due respect, are simply trying to be too partisan and too political. If they have some real solutions to real problems, or if they have some real ideas on how to enhance things we're

doing already, that's fine. But what we see is the same old, tired stuff coming from members opposite that we see time and time again. Their vision is different than ours, and that's okay. I mean, I think that's part of what makes Manitoba's democracy strong, is that we just don't all have the same idea in this Legislature.

I think it's perfectly fine for us to have our way of seeing the world and the Conservatives to have their way of seeing the world, Mr. Speaker; that gives Manitobans a choice come election time, gives them a very clear choice come election time. And what we have portrayed to people and what we have followed up on and what we have done and we have—what we have produced results on is the vision that's not just competitive—of course, it needs to be competitive, but it needs to be more than competitive. It needs to be co-operative. And I think, maybe, if I want to draw something out of what the member for Lakeside was saying and the advice that he gave us, it may be that he wants us to co-operate more with not just our partners to the west, but partners in each direction. I was very pleased that he talked about the initiative in his backyard called CentrePort. CentrePort isn't just facing west. CentrePort looks in all four directions for partners to work with, to co-operate with. You know, not only are we diversified with our trade east and west in Canada, but we're diversified in terms of national and international.

We're—Manitoba is about 65 per cent reliant on the US as a market. Now, you—initial reaction may be, but, you know, that's quite high, except that that's lower than any other jurisdiction. The Canadian average is about 75 per cent reliance on the US market. And don't get me wrong, the US is an important neighbour and an important trading partner and we need to work ways in which we can trade, export, import even more with the States. But that doesn't mean we put all our eggs in one basket. That means we keep looking for ways to trade with Brazil and Russia and India and China, South Africa. That means we look for opportunities north through our port in Churchill and all the communities, including my own of Dauphin along the way, how we can use that to benefit our whole province and grow our economy.

And that leads me to one of the be it therefore 'resol'—further resolved statements of the resolution we're talking about where they talk about the mismanagement in growing the Manitoba economy, Mr. Speaker. I would also ask—these are good

debates in this House—but I would ask members opposite not to just make stuff up. Since 1999, and this is a fact, an absolute fact, that members opposite don't challenge, they don't rec—they don't acknowledge this, but they don't challenge it, either—that in 1999 the economy of the province of Manitoba was \$32 billion. It's a big number, right? Today it's \$62 billion. We've nearly doubled the size of our GDP. We've nearly doubled the size of our provincial economy and, yet, they talk about not growing the Manitoba economy. I would ask that members opposite at least try to be accurate in what they put in their resolutions.

We have almost doubled the size of our provincial economy, and I want to make it very clear that that's not just decisions that this side of the House and this government has made. That means that there was co-operation between—amongst and between a whole number of partners, not the least of which is the private sector, Mr. Speaker. The private sector in Manitoba has been stepping up to the plate, putting people to work, making products to sell and to trade with our partners east and west, north and south. Private sector has been working with us to—on the very project the member opposite referenced in CentrePort. The federal government has co-operated with us on that and a number of other initiatives to grow the provincial economy.

I agree with what the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) said when he said we don't always have to turn to the Manitoba taxpayer, although sometimes it's necessary. But we should be concentrating on growing the provincial economy because that generates a whole lot of good things, including taxes and revenue that we can then use to reinvest back into our economy to keep it growing. It means that we put people to work, and it's always better to have people working rather than on social assistance. That improves our GDP. That improves our provincial economy.

\*(11:40)

So, Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the advice that the member for Lakeside and others have given, I also want to make sure that I mention that over a half a billion dollars' worth of cuts to services in Manitoba, as put forward by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), do not grow and contribute—and they don't contribute to the growth of our provincial economy. It actually sets our provincial economy back. That will not be the

actions that we take. They can have that position if they like.

Our intent is to continue to grow the provincial economy. Our intent is to continue to trade with our partners. Our intent is to look for more partners. And the Minister for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade is working at that, as is our Premier (Mr. Selinger). We'll continue that and we'll continue to grow our economy despite members opposite's opposite views.

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) for bringing forward this resolution. And I listened very intently to both the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers), and I was listening rather intently to hear why they would give a reason for not joining the New West Partnership. They gave us many so-called examples of why they don't need to, but at the same time there was no reason given why they won't join it.

And, I guess, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I've figured out—and I hear the member for Riel (Ms. Melnick) chirping from her seat—and I'm reminded when the member for Lakeside was speaking and he was speaking about the beef industry and she was putting in her contributions about her extensive knowledge in the beef industry, I would remind her that it's—the beef industry is somewhat different than the frozen fish industry. So, although they're both food products, they are different.

So, Mr. Speaker, the—I guess I can't—the—I have to believe that the reason that they're not interested in joining the New West Partnership is because they haven't figured out yet how they're going to tax it, because that seems to be their only motivation for doing anything these days, is to be able to tax it.

They talk about trade but they also fail to mention that when the premiers of Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC were on a joint trade mission to China and Southeast Asia, Manitoba wasn't there. BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan were all represented on this trade mission. The—our foreign trade partners that we developed relationships with like to see strength in their trading partners and it would—Manitoba was noticeable by their absence there. And the Premier can travel with his own trade missions around the world, and good that he does that, but at the same time, it doesn't have the effect as going with three other western provinces. Because we have so

many similarities with those provinces, it would strengthen our trading position, and that's why we need to belong to the New West Partnership.

And there was many reasons given, too. We could harmonize more standards, and if you're interested in trading, whether it's interprovincially or whether it's around the world, trading standards are our huge issue.

And we only have to look to the United States, the country of origin labelling—the—that's what we call it, the MCOOL, the M-C-O-O-L, has been a huge—had a huge impact on our livestock industry, both the hogs and the cattle industry. And from that, too, it affects the grain industry, because when the livestock sectors are doing well, the grain industry does well also. And those are agreements that the federal government is working on, and yet we need—we can see, and I'm using that as the example of how it affects trade when standards are not the same.

So what would be wrong with trying to harmonize standards for the transportation industry across western Canada? We are the—have been the hub of the transportation industry in Canada. We've lost some of our position there. But we need to work on those—harmonizing those standards.

The agricultural industry—we have huge potentials in research and development, as well as further processing. If—we need to be at the table with those other provinces to make sure that we are in the game and being competitive and part of the industry and not standing on the outside looking in.

Of course, the resource industry is—and I'm talking about the oil industry—oil and gas industry in southwest Manitoba, we saw a great exodus of drilling rigs out of—and companies—out of Manitoba into Saskatchewan, and then Saskatchewan-based companies coming back in here. And that hurts our province and we just don't have that harmonization of standards between the two.

The tourism industry was mentioned also. We have a lot of potential here, you know. And we're dealing with some rather strict competition there between—with Alberta and BC in particular—in the tourism industry, when, particularly, Europeans and the Asians come to visit our country, we need to be there and we need to extend the offer to these tourists to be here, and to come and visit our province and see all the great benefits that we have.

And so, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of reasons why we should. The two members opposite that spoke

previously to me, never gave me a reason why we shouldn't. They seem to be living in their own little bubble about how they perceive Manitoba to be participating with other provinces, and yet they seem to be afraid to get out there and try to work co-operatively with other provinces in there.

And, you know, they've hung their hat before on the agreement of internal trade. They didn't even mention that one today. Apparently this is the island of Manitoba that they seem to be very complacent with and we have to do better than that. We have a small population in terms of world economies. We need to have every advantage we can, and their new—the New West Partnership would be another one of those advantages that we could do. Because the partnership does focus on trade and international co-operation, innovation, procurement.

Perhaps we could lessen our procurement costs for products that the province has to purchase if we were in a co-operative arrangement with the western provinces. We're very similar in many ways. I'm sure we buy many of the same products. So why wouldn't we look at that in terms of being able to cut costs and economize here in Manitoba, and make those tax dollars go a little bit farther.

This government has been absolutely brutal on the taxpaying public in Manitoba, with their fees—fee increases, and their—and now the illegal tax—PST tax increase. And we just have to—there's only one taxpayer in Manitoba and they are being burdened very heavily by this government, and yet they don't see any—they express no interest in trying to make an easier burden to the Manitoba taxpayer.

And it's—that's unfortunate that they seem to have such a small vision of what Manitoba is capable of. And we have a great province. There's so much potential here. It's unfortunate this NDP government is determined to squander that benefit that we do have. And we would certainly like to continue to promote the idea of joining the New West Partnership.

I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) seems to think that repetition is not a good thing. But sometimes you just have—when you've got a good idea, you just have to keep going with it. It's a good idea. And perhaps, somewhere down the line, he will see the light and see that, you know, that joining the New West Partnership is a good idea.

And so, you know, I'll—I hold out hope that he'll someday see the light. You know, that's up to him

to—however long it takes, we're willing to keep promoting the New West Partnership because it's a good idea and good ideas need promoting.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon):** Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk on the opposition's private members' bill.

I was sitting here almost going to sleep, and then when the honourable minister from Midland talked about vision, I thought, whoa, wakeup, let's hear what the vision is. And it's doom and gloom. I think the honourable minister from Gimli mentioned the doom-and-gloom party.

So I want to put on record, that there's a new Manitoba. And I want you guys to put on the new smile. I want you to realize that when you walk in to the stadium, when you walk in to the hockey rink, walk in with a swagger. Okay? Walk in as if, hey, you own it. Well, you know what? You do. And walk in with a swagger that you know that we're going to win. I hate this doom and gloom.

\* (11:50)

And this is very important, this private member's bill because I want to see us look at the optimism that we have here. Our unemployment rate is third in Canada. Our economy is growing, and yet if we get stuck in that rut of doom and gloom, you know, what are we going to do? You know, are they going to just get up and move? You know, I mean, you can quote me from the last time I spoke and I said, a 'Clampettesque' saying, so they loaded up their truck and they moved to?

**Some Honourable Members:** Calgary.

**Mr. Pettersen:** Calgary, that's right, oil, hills, but no flood control.

So, you know, and now they talk about Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan oil companies moving here and our oil companies moving there. We're growing. We're growing at a tremendous rate. And, like I say, walk into Manitoba with a swagger. This party, our party, the NDP party is working to make sure that Manitoba's growth is not just for the south, it's the growth for the North. It's a growth for the east. It's the growth for the west. We are the party of all Manitobans, and we don't want to hear doom and gloom. Get on the happy train—get on the happy train—come with us because we are going to build—*[interjection]*—thank you. We are going to build Manitoba.

We had companies like, you know, they say, well, no one wants to come to Manitoba. We've had Facebook look at us. We've had Canadian Tire move here. We have given hydro companies coming and coming here. We've had Mitsubishi come here. We have got people kicking the tires of Manitoba all the time, and, believe me, if they're not kicking the tires, then we should be worried. But they're kicking the tires. And we'll get some, we'll lose some, and I'm glad we're the party that is the party of optimism. I'm not going to sit—

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

**Mr. Pettersen:** Thank you, thank you. Keep it up.

I'm not going to sit there and look at my paper; I'm going to actually listen—listen about a optimistic view of Manitoba—*[interjection]* I hear the honourable members talking—*[interjection]* I was just about asleep, just about. But then I woke up—I woke up—I woke up because I wanted to talk about the new swagger in town.

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

**Mr. Pettersen:** Thank you, thank you.

When you leave this House—and I think we should start with the Speaker—let's walk out with a swagger of optimism, a swagger of hope, a swagger of love, a swagger of them all because, you know, Manitobans are a proud, proud bunch, and whether you're farmers, whether you're miners, whether you're fishermen, whether—whatever job you do, we're proud and we're working together. That's the big thing, we're working together and by working together we're going to make this province great.

When I look at trade agreements with the—our western partners, 42 per cent of our trade is going west. I think that's great. We're going to try and increase it. But, you know what? I have an optimism. I have an optimism about hydro, and one of the great Conservatives of our time, Steven Fletcher, even stood up—stood up—and said the opportunities of hydro, Manitoba Hydro, are great. And when we get an east-west line things are going to move.

I've been to Alberta. I've been to Alberta and I know Fort McMurray needs our hydro. I know Saskatchewan needs our hydro. They're investing \$10 million just to see what the alternative to coal is. And they know that our hydro—we are going to announce a deal with Saskatchewan soon. We're going to announce a deal with Alberta soon. When—you know, everything is possible. We're—they're

kicking the tires. We're there. We're there to satisfy their needs, and I'm glad that we're doing that because I think hydro is our oil.

So I'm very proud at that. I'm proud also that we're looking at other opportunities, and the one great thing about Manitoba is that we have such diversity. And with that diversity we can look at many different areas. That's why when there is a recession we tend to handle it better than our neighbours because we have that diversity, and that's what makes us special.

So when you look in the mirror today, walk in front of that mirror, have that swagger and look in that mirror and say, I'm special. Okay? And by doing that what you're doing is you're going to come back here with that big smile and realize that the NDP—*[interjection]* Thank you. The NDP are the party of choice. The NDP are the party that's going to take this great province to greatness.

I think the opposition—what really concerns me is when they say no to different things, and the honourable minister from Gimli stated that and that's scary. I mean you can't say no to the floodway. You can't say no to flood protection, okay. That is something that is despicable. You can't just—you just can't pick up and leave when there's a crisis and move to a different party. You can't do that. You are a Manitoban, okay. You have honour and the honour is that you are going to stand up for Manitoba—*[interjection]* Thank you, thank you. And whatever happens we are going to be there for Manitobans. Why? Because I said it, because they said it and the people believe it, that's the big part of being the party that we are.

I'm so proud of our Premier (Mr. Selinger) leading us and making decisions that are for the best of all Manitobans and we'll go forth and we'll have some rocky times I'm sure, but I would sure like to see the opposition get on the train of success and actually be more co-operative, you know, have those smiles on. I mean I, you know, sometimes I know—and I want to apologize right now, I mentioned that they had green melons on their head and I apologize for that and today I don't see that stain on their head, so that is good.

But remember we are the party that is hoping that we're going to win the Grey Cup. We're the party that we're hoping to win the Stanley Cup and, you know what? That's what makes us so great is that we have hope. We have hope. I don't want to be

depressed here. We have hope and some day we will, some day we will—*[interjection]* And I see the member from Lac du Bonnet saying, oh, yes, we'll never win the Stanley Cup. He's probably saying that even the Toronto Maple Leafs won't win the Stanley Cup, but I don't know. I don't know.

I mean I hear different things, Mr. Speaker, I hear different things but again, okay, again what I want to say is we're looking west. They're partners—we're partners in Hydro. We're partners right now. At the Port of Churchill they're looking at shipping oil through the Port of Churchill. We're looking at the environmental aspects of that. We're working together.

Alberta needs to have their oil shipped somewhere and we're partners that we're looking at oil pipelines, moving Alberta oil and Saskatchewan and Manitoba oil. So we're working together. We all have needs and, like I say, the Port of Churchill is one aspect that we'll look at. Maybe we can have partnerships where all three partners will chip in maybe on the rail line because that'll have to—haul the loads that they have, they're going to have to maybe redo the line or whatever. So we need partnership just like the opposition said and we'll work close with them.

I think probably, and I'm not saying this—I'm saying it with much respect that the premiers of the west are probably closer now than they ever have been and that's really great so they're working together for the betterment of all westerners and, of course, Manitoba is part of that.

And when I hear the honourable member in Emerson saying that, you know, they have a low tax rate down in South Dakota or Minnesota, I'm thinking why the heck are you going there? Why the heck are you going there, you got—I mean you got IKEA moving here, you got Marshalls moving here, you've got Target moving here. I mean they're American companies

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. When this matter is again before the House—

Any further debate?

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** I'm thrilled to enter into this debate, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the great things we're doing here in Manitoba and thrilled to follow my colleague from Flin Flon and his very inspirational comments about—we, on this side, know



members opposite, they only represent two things, and they represent gloom and they represent doom. This is a government that represents hope and opportunity for Manitobans, and it was displayed very obviously this morning—

\* (12:00)

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

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, August 22, 2013**

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