

# Appendix A: Manitoba Policy Facts and Trends

K A R I N E L E V A S S E U R

## 2013

- 8 June: The Minister responsible for Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI), Attorney General Andrew Swan, asks MPI to eliminate a controversial plan to use ratepayers' money to fix streets and highways, thereby improving safety.
- 12 June: The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF), the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, as well as other agencies, partner to oppose the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) increase.
- 15 June: For the first time in ten years, MPI requests an insurance rate increase. In 2011 and 2012, the insurance rates decreased and in 2013 the rates remained stable. MPI is requesting a 1.8% increase that would be effective in the 2014/15 insurance year.
- 19 June: A new study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found 62% of Manitoba Status First Nations children live below the poverty line – 12% higher than the national average. Only 15% of non-Indigenous children in Manitoba live below the poverty line.
- 20 June: The ruling New Democratic Party (NDP) and the opposition party have negotiate a deal to end an ongoing filibuster at the Manitoba legislature. The two sides have agreed to let Bill 20 pass second reading. Bill 20 legislates the PST increase which, despite the filibuster, will increase on 1 July 2013.
- 27 June: The Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development holds the first of at least six public hearings at the

legislature this week. Dozens of Manitoban's, mainly opponents, weighed in on the planned PST increase.

- 1 July: The controversial PST increase, originally proposed in the April 2013 Manitoba Budget, goes into effect. The one percentage point increase in the PST will result in an eight percent sales tax, up from seven in June 2013.
- 10 July: The Manitoba Progressive Conservative (PC) Party is delaying the NDP Government's anti-bullying bill, and instead, advocating for their alternative anti-bullying legislation. The opposition's filibuster means the passage of the bill will face an unlimited delay.
- 12 July: The controversial Manitoba Hydro plan to build a transmission line on the west side of Lake Winnipeg – Bipole III – receives support from Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission (CEC). The CEC recommends the province grant a license to the project, but require some conditions to be met.
- 15 July: From March to May, MPI reported a \$33.9 million net loss. MPI also faced a \$53.3 million increase in the total cost of claims for this year's first quarter compared to the last year.
- 17 July: According to the Bank of Montreal, Manitoba has steady economic growth in its future. Winnipeg alone is expected to see 12,000 new jobs, bringing the provincial jobless rate to a national low of 5%. The economy is expected to grow 2% this year, which is above the national average but below the 2.7% growth of last year.
- 19 July: The Manitoba Government announced the resignation of the Child and Family Services Southern Authority head in Manitoba. Elsie Flette, CEO since 2003, oversaw ten First Nations agencies including the All Nations Coordinated Response Unit. The authority has faced ongoing difficulty due to a prolonged legal battle with the First Nations over board appointments.
- 22 July: The Manitoba Government invests \$1.4 million over two years in a pilot project aimed at making it easier for internationally

educated immigrants to have their credentials recognized. The credentials that are targeted include science, technology, engineering, mathematics, health and trades.

- 25 July: According to new Statistics Canada data, Manitoba has the second highest crime rate amongst all the provinces in Canada – only Saskatchewan ranks higher.
- 29 July: In the final submissions this week, the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry heard witnesses testify that Aboriginal Peoples need more control over their education, child-welfare and social programs.
- 2 Aug: The Manitoba Government tightens the rules for Business Class immigrants through the Provincial Nominee Program. The government increased the deposit required for immigrants from \$75,000 to \$100,000 as well as established stricter validation and monitoring procedures.
- 12 Aug: Manitoba's top flood forecaster, Phillip Mutulu, quits his position just two years after taking the job over from Alf Warkentin – the 40 year veteran. According to Mutulu, it may be hard to replace him as the demands of the job are high, as too are the qualifications.
- 14 Aug: The Manitoba Government grants Manitoba Hydro an environmental licence for the controversial Bipole III transmission line. The licence, however, comes with 68 conditions including 26 recommendations from the CEC.
- 17 Aug: Manitoba Hydro seeks approval for a \$20 billion megaproject which would build two dams (Keeyask and Conawapa) and another transmission line in the province. A proposal document was filed to the Public Utilities Board (PUB) earlier in the week, which outlines the project's plans.
- 23 Aug: According to the CFIB, many private sector jobs remain unfilled in the province. Manitoba's private sector job vacancy rate was 2.5% in the second quarter of 2013.
- 26 Aug: According to an independent audit commissioned by the Manitoba Government, Manitoba remains the province with the most affordable utilities in Canada. Manitobans, on average, pay \$2,731

for electricity, home heating and car insurance compared to British Columbia, the second most affordable province, where the average is \$3,324.

- 28 Aug: The STARS (Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society) Air Ambulance service and several of its cases are under clinical review in Manitoba. The Manitoba Government signed a ten year agreement with STARS in 2012 to provide services to the province for \$10 million per year.
- 31 Aug: Public hearings begin on Manitoba's controversial Bill 18, the anti-bullying Bill. There are 317 people registered to speak out on Bill 18. Opponents take issue with the Bill's requirement that forces acceptance of gay rights groups and gay-straight alliances in all Manitoba schools.
- 5 Sept: The Manitoba Government rejects the Liberal Bill to make bullying a human rights offence under the Human Rights Code. The Bill would have allowed individuals who felt bullied to file a human rights complaint with the Human Rights Commission.
- 10 Sept: Despite record numbers of doctors practicing in Manitoba, rural Manitoba still face significant physician shortages. Emergency rooms in the Westman region have closed due to a doctor shortage in these areas. Prairie Mountain Health also reports 14 vacancies and Brandon reports six.
- 11 Sept: The Manitoba Metis Federation appeals the environmental licence which was granted to Manitoba Hydro's Bipole III project. The Federation says that the Bipole III line would run through Metis land and would affect traditional culture activities such as hunting.
- 13 Sept: The Manitoba Government's controversial anti-bullying bill passes in the legislature. The bill requires schools to accommodate gay-straight alliances and, because of this, religious groups argue the bill infringes on their religious freedom.

- 13 Sept: MLAs break from the marathon-long session in the legislature, after passing ten bills today. The MLA's will return 12 November with the Speech from the Throne.
- 13 Sept: Jon Gerrard steps down as Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party after 15 years in that role. His successor will be decided on 26 October.
- 17 Sept: The Federal Government contributes \$200 million toward the 2011 Manitoba Flood recovery. The 2011 Manitoba Flood was the most devastating flood in the province's history. Prior to this, the Federal Government contributed a total of \$100 million toward the recovery.
- 24 Sept: According to Statistics Canada, following the PST increase on 1 July retail sales have dropped in Manitoba. Retailers saw a 4.1% decrease from June to July, which resulted in a \$60 million decline in sales.
- 1 Oct: The minimum wage increases 20 cents to \$10.45/hour.
- 1 Oct: The Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) states that the minimum wage increase is not enough. According to MFL, 55% of minimum wage workers are adults, many are single parents and this 20 cent increase fails to accommodate the working poor. The MFL argues that the minimum wage needs to increase to \$12.44 to reach a working wage for low-income individuals.
- 7 Oct: Marilyn McLaren, President and CEO of MPI, announces her retirement early next year after 35 years with the crown corporation.
- 10 Oct: Bill 18, the Manitoba Government's controversial anti-bullying Bill, becomes law today. This Bill covers cyberbullying and requires schools to develop diversity policies.
- 16 Oct: The Manitoba Government contributes \$100,000 to the earthquake relief in the Philippines.
- 18 Oct: Premier Greg Selinger shuffles his cabinet.

- 22 Oct: The PUB approves an increase in natural gas rates for Manitoba. Effective November 1, gas rates will increase from \$0.1092/m<sup>3</sup> to \$0.1142/m<sup>3</sup>. This constitutes an average annual bill increase of 1.4% or \$11 per year.
- 27 Oct: The Manitoba Liberal Party elects Rana Bokhari, a 36-year-old Winnipeg Lawyer, as the new party leader. Bokhari won 431 votes, which was one vote more than was needed to win. Fellow candidates Dougald Lamont and Bob Axworthy received 285 votes and 131 votes respectively.
- 4 Nov: The Manitoba Government meets with stakeholders to develop a multi-year plan for infrastructure priorities in the province. Additional meetings will continue in November and December.
- 6 Nov: The World Trade Centre Winnipeg and Montana partner to organize talks with private sector delegates from Montana, North Dakota, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to explore the oil and gas-rich Bakken region. The region, which spans between the two provinces and two states, produces one million barrels of oil per day and is expected to double by 2017.
- 12 Nov: Lieutenant Governor Philip Lee opens the third session of the 40th Manitoba Legislative Assembly today, with the Speech from the Throne.
- 14 Nov: The Manitoba Jobs and Skills Development Centre officially opens today. The centre is devoted to connecting job seekers with available employment positions. It brings the Manitoba Government's apprenticeship, employment and workforce development services together in one centre.
- 15 Nov: The Manitoba Government introduces Bill 2 today, which doubles the regular speeding fine in construction zones within Manitoba. This legislation is already in place for cars passing emergency workers. Municipalities are allowed to set reduced speed limits in school zones.

- 15 Nov: The Manitoba Government announces it is expediting Manitoba Provincial Nominee Applications for applicants affected by Typhoon Haiyan.
- 18 Nov: The Manitoba Government announces a deal with the Saskatchewan Government to sell an additional \$100 million of electricity from Manitoba Hydro to SaskPower over the next eight years.
- 19 Nov: A deal has been negotiated between the Manitoba Government and the City of Winnipeg to begin the second phase of rapid transit expansion, extending into the southwestern part of the city. Both partners will contribute \$225 million.
- 22 Nov: The leader of the Manitoba Green Party, James Beddome, steps down from his role. In the 2011 provincial election, he came in second place in his Wolseley riding. An interim leader is expected to be named by 1 December.
- 26 Nov: Manitoba Attorney General Andrew Swan passes a motion in the legislature today which urges the Federal Government to consult with the provinces to abolish the senate.
- 29 Nov: Parents are now able to check what their children are learning online. The Manitoba Government introduces an online learning site which helps parents understand their children's education.
- 2 Dec: Alain Landry, a French immersion high school educator, has been appointed interim Leader for the Manitoba Green Party.
- 2 Dec: As the Manitoba Legislative session wraps up this week, numerous bills are being voted on, including the bill to officially ratify the PST increase. The legislature will resume March 6.
- 3 Dec: STARS Air Ambulance Service is suspended in Manitoba after three recent critical incidents came under investigation. During the suspension the province will rely on its own fleet of air ambulances.

- 6 Dec: Manitoba's Official Opposition leader Brian Pallister shuffles his shadow cabinet.
- 11 Dec: The Association of Manitoba Municipalities sues the Manitoba Government over its plan to force municipalities with a population of under 1,000 to amalgamate. According to the Manitoba Government, this decision was made in an effort to save money, improve administration and allow more municipalities to qualify for economic development programs.
- 12 Dec: The Manitoba Ombudsman releases a report on former Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Christine Melnick's decision to invite immigrants to a legislative debate in April 2012. The Ombudsman cleared Melnick's Assistant Deputy Minister of any wrongdoing, and instead, will help set guidelines to ensure the government avoids the perception of civil servant's partisanship in the future.
- 13 Dec: The PC Party demands an inquiry into the former Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister, Christine Melnick for lying to the legislature.
- 16 Dec: The Manitoba Government argues that a Statistics Canada error has resulted in a \$100 million funding shortfall this year from the Federal Government. The alleged Statistics Canada census error has underestimated the provincial population by as much as 18,000 people, according to the Manitoba Government.
- 16 Dec: The Manitoba Government receives the Phoenix Sinclair Report after a 91 day inquiry with 126 witnesses. The report and its findings will not be made public until next year.
- 18 Dec: Manitoba still has not filled the role of head flood forecaster for the province, since Phillip Mutulu stepped down. According to the Manitoba Government, there is currently an acting flood forecaster.
- 19 Dec: According to Statistics Canada, Manitoba had the worst homicide rate of all the provinces in 2012, with a homicide rate of 4.1 per 100,000. The next highest province was Saskatchewan at 2.69 per 100,000.



- 20 Dec: The Manitoba Government gives pharmacists new powers under the new Pharmaceutical Act that will come into effect in the New Year. Pharmacists will have the power to prescribe a very limited number of drugs, as well as administer vaccinations such as the influenza vaccination.
- 20 Dec: The Manitoba Government took in \$41 million more in revenue than was projected in the province's spring Budget forecast. This led to the \$33 million lower quarterly deficit than expected, bringing the total provincial deficit to \$485 million.
- 27 Dec: Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger calls two by-elections after nearly a year. The Morris and Arthur-Virden by-elections will be held on 28 January 2014.
- 28 Dec: MPI reports that it saved ratepayers \$8 million last year through investigations into fraud. The insurer investigates 3,000 fraud claims per year.

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- 4 Jan: The Manitoba Government is eliminating education taxes for seniors who own their own homes. The Manitoba Government has not, however, explained how it will make up this tax deficit, but this has come after a 4.1% general increase in school taxes.
- 8 Jan: The Finance Minister Jennifer Howard expects a \$500 million deficit in the upcoming year, despite a number of recent tax and fee increases. She also expresses doubt that the annual accounts could be balanced in the years ahead.
- 8 Jan: According to a CTF, Manitoba Hydro has already spent \$1.4 billion on its Keeyask, Conawapa dams and Bipole III projects. This money was spent without approval for the dams by the CEC or the PUB. The CTF questions the legitimacy of these reviews given that Hydro spent over a billion dollars on these projects without first receiving approval.
- 10 Jan: A second man has died outdoors after being brought home from the hospital in a taxicab. The Minister of Health Erin Selby was

criticized when she blamed the taxi drivers for these deaths. Manitoba Health is now drafting protocols for taxi drivers to ensure patients make it home safely after being discharged from a hospital.

- 15 Jan: Premier Greg Selinger is the second least popular Premier in the country. His approval ratings sit at 28%, according to a new Angus Reid Global poll.
- 17 Jan: Manitoba PC Leader, Bryan Pallister, files a complaint with the provincial elections commissioner against the NDP. The complaint involves a reception that will be held at the legislature celebrating the Woman's Right to Vote on 28 January – the day of two provincial by-elections. The PCs argue this is a violation of the elections rules that ban advertising prior to elections.
- 23 Jan: The PUB approves a 6.4% natural gas rate increase in Manitoba, beginning February 1. This will amount to approximately \$50 more annually for the average family. The rates will be reviewed again on 1 May.
- 29 Jan: The Manitoba PCs win both seats in the two provincial by-elections (Shannon Martin in Morris and Doyle Pivniuk in Arthur-Virden).
- 3 Feb: Premier Greg Selinger announces Dan Guimond will become the new President and CEO of MPI, effective 24 February 2014.
- 4 Feb: Christine Melnick, MLA for Riel, was removed from the NDP caucus.
- 7 Feb: According to a poll conducted by Inshgtrix Research, the PC Party has a 25 point lead on the NDP.
- 11 Feb: The Manitoba Government formalizes the deal to sell off the province's property registry to the Ontario-based company Teranet. The registry sold for \$75 million and Teranet is required to pay royalties to the government in exchange for the property registry licence.

- 14 Feb: Manitoba Hydro announces a third quarter profit of \$72 million. This was a surprise as Hydro reported losses of \$38 million in last year's third quarter. The profit is attributable, mainly, to cold weather and an increase in sales outside Manitoba. Hydro also announces it expects \$130 million in profit for the next fiscal year.
- 27 Feb: According to the CFIB, small business confidence in Manitoba declined in February. Over the past 3 months, small business confidence in Manitoba fell 8.9 points to an index of 58.7.
- 28 Feb: Manitoba Hydro signs two major power deals with the Green Bay, Wisconsin. The first contract runs from 2016 to 2021 and will provide Wisconsin with 108 megawatts of firm power. The second deal involves power generated from the controversial Conawapa Generating Station to provide Wisconsin with 308 megawatts of firm power from 2027 to 2037.
- 5 Mar: Almost a year after the PST increase was announced, the Manitoba Government releases a \$5.5 billion, five-year infrastructure plan.
- 5 Mar: The CTF announces that Manitoba is \$30 billion in debt. Moreover, the provincial debt is increasing by \$6.78 million per day or \$78 per second. The Manitoba Government will spend \$839 million on interest alone this year. The CTF's suggestion for this growing problem is to shrink cabinet, as well as the bureaucracy.
- 6 Mar: The 2014 Manitoba Budget is delivered.
- 7 Mar: The Manitoba Government announces that the STARS air ambulance service will resume responding to calls. According to the Minister of Health Erin Selby, the decision to resume the STARS service was based on a number of new measures undertaken by STARS to enhance patient safety within its service.
- 12 Mar: Manitoba's Ombudsman is tasked with finding out who from the Manitoba Department of Health leaked the confidential report on STARS air ambulance to the CBC. The report

contained patient's health information, which violates the Personal Health Information Act.

- 19 Mar: The Auditor General's report on the STARS Air Ambulance Service says the Manitoba Government did not put the air ambulance contract out to tender, despite that the law required the Government to do so. The cost of the service was also questioned as the cost per mission in Manitoba was 231% to 618% higher than similar programs in other provinces.
- 22 Mar: The Manitoba Government ranks third worst on the C.D. Howe Institute's Index of government over-spenders for the second year in a row.
- 1 Apr: The Court ruled against the Association of Manitoba Municipalities in its case against the Manitoba Government. The court said the Government did nothing legally wrong in its decision to amalgamate all municipalities with a population of under 1000.
- 3 Apr: A newly released Angus Reid poll shows Greg Selinger is tied with David Alward of Nova Scotia as Canada's least popular premier. Selinger's approval rating is 28% according to the poll.
- 8 Apr: Health Minister Erin Selby faces mounting criticism for saying the Manitoba PC Party allowed 12 babies to die when the Conservatives were in power in the 1990s. Though she apologized to the families of these children, family members of the babies says the apology came only after two weeks of mounting public pressure for her to do so.
- 8 Apr: The Paramedic Association of Manitoba says the poor condition of Manitoba's roads could impact patient care. According to CAA Manitoba, more than ten thousand patients are transported from rural areas to Winnipeg every year. The generally poor condition of Manitoba streets and highways have forced paramedics to take alternate, less ideal routes.
- 10 Apr: The Manitoba PC Party hires Lyle Bauer, former Winnipeg Blue Bomber President and CEO, as the new CEO of the PC Party.

- 16 Apr: The Manitoba PC Party's lawsuit against the Manitoba Government for raising the PST has a court date scheduled for 4 June.
- 23 Apr: The Manitoba Government signs on to the Federal Government's Job Grant Program and will receive \$18 million a year for the new job training programs. The provincial governments were initially against the Job Grant Program because it provided them with less money overall than previous programs. The Manitoba Government signed on after the Federal Government agreed to increase the funding.
- 25 Apr: The Manitoba Government proposes new legislation that changes the Vital Statistics Act. The Government will no longer require sex change surgery before allowing people to change their sexual designation on government documents.
- 1 May: The Manitoba Government announces that the municipal modernization process is now complete. A total of 47 amalgamations of 85 municipalities will occur by 1 January 2015.
- 6 May: The PUB approves a 2.75% rate increase for hydro, retroactive to 1 May. Manitoba Hydro was denied a request to the PUB for an even larger rate increase of 3.95%.
- 7 May: Manitoba's CEC publishes a controversial report that recommends granting an environmental licence to the Keeyask hydro dam. Manitoba Hydro still must wait for the PUB report on 20 June, which will confirm if the project makes economic sense for the province.
- 8 May: The Manitoba Government announces three projects in support of the rural health initiative, including a new healthcare clinic in Steinbach, an emergency medical service station in Iles des Chênes, and a nursing station in the Mosakahiken Cree Nation.
- 10 May: After a record high collision rate this year, MPI is requesting a 5% rate increase for Autopac rates in 2015.

- 15 May: The Conference Board of Canada gives Manitoba a 'C' grade on its economic report card, despite having low unemployment and steady GDP growth. Manitoba's income per capita was graded 'D' and was ranked 17 of 26 jurisdictions overall by the Conference Board of Canada.
- 20 May: The Manitoba Government proposes new legislation to protect buyers and sellers of homes by implementing strict regulations on real estate agents and brokerages.
- 22 May: The Manitoba Government and The Forks partner to launch Winnipeg's first publicly accessible electric-vehicle charging station.
- 23 May: The CTF requests an explanation from Manitoba Hydro regarding \$251 million spent on consultations with northern Indigenous communities.
- 29 May: Manitoba Hydro launches a three-year energy efficiency program. The goals of the program are to save ratepayers \$157 million as well as 411 megawatts of electricity in 2017.
- 30 May: Manitoba PC Party leader, Brian Pallister, adds his name to the court filings which alleges the Manitoba Government broke the law by not holding a referendum before raising the PST last year. The lawsuit had previously been filed by the PC Party, but as a political party, it was not capable of bringing legal action against the current government.

