

**Fourth 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	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
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<i>Vacant</i>	Southdale	—

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 2, 2015

*The House met at 1:30 p.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 and 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 afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Mr. Speaker:** Introduction of bills? We'll move on to committee reports.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection):** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the following reports from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection: 2014-2015 annual report for the Manitoba Arts Council, the 2014-2015 annual report for the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission, 2014 annual report for Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and also the 2014-15 annual report of the Manitoba Residential Tenancies Commission.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I have the Manitoba Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2014, Legal Aid '14-15, Department of Justice '14-15 to table.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further tabling of reports? Seeing none, we'll move on to ministerial statements.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### East Side Eagles

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Today I'd like to recognize the talented and tenacious 2015 East Side Eagles peewee football team. Some of the players and coaches of the team are here today.

These players have managed to hold their heads high through a heartbreaking season. We're joined today by some of the team's coaches and players. I know first-hand that football is a team sport that can

shape the character of young players both on and off the field. While the game itself helps players learn about teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline, the team's environment can also teach young players how to build friendships, work with a diverse group of people, tackle new challenges and roll with the punches both on and off the field. These are all the foundations of a young person's character, and it will determine how they respond to the challenges they face every day.

This year the Eagles peewee team had an undefeated eight-game season. Unfortunately, because of an administrative error, they weren't able to continue on in the playoffs, a big disappointment to the team, to say the least. But these boys proved that a team sticks together through thick and thin. The resilience, co-operation and class that they demonstrated was truly inspiring.

As a former East Side Eagles player myself, I learned how to deal with both the victories and losses. Both involve respect for the other team and for the rules of the game. I played on teams that were undefeated and I played on teams that struggled to cobble together a couple of wins all season. What I remember years later are the teammates I played with, the great coaches and the respect that I learned. Respect gives us the adaptability and the energy to carry on when things don't go as planned. I can see that the East Side Eagles have that respect, and it has allowed them to walk away from the playoffs with their heads held high.

Now, with the playoff upset behind them, the Eagles are busy preparing for an upcoming game in Minneapolis. I know this isn't probably how they thought they would finish the season, but I also know the East Side Eagles now have a bit more experience under their belt. They know what it's like to get knocked down; they also know what it's like to get back on their feet and keep fighting no matter what.

Congratulations to the East Side Eagles on their co-operation, hard work and eight straight wins of the season. Good luck in Minneapolis, and we'll see you next year.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask leave of the House that the names of the 2015 East Side Eagles peewee team be included in the Hansard here today.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to include the names that the honourable member has mentioned in his statement? *[Agreed]*

*Peyton Crerar, Zachary Lytle, Ike Plett, Muludesta Yitna, Gage Richey, Ashton Boutang, Isaiah Carriere-Krah, Dylan Normand, Skyler Griffith, Wyatt Penner, William (Billy) McCluskey, Ayden Weiner, Donovan Dobson, Harrison Gonske, Evan Blakey, Mekai Saillant, Nick Holtmann, Donteia Cameron, Shiv Harper, Mataeo Mohamed, Charles Trey Peterson III, Hunter Cosette-McDermid, Tyrell Trinidad, Kyle Watt, Tyler King, Carson Chamberlain Brass, Julean Garcia, Gloria Plett, Niko Jokic, David Wheeler II*

### **Processing Plants For Cattle Industry**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** Mr. Speaker, when BSE hit this province and, indeed, all of Canada in 2003, the American border slammed shut. Cattle producers were left without markets, prices dropped and the cattle industry in Manitoba was devastated. I was one of those cattle producers.

We knew the impacts would be long-lasting to the cattle industry. Cattle producers lobbied the NDP to develop a processing plant that would take pressure off our reliance on live export from our province. What did the NDP do?

Well, they decided that a processing plant should be built in Dauphin. They then went to a plant in the US that was being decommissioned and paid \$4 million for used plant equipment, which was transported to Dauphin. What happened? The equipment sat for several years. The processing plant was never built, and the plant equipment was eventually sold for scrap at pennies on the dollar. Net loss: \$4 million.

The NDP then had another bright idea. They said, we will collect \$2 per head on all cattle sold in Manitoba and we will use it to develop processing capacity. The NDP set up a board, they collected 7 and a half million dollars in levies from the producers, and what happened? No processing was developed. The fund disappeared and, finally, the board was disbanded. Net loss: \$8 million.

It's now been over a decade since the BSE outbreak. Manitoba has no additional processing capacity. The NDP have been a total failure on this file. Not only did the taxpayers and cattle producers pay more and get less, in this case they paid over \$12 million and got nothing.

Cattle producers of Manitoba remain at the mercy of out-of-province markets and border restrictions. Cattle producers have paid more and got nothing due to the high level of mismanagement, broken promises and ineptitude of this NDP government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **First Nation Soldiers**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Mr. Speaker, as we move towards Veterans' Week, I'd like to take a moment to remember our First Peoples in Canada's military who sacrificed their lives for the freedoms which we enjoy today, yet so often take for granted.

Aboriginal soldiers made very significant contributions to the world wars, and yet for a very long time their stories were never told. Despite the federal government's refusal to offer full citizenship, more than 7,000 First Nations people enlisted to serve our country in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War. Because only those who fell under Indian status were counted, the number of Inuit and Metis people who served are unknown.

In Manitoba, opportunities like Remembrance Day and Aboriginal Veterans Day allow us to remember heroes like Sergeant Tommy Prince of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, one of the most decorated First Nation soldiers in Canadian history.

While serving, First Nation soldiers had to overcome prejudices and perceptions, and adapt to a military hierarchy that worked exclusively in English. Despite these struggles, First Nation soldiers left a remarkable record of wartime accomplishment, some of which has only been acknowledged in the last few decades. Many drew on traditional hunting skills and wilderness experience to acquire near legendary status as snipers and scouts.

\* (13:40)

The returning soldiers hoped that their sacrifice and achievements on the battlefield would lead to greater recognition from the federal government, a re-evaluation of their treaty rights and improved living conditions. Sadly, many soldiers, especially those without Indian status, were not given the postwar benefits they deserved, nor did their return alone initiate a new era of civil rights for First Nations people. Many First Nations veterans became politically active and their voices contributed greatly to the ongoing advancement of First Nation rights.

In the years since the world wars, First Nations people have been active members of the Canadian Armed Forces, helping to establish peace around the world.

War should never be glorified, but those who made the ultimate sacrifice must never be forgotten. This includes Canada's First Peoples, whose cultural, political, spiritual and military contributions to our country deserve to be recognized and honoured.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our First Nations soldiers and their communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Zebra Mussel Infestation**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have grown accustomed to NDP government's heel-dragging lack of strategy on important issues. This kind of mismanagement, however, has now led to damage to the province's largest and fourth largest lakes.

The province—the provincial Conservation and Water Stewardship Department confirmed on October 9th that zebra mussels had infested Lake Winnipeg's north basin to the point that nothing can be done. The minister went on to publicly declare, and I quote, that it is not reversible, end quote, just days after saying he hadn't given up.

This invasive aquatic species is a serious threat to the economy and the environment on Manitoba's lakes, not just the commercial fishing industry, but recreational fishers and the health of our waterways. Despite knowing as far back as September 2009 that zebra mussels had made their way into the Red River basin, it took the NDP over six years to introduce and proclaim legislation and to begin educational campaigns to curb the spread.

Mr. Speaker, just last week the minister confirmed that despite knowing about the imminent threat posed by this invasive species, the Department of Conservation didn't create a separate funding to deal with them until 2014.

The NDP undertook a science experiment against zebra mussels 18 months ago, and though it was more aimed at garnering headlines than actually working, the NDP government declared victory after dumping several hundred tons of potash into four harbours at a cost of \$500,000, funds that could have bought approximately six more portable decontamination units.

Less than a year and a half later, the NDP has gone from declaring victory to declaring the lakes a lost cause. And this declaration can't be overstated, Mr. Speaker, as it—as Lake Winnipeg directly and indirectly adds billions to our economy.

We have known for several years the long-term cost of zebra mussels on the health of our lakes, accessibility of our beaches and the cost to municipal and hydro infrastructure, but we will know—but we may not know what the long-term implications will be.

Manitobans are tired of the NDP's broken promises and want a change for the better. We can no longer afford a government whose mismanagement is threatening our lakes and waterways.

Thank you.

### **Bonnie Schmidt**

**Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** Mr. Speaker, it is with heavy hearts that my colleagues and I mourn the untimely passing of an incredible member of our community, Bonnie Schmidt.

Bonnie passed away suddenly but peacefully in her home on October the 15th at the young age of 52.

Bonnie dedicated her life to her friends and family and was an active member of her community. She was a competitive athlete and excelled especially in curling, as the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) knows, as she co-chaired the 2009 Safeway Select host committee with him.

Bonnie also dedicated her life to the progressive movement. She organized several major successful fundraisers to make life better for people in palliative care in Selkirk and Gimli. As a committed New Democrat, Bonnie worked on over 30 election campaigns across Canada, including many of our campaigns here in Manitoba, and she worked for many years at our provincial office. Right up until her passing, she continued to serve the people of the Interlake as my executive assistant. She made my life easier by tackling the difficult casework and many of the big issue files.

Bonnie worked with compassion and dedication because she believed that government has a role to play in making life better for everyone. She believed in standing up for the poor, the underprivileged and the average person, and her priorities never changed.

As her colleagues and friends, we say to Bonnie: Thank you for working shoulder to shoulder with us

for all of these years. Your life truly made a difference, and we will never forget you.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Manitoba, I extend our condolences to her family. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** That concludes members' statements.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I have some guests that I would like to introduce.

We have—seated in the public gallery today we have from HS Paul School, we have 50 grades 5 and 6 students under the direction of Ms. Shannon Young, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Oswald).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome all of you here this afternoon.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Saskatchewan Trade Restriction Impact on Manitoba Businesses

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government and the Premier have adopted, in respect of trade, isolationist policies for some time, and now the response from the Saskatchewan government is apparently that Saskatchewan Crown corporations will not allow Manitoba small businesses to bid on jobs. Opportunities to provide goods and services to the people of Saskatchewan will be limited as a result, and seven Crown corporations are going to be engaging in this practice as a response, I suppose, to the NDP's isolationist strategies.

Now, Manitobans know that they can compete given the opportunity, but the Premier has, because of his intransigence on this issue over many years, closed the door on Manitoba jobs and Manitoba growth by failing to partner in the New West Partnership.

I'd like him now to outline his reasons for keeping Manitoba out of the New West Partnership.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** I thank the member for the question.

Manitoba has a greater proportion of trade going east and west to provinces in Canada than any other province, over 50 per cent.

As—just a few months ago we signed a major energy agreement with the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Mr. Speaker. Hundreds of millions of dollars of energy are now going to flow to the west of us that have never been done before.

And I point out that the Leader of the Opposition has said we should not be building hydro for export purposes, either to Saskatchewan or to anybody to the south of us. He's willing to cancel \$9 billion-plus of orders for Manitoba Hydro, which would keep our rates low, keep our Crown corporation among the most affordable in terms of providing electricity and home heating of anyone in North America.

That's his approach to trade: cancel lucrative contracts. What right does he have to challenge trade when he's prepared to take a position like that?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the Premier doesn't know his own agenda, Mr. Speaker, so it would be beyond believability that he would know mine.

All the more reason, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba depends more on interprovincial trade than every other province. All the more reason that we should be encouraging interprovincial trade with other provinces.

Our provincial neighbours Saskatchewan and Alberta and British Columbia have opened the door to us on numerous occasions, and the Premier of Manitoba keeps slamming the door shut and saying no to trade opportunities, and this is the logical consequence, it seems, of a protectionist government in action.

Manitoba companies provide value. They create jobs, and they can create better opportunities for Manitobans if they're able to provide better value to people in Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC. But the NDP says no to jobs, and they say no to value, and now they're saying nothing about the opportunities we're losing as a consequence of their own policies.

And the Saskatchewan government announced more than two months ago, well more than two months ago, that they would be closing the door on Manitoba companies. No good or services would be allowed to be provided by Manitoba companies.

The Premier wants to point fingers. I'll point a finger at him now, Mr. Speaker, and ask him: What steps has he taken since learning of this misguided practice to protect Manitoba jobs and Manitobans' employment opportunities?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member obviously is misinformed. Manitoba is one of four provinces working on the internal trade reform in—all across the country because we trade more with all other provinces as a proportion of what we do. We're looking at strengthening the economic union of the country.

The member opposite takes the narrow approach. We take the broad approach. We trade east, we trade west, we trade north and south, Mr. Speaker. We want all of those doors open, and we're working with all provinces to achieve that.

\* (13:50)

What measures have we taken? We've put \$1 billion of infrastructure out there this summer, Mr. Speaker. That's Highway No. 1 going east and west, Highway No. 10, Highway No. 6, Highway No. 3, Highway No. 2, Highway 75. All of those roads take goods and services to markets.

What does the Leader of the Opposition want to do? He wants to cancel that. Bad roads make for bad trade.

**Mr. Pallister:** Mr. Speaker, you know, bad premiers make for bad trade.

The Premier speaks about wanting to trade with everyone at the same time, but he refuses to participate in a partnership with Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC and trade with them. It makes no sense, never has, and he's failed to put any reasons on the record as to why he thinks it does. It doesn't, and it's going to result in fewer job opportunities for Manitobans and for Manitoba companies.

Now, his own deputy of Finance said in Estimates recently that the government is breaking its own rules on internal trade.

If they can't abide by their own rules, if they're handing out contracts that are untendered, if they're covering up the details, and the Auditor General has well publicized these realities, if they cannot abide by their own rules, Mr. Speaker, why would any partner across the country believe that they would be a fair and fulsome trade partner? Would the Premier answer that?

**Mr. Selinger:** When greater than 50 per cent of your trade was done with other provinces, that means those other provinces want to trade with us: information for the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, when we sell 125 megawatts of power to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, a Crown corporation, for the first time in history, that shows there's an interest in what we have to offer east and west of us. When we harmonize our transportation regulations to allow trucks to move more easily between provinces, particularly with Saskatchewan and provinces to the west of us, first time that's ever been done, that's historic. And when we build \$1 billion of infrastructure to allow our trucking and transportation industry to better access markets, that's historic.

What would the Leader of the Opposition would do? He would cancel the highways program. He would cancel the hydro exports program. He would not co-operate with other jurisdictions. It's a double standard, something we've seen before from the leader opposition, a double standard, a protectionist standard, a do-nothing standard.

#### **Trade with Western Canada Government Approach**

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We've been advocating for quite a while on this side of the House to do something, Mr. Speaker, but the Premier refuses to do it, and that's join the New West Partnership and create jobs and economic opportunities for Manitobans.

The Premier likes to export. He likes to export jobs. He likes to export former communications staffers to Alberta. The problem is they're not trading back.

Now, the Saskatchewan government doesn't seem to like it very much. They issued a statement this morning, and I'll quote from it. It says, it was surprising to first hear of the concerns raised by Manitoba through the media. Provinces of every political persuasion deal with each other every day in a professional and respectful manner. The fact that the government of Manitoba chose to raise these matters in the media without any previous communication at either the officials or political level is disappointing.

Would the Premier explain why he failed to communicate after months of knowing that this was going to be a problem, he failed to communicate any concerns whatsoever to Brad Wall or even Rachel Notley, the Premier of Alberta? Would he apologize to Manitobans for failing to do so?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has clearly missed the boat

again. We've been working with all the other jurisdictions of Canada, including those to the west of us, including those to the east of us, including those to the north of us, on the internal trade agreement to allow for greater internal trade.

We started by—with labour mobility all across the country, which allows people to go where the jobs are and return. We've started—further followed up on that, and we just signed it this summer, Mr. Speaker, for apprenticeships. Apprentices now are able to get credit for the work they do towards their Red Seal regardless of the jurisdiction they working in. That's a harmonization of regulations which allows for more trade across the country. It allows our people—it allows people to come and work here; it allows our people to go work elsewhere. Those are very material and significant accomplishments. They add to the vitality of this province.

We have the best job creation record in the country, Mr. Speaker, of any other province. The best job creation record in the country, and what would the Leader of the Opposition do? He would cancel all those initiatives. Hydro contracts? He would cancel them. Road contracts? He would cancel them. That's not progress; that's looking backwards.

**Mr. Pallister:** The ninth best record—ninth, Mr. Speaker—ninth best record on economic growth under this Premier, closer to 10th—closer to 10th—than to eighth, I repeat. And the members opposite, if they had any concern for working Manitoba families, would listen.

The government of Saskatchewan issued a statement today saying it was surprising to hear of the concerns. They said, without any previous communication the government communicated to media, not to them.

And they went on to say, the substance of the concerns raised by Manitoba is also baffling. Manitoba has been repeatedly invited to become a member of the New West Partnership, but they have chosen not to do so. One of the reasons cited by Manitoba are concerns over protecting procurement policies of their Crowns. We would continue to welcome Manitoba's membership in the New West Partnership.

Mr. Speaker, the other provinces in western Canada have an open-door policy for our province, which I would welcome, and I think the people of Manitoba would too.

Why does the Premier close the door on opportunities for Manitobans?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member never lets facts get in the way of a false argument.

Full-time employment, September 2015, No. 1 in the country, Mr. Speaker. Private employment, September 2015, No. 1 in the country. Unemployment rates, second lowest in the country, 5.1 per cent and getting better. Total employment, No. 1 in the country.

The member opposite has no clue of what he's talking about. He has no program for economic growth in this province. He wants to cancel infrastructure. He wants to cancel hydro exports. He wants to cancel training programs. Mr. Speaker, he wants to cut essential services for families, he wants to privatize the social services and he wants a two-tier health-care system. There's no formula there for our growth. That's a formula for greater inequality; that's a formula for greater division in our community.

We are working with all the provinces on strengthening the internal trade agreement. We're one of four premiers doing that. We're making great progress, Mr. Speaker, and I invite the member opposite to get up to date.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the Premier is shrinking our economy like he's shrinking the membership in his own caucus.

Mr. Speaker, he can cite one-month numbers, but the record over six years with him as Premier is clear: ninth on economic growth, closer to 10th than to eighth.

And the government of Saskatchewan goes on in its release to say, the timing of this is also slightly strange. Provinces are currently engaged in intense discussions on the most ambitious overhaul of the Agreement on Internal Trade in history. Saskatchewan will continue to push for the most ambitious outcome possible. These sorts of comments are counterproductive in the context of these discussions.

This is the approach this government's taken; it's obstructionist and it's isolationist as well. Our small-business community is the backbone of our economy. Manitobans are ready to compete. We're ready to compete given the opportunity, and we're ambitious, Mr. Speaker, and we are team players.



Why has the Premier (Mr. Selinger) decided to stand in the way? Why is he not ready to allow Manitobans to compete? Why does he lack ambition, and why is he not being a team player when it comes to building our economy for the better good of all Manitobans and their families?

**Mr. Selinger:** The member opposite has completely missed the boat again.

Mr. Speaker, when you're No. 1 for trade with other provinces, that shows that we're getting results. When you have an apprenticeship agreement with other provinces, that shows co-operation. When you have a labour mobility agreement, that shows we're getting very significant results in terms of co-operation. All of those factors—when you have hydro sales for the first time in history to the west of us, Mr. Speaker, that shows great advantage for Manitobans. That will keep our rates among the lowest in North America.

What would the member opposite do? He would do the same thing that he did with the telephone system; he would sell it off and take the rates from among the lowest to among the highest.

Our 'remates'—our rates remain among the lowest because we've got \$9 billion-plus in export contracts. For the first time ever, some of those exports are to the west of us, Mr. Speaker. That makes a gigantic difference, and the Leader of the Opposition, he will cancel that, along with the roads program.

#### **New West Partnership Agreement Need for Manitoba Participation**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** The only one who has missed the boat here, Mr. Speaker, is this Premier who has jeopardized business in Manitoba by refusing to join the New West Partnership.

Mr. Speaker, five years ago, the NDP government in Manitoba had a choice to make. They could join with neighbouring provinces to the west in a partnership established to reduce trade, investment and labour barriers for all participating provinces, yet the NDP chose not to.

And according to Statistics Canada, and, as well, the Premier admitted earlier, Manitoba relies more heavily on interprovincial trade than any other province in Canada. In fact, according to the CFIB, 57 per cent of small-business owners sell goods to other provinces, the highest percentage of any province in Canada.

\* (14:00)

The Minister for Jobs and the Economy has frequently stated in the past that small business represents the backbone of our economy, Mr. Speaker, and the future growth of our economy.

So why, then, has he put them in jeopardy by refusing to join the New West Partnership?

**Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy):** Manitoba is at the centre of the country. We want to continue to take full advantage of that geographic, Mr. Speaker. We do as much trade to the east as we do to the west.

Businesses want us to have a strong national agreement, including delegations from the CFIB. They want to make it easier to do business in Canada from province to province.

That's one part of our plan to support trade. The second part is to build world-class trade infrastructure, more than \$5 billion for roads, highways and bridges that get Manitoba's goods to market faster.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I'm glad the—I'm glad that the member—or the minister mentioned the CFIB, because, in fact, 73 per cent of small-business owners in Manitoba are in favour of Manitoba joining the New West Partnership, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, but that's not all. In fact, six months ago the Saskatchewan government announced that in order to maximize all opportunities available within the New West Partnership, seven Crown corporations have adopted a New West Partnership Trade Agreement procurement preference policy. Because the NDP has refused to sign on to the New West Partnership agreement, this means that any business in Manitoba that currently does business with these Crown corporations will be in jeopardy. This is a huge disadvantage for Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister just admit that by refusing to join the New West Partnership, he has put Manitoba business at risk and jeopardized economic growth in our province?

**Mr. Chief:** Mr. Speaker, here's the facts. When it comes to Manitoba's trade infrastructure plan, our businesses understand it. They support it. In fact, they helped build it.

Here's what Chris Lorenc had to say: These investments go far beyond just building more highways and overpasses. They equip our trade-reliant economy with a transportation system that

makes us more productive and competitive as we grow our global trade footprint.

Think about the major trade routes, such as Highway 75: \$19 billion north-south trade-related supports; Perimeter Highway connected to Trans-Canada Highway, which links our country coast to coast to coast; or CentrePort Canada Way.

The important systems help sustain 240,000 jobs in Manitoba directly or indirectly enabled by trade. Our businesses, Mr. Speaker, they understand our trade infrastructure plan. They support it. In fact, they helped build it.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this is another example of this NDP government dropping the ball on economic growth in our province. They have placed Manitoba businesses in jeopardy by refusing to join the New West Partnership.

In fact, the minister of trade in Saskatchewan extended an olive branch. He said, and I quote: We would continue to welcome Manitoba's membership in the New West Partnership. End quote.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: Will this government do the right thing and accept it? Will the minister—the minister has a chance to do the right thing. Will he agree today to join the New West Partnership?

**Mr. Chief:** Mr. Speaker, here's what the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) had to say to the Winnipeg Free Press about Manitoba's trade infrastructure plan: I've driven around CentrePort a number of times and I've tried to wrap my head around what it's supposed to be. I've been around infrastructure projects a long time, but that one remains a mystery. That's what the member, the critic for Infrastructure, had to say about CentrePort Canada Way.

Well, Mr. Speaker, any time the Leader of the Opposition wants a briefing to educate his critic, I'd be more than willing to set that up. In fact, I'll invite Chris Lorenc and Diane Gray to join us, and they can explain why Manitoba's a model when it comes to trade infrastructure in the country.

#### **Saskatchewan Trade Restriction Impact on Manitoba Businesses**

**Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler):** Mr. Speaker, Grandeur Housing is a manufacturer of modular structures. It employs hundreds of people in the city of Winkler. Grandeur sells their products throughout Manitoba and in provinces including

Saskatchewan. Grandeur has been bidding on Saskatchewan Power opportunities since 2000. They do \$1 million worth of contracts each year for 15 years with SaskPower.

And Grandeur wrote to this Minister for Jobs and the Economy about these new measures being undertaken in Saskatchewan that would make Grandeur unable to do work with Saskatchewan Crown corporations. These contracts would be wiped out while this minister has done nothing to get Manitoba inside the New West Partnership.

What explanation does the Minister for Jobs and Economy have for this Manitoba business?

**Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy):** Mr. Speaker, facts remain: Validator after validator, private sector forecaster after private sector forecaster says Manitoba continues to have one of the strongest economies in the nation with one of the best job growths, one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, and why? Because this government stands with businesses like Loewen Windows and businesses in Steinbach like Valeant, where we're helping train over 200 employees.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to be able to support a strong economy. Just recently we were able to announce of how we're putting women at the front of our trade classrooms to make—send a strong message that there is no job a woman can't get.

At the end of the day, there's announcement after announcement of how we're working closely with our businesses to make sure that we continue to have one of the fastest growing economies in the nation.

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, last week when this issue emerged, the Minister for Jobs and Economy responded in the media, saying that he was surprised by the new requirements of Saskatchewan. He wanted to discuss them as soon as possible.

But, Mr. Speaker, in a September 25th letter that I table for the House—it's a letter sent to the Minister for Jobs and Economy and copied to my office—Grandeur includes documents from Saskatchewan Construction Association detailing to this minister these changes to procurement policy.

The letter asks, why doesn't Manitoba join the New West Partnership? There has been no reply to Grandeur other than a receipt of correspondence.

Mr. Speaker, this is baffling. The media is being told by this minister that he is surprised by the

information and he's sitting on the information the whole time. Why?

**Mr. Chief:** Mr. Speaker, once again, Manitoba, we're taking advantage of our geographic location being in the centre of the country. We do as much trade to the east as we do to the west.

What I could say is businesses, both locally and nationally, have called for us, as provinces, that we're deeply committed to a strong Agreement on Internal Trade, a new agreement, a March 26 deadline. Our government's committed to that, as are provinces all throughout the country.

We're going to work hard to make sure we meet the deadline by March 2016 and make sure that our businesses are staying competitive and Manitoba continues to have one of the fastest growing economies in the nation.

**Mr. Friesen:** Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. He knew for months and he did nothing. The minister says that the move by Saskatchewan to shut out Manitoba companies surprised him, but the letter was on his desk, and other businesses stand to lose access to a significant market. In this letter it says, if these new rules go into effect, it will have a negative impact on jobs in Manitoba.

There was no response to that 25th of September letter, so they wrote the minister again on October the 21st, and I table the letter. Still no reply. Baffling and strange.

Mr. Speaker, Grandeur and other Manitoba companies want to know how big could this get. It's seven Crown corps now, but if it gets bigger, it could amount to half of Grandeur's business.

The minister says he's surprised, but where is the minister's action when it comes for standing up for Manitoba companies and Manitoba workers?

**Mr. Chief:** Mr. Speaker, when we—we're committed to internal trade, committed to making—to meeting our deadline in March—by March 2016.

In fact, we were very proud to be part of a trade infrastructure luncheon. Our keynote speaker was John Law, president of Lawmark International, co-author of *Building on Advantage: Improving Canada's Trade Infrastructure*.

The Leader of the Opposition asked about Manitoba's trade infrastructure plan, and here's what John Law had to say for the Leader of the Opposition: Manitoba is committed to the long-term

plan. He said Manitoba's plan works closely with the private sector, and, simply put, what John Law had the message for the Leader of the Opposition, simply put, he said, Manitoba is doing it right.

### **New West Partnership Agreement Need for Manitoba Participation**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz):** Mr. Speaker, Alberta has announced preferential pricing for craft breweries based in Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC. Manitoba craft breweries have been left out in the cold because this NDP government has refused to join the New West Partnership. That refusal has placed roadblocks in the way of Manitoba businesses.

\* (14:10)

When is this NDP government going to improve trade for our business community by joining the New West Partnership?

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister responsible for Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we're very pleased as a government to be working in partnership with the restaurant association, hotel association. The changes we made—the minister from Kildonan made a number of changes with regard to the liquor control act, first time in about 60 years, very, very positive changes.

We have a number of different businesses that are seriously looking at opening up new micro-breweries in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, again, all the jobs related to that.

We make the best barley in the world to make beer, Mr. Speaker, the best hops. Have a barley sandwich and relax.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, microbreweries in Manitoba are just the latest victims of the NDP refusal to join the New West Partnership.

I ask again: When is this NDP government going to join the New West Partnership and stand up for Manitoba's microbreweries?

**Mr. Lemieux:** You know, Mr. Speaker, all joking aside, I mean, we've worked with Alberta and Saskatchewan, British Columbia and all the provinces of Canada with regard to craft beer. We continue to work in partnership with them and learn what they've accomplished and how they've accomplished it. They're letting us know the best way to proceed. So this continues every day as I speak.

So we're very pleased to let the public know—of Manitoba—that—all those beer lovers in Manitoba—that there are many looking at, right now, investing in Manitoba to start up new microbreweries, Mr. Speaker, and craft beer is truly growing in leaps and bounds. And we're going to be pleased to be a partner with all those businesses and make sure that they're a success.

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, microbreweries such as the Farmery, which is in my constituency, Fort Garry, Half Pints and many others have now been penalized by the policies of this government. Their costs of moving their product into western Canada have increased by 20 to 40 dollars per keg since last week.

When will this NDP government wake up, do the right thing and join the New West Partnership?

**Mr. Lemieux:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we're one of the only provinces—in fact, I believe we're the only province to have open borders with regard to wine, for example, coming to this province and working with other provinces.

But, Mr. Speaker, what's really concerning to me is—listening to the member opposite—is that we know with their privatized and privatization agenda, and liquor and our liquor stores and liquor distribution is just another one of those areas that they're looking at. And finally we start to hear from the member opposite from Neepawa talking about where he wants to go with regard to this issue.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we believe in protecting those jobs, hard-working civil servants in Manitoba working in our liquor stores doing a fantastic job, and when we hear the opposition with regard to privatization, very similar to the Liberal Party, wanting to privatize our liquor stores and all the distribution centres in Manitoba.

#### **Family Services Agencies Out-of-Province Travel Expenses**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, it was our understanding when we last brought forward the issue of out-of-province travel for employees of child-welfare agencies that the minister has indicated that this government would be putting an end to this practice. It would seem not so.

Freedom of information information shows that as recently as April 2014 travel was authorized to such wonderful destinations as Cancun, Las Vegas and Anaheim, California.

Can the government tell us what instructions she has given to child and family services agencies on this issue?

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services):** We work very closely with the devolved child-welfare agency, includes authorities and agencies. They are—they work with us, but they are stand-alone organizations that we work with every day.

Mr. Speaker, we supported devolution. We support indigenous-led organizations working within their communities and with their families to address the issues.

If the member has a specific claim he'd like me to look into, I will welcome that.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, it would seem, Mr. Speaker, that this province has shown little leadership to these agencies.

This problem of out-of-province travel for child and family service agencies has come up many times before, and a review of travel reveals that most are seminars on employee benefits, nothing to directly benefit the child and family services clients.

Does this minister think this is okay, to spend child-welfare dollars on this type of seminar?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** What we will continue to do is work with the system, the child-welfare system, with the authorities and the indigenous-led organizations, the agencies that deliver that program. We're going to continue to provide them with support so they can deliver prevention programs which are vitally important to supporting families. We support them every day in the work that they do. They have very difficult jobs, going into families where there is a crisis and working with that family to resolve it with the ultimate goal of keeping the child safe but also keeping that family together.

And looking at what are the different initiatives that they can put into place, we have Families First which we're funding; we have Healthy Baby program that we're doing. We're committed to providing better services for complex kids.

We're working with those agencies and authorities every day to make a difference.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, Mr. Speaker, travel to exotic destinations for employee benefit training costs approximately 10 times as much as the same training

supplied here in Manitoba. I do not agree that that is the best use of the dollars.

Why would this government approve travel at such a great cost when the same service can be provided here in Manitoba?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Let's talk about what supports the child-welfare system and families in Manitoba.

It is increasing funding by four times when the members opposite decreased it by \$4.5 million. It is investing in prevention programs such as Families First, the Mothering Project. Those investments are making a difference.

It's about investing in housing. When the members opposite were in government, they didn't spend a dime on either building new housing or making sure that the existing housing was going to be maintained.

It's about supporting foster parents. They cut foster parents rates multiple times when they were in government.

We're going to continue to work with the agencies and the authorities to provide good quality service for all Manitoba families.

#### **Restaurant and Bar Industry Wholesale Pricing for Alcohol**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has the highest wine prices in all of Canada, while right next door in Saskatchewan, a province with a similar population, they enjoy being among the three provinces with the lowest wine prices in all of Canada.

The minister has suggested that the difference is merely nickels and dimes, but this government has nickelled and dimed the wine prices in our province to higher than any other province or territory.

I ask the Premier: Why has he been using the government monopoly on liquor sales to gouge Manitobans with such high prices?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite, because he will know that the service provided to Manitobans through the Liquor Marts which are in various communities throughout Manitoba is among the best you can get.

With a wide array of products—and by the way, we have free trade in liquor—in wine all throughout the country. We were the first jurisdiction to open

our borders from wine from any other jurisdiction, something never done when the members opposite were in office.

So we will continue to offer a very good quality and range of products to Manitobans with well-informed advice and make sure that they have access to the finest products in the world.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, the report released today by Restaurants Canada cites the fact that bar and restaurants get no form of wholesale pricing here in Manitoba. This approach is very unfriendly to any bar or restaurant owner, forcing them to make the cost of enjoying a drink with their meal very expensive for Manitobans when they go out.

Will the Premier adopt the Manitoba Liberals' approach and allow—and provide wholesale prices to restaurants and bars in our province?

**Mr. Selinger:** Mr. Speaker, the member will know that we've had a dramatic improvement in the liquor laws in this province, including for wine and beer sales. We've taken the number of licensing categories from multiple double-digit categories down to two. We've made products more available. We've allowed small restaurants to—where families can come in and bring a bottle of their preferred wine if they wish.

We've opened up a number of opportunities. The industry and the restaurant association has responded very positively to the recommendations we've made. We've provided incentives for craft beers in Manitoba, and now we have a couple of major craft breweries in Manitoba, with another four to six in the pipeline.

\* (14:20)

Mr. Speaker, we're modernizing the experience of the liquor laws. We're doing that while ensuring that people have good jobs, and also ensuring that we continue to have social responsibility.

The member opposite is talking about privatizing the liquor and lottery system in Manitoba. That would diminish social responsibility, that would reduce the number of good jobs in this province, and more importantly, it would take resources away that are used. The profits are used to support health and education. He would reduce and cut funding to health and education.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, it's not just about this government's exorbitant liquor prices.

As the report says, listing new standard products can be very tedious in Manitoba. Special orders are really tedious. As the report card says, because there's no room for negotiation, it eliminates the potential for consumers to benefit from enhanced choice as well as lower prices.

Manitoba Liberals, unlike the NDP, believe Manitobans are very capable of making their own choices when it comes to the products that they want.

I ask the Premier: Why will he not do what Manitoba Liberals will do? Why will he not trust Manitobans to make their own choices?

**Mr. Selinger:** The member hasn't followed what the changes have been made in the liquor laws. We have lowered the surcharges on craft brewery products manufactured and produced in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, that creates good jobs in the province of Manitoba.

There are some people that like to brew their own wine, Mr. Speaker, and ferment their own wine. We've created laws that now allow them to go to a facility to be able to produce their own wine in Manitoba, never done before.

But what we won't do, Mr. Speaker, is what the Liberals are proposing to do. We won't privatize it and abandon our responsibility for social responsibility. I've heard the member from River Heights get up many times and ask about treatment for addictions. His approach would reduce the amount of resources available for people suffering from addictions.

We will look after people with addictions. We'll modernize the experience for those that can consume the products, and we'll make sure that people have access to affordable craft brew and homebrews in Manitoba done safely. But we won't abandon social responsibility like the member opposite is going to do.

#### **Investment in Education Small Class Size Initiative**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg's West End continues to be one of the most diverse and exciting communities in the province, and West End families know that the key to bright futures for their children is education.

And last Thursday I was pleased to visit Sister MacNamara School on Sargent Avenue with some of my colleagues for an announcement on more progress on supporting our children's education.

It was great to see children excited not just about a new classroom for Sister MacNamara School but also about Halloween this past weekend, even though we know there's some members in this House that are less enthusiastic about the holiday.

Can the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning inform the House on our progress to date on measures to ensure that children and their teachers are well supported?

**Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning):** I was with my friend from Minto and my sister from Logan at Sister MacNamara last week, and then I was at George Fitton School in Brandon on—last Friday to announce Manitoba's continued contribution to the small class size initiative.

Mr. Speaker, we've invested over \$13 million in 'nage' initiative to date, which has resulted in the hiring of 380 more teachers in Manitoba. We've increased the number of classes with 20 students or less by 61 per cent; we have cut down the number of classes with 24 or more students by more than 59 per cent; 91 per cent of our classes have 23 students or less, and some 66 per cent of classes met the target of 20 students or less.

Mr. Speaker, parents love this initiative; teachers love this initiative; administrators love this initiative; students love this initiative.

When children of Manitoba come to our front door, we open that door and embrace them. When the Leader of the Opposition opens his door, he gives them a lump of coal.

#### **Zebra Mussel Infestation Funding Commitment**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, if the NDP spent as much effort fighting zebra mussels as they do fighting amongst themselves, perhaps Lake Winnipeg wouldn't have been declared a lost cause.

The minister says the budgets are complicated, Mr. Speaker. What's not complicated is that under the NDP they will allocate more resources to severance packages for political staff than they will fighting zebra mussels.

Can the minister explain to Manitobans why his government will spend 50 per cent more, or \$250,000 more, on severance packages for political staff in 2015 as compared to fighting zebra mussels?

**Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question because it gives me the opportunity to make the point that the amendment to The Water Protection Act to include aquatic invasive species was proclaimed today. This was a very important step in the right direction to fight zebra mussels.

And members opposite may have given up on lakes like Lake Winnipeg, but we have not, and we have not given up on containing the infestation and preventing the spread to the other 99,000-plus lakes in Manitoba. So, Mr. Speaker, this is work well worth doing, and we will continue despite the politicization of the issue.

Members opposite delayed the passage of the amendment to The Water Protection Act in June to the very end of June, Mr. Speaker, so, you know, we've—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister's time on this question has elapsed.

Time for oral questions has expired.

### PETITIONS

**Mr. Speaker:** It is now time for petitions.

#### Minnesota-Manitoba Transmission Line Route— Information Request

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line is a 500-kilovolt alternating-current transmission line set to be located in southeastern Manitoba that will cross into the US south of Piney, Manitoba.

(2) The line has an in-service date of 2020 and will run approximately 150 kilometres with tower heights expected to reach between 40 and 60 metres and be located every four to five hundred metres.

(3) The preferred route designated for the line will see hydro towers come in close proximity to the community of La Broquerie and many other communities in Manitoba's southeast rather than an alternate route that was also considered.

(4) The alternate route would have seen the line run further east, avoid densely populated areas and eventually terminate at the same spot at the US border.

(5) The Progressive Conservative caucus has repeatedly asked for information about the routing of the line and its proximity to densely populated areas and has yet to receive any response.

(6) Landowners all across Manitoba are concerned about the impact hydro line routing could have on land values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro to immediately provide a written explanation to all members of the Legislative Assembly regarding what criteria were used and the reasons for selecting the preferred routing for the Minnesota-Manitoba transmission line, including whether or not this routing represented the least intrusive option to residents of Taché, Springfield, Ste. Anne, Stuartburn, Piney and La Broquerie.

This petition was signed by L. Wachal, H. Wilson and C. Monchamp and many more fine Manitobans.

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

#### Applied Behavioural Analysis Services

**Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 68 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 148 children by September 2016 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The current provincial government policy now imposed on the ABA service provider will

decrease the scientifically proven, empirically based and locally proven program and force children to go to school at age five before they are ready, thus not allowing them to full—them full access to ABA services promised them as they wait on their wait-list.

\* (14:30)

(5) Wait-lists, forced decrease in service and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the ministers of Family Services, Education and Advanced Learning and Health consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This is signed by G. Mercier, K. Koop, D. Roncadin and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**Proposed Lac du Bonnet Marina—  
Request for Research into Benefits and Costs**

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

- (1) Lac du Bonnet is a recreational area with great natural beauty.
- (2) The Winnipeg River is one of the greatest distinguishing cultural and recreational resources in that area.
- (3) Manitoba marinas increase recreational access and increase the desirability of properties in their host communities.
- (4) The people of Lac du Bonnet overwhelmingly support a public harbourfront marina in Lac du Bonnet.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as—of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider collaborating with other levels of government to research the economic benefits and construction costs of a marina in Lac du Bonnet.

This petition is signed by S. Marty, D. Pefo, C. Grant and many more fine Manitobans.

**Request to Reduce Speed Limit along  
Road 9E, LaSalle, Manitoba**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to the petition is as follows:

The community of LaSalle, Manitoba, continues to see significant residential growth, including new developments along Road 9E.

(2) As part of this growth, additional active transportation improvements are being constructed by the RM of MacDonald, including the installation of walking paths.

(3) One of these paths is less than 10 feet away from Road 9E, a gravel road where the current speed limit is 90 kilometres an hour.

(4) Families and individuals, including those with small children and pets, are concerned about the safety of using walking paths with high-speed traffic being within such close proximity.

(5) Interconnecting roads, including Road 47NE and Vouriot Road, have speed limits of 70 kilometres an hour and 50 kilometres an hour respectively.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to recognize the potential danger of allowing high-speed travel on a gravel road immediately adjacent to a walking path.

And (2) to request that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation consider reducing the speed limit along Road 9E similar to Road 47NE and Vouriot Road.

And this is signed by K. Peters, K. Peters, A. Giesbrecht and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**Manitoba Interlake—Request to Repair  
and Reopen Provincial Roads 415 and 416**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Interlake region is an important transportation corridor for Manitoba but, unfortunately, is still dealing with serious underinvestment in infrastructure under this provincial government.



Provincial roads 415 and 416 are vital to the region but have still not been repaired or reopened since sustaining damage during the 2010 flood.

Residences and businesses in the Manitoba Interlake are seriously impacted and inconvenienced by having no adequate east-west travel routes over an area of 525 square miles.

This lack of east-west travel routes is also a major public safety concern, as emergency response vehicles are impeded from arriving in a timely manner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government repair and reopen the provincial roads 415 and 416 to allow adequate east-west travel in the Interlake.

And this petition is signed by K. Bibeau, J. Sweezie, L. Slater and many more fine Manitobans.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any further petitions? Seeing none, we'll move on to grievances.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** Seeing no grievances, we'll move to orders of the day, government business.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, can we resolve the Assembly into Committee of Supply?

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair, and the various committee Chairs to the committee rooms. Thank you.

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### HEALTH, HEALTHY LIVING AND SENIORS

\*(14:40)

**Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the last item, resolution 21.1, of the Estimates for the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors.

Are there any questions?

Seeing none, I will now put the question.

Is—resolution 21.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,670,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

#### **Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Justice.

Shall we briefly recess to allow everyone to arrive? *[Agreed]*

*The committee recessed at 2:44 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 2:53 p.m.*

#### JUSTICE

**Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Justice.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** In the Estimates we'll notice a continuing reorganization of the department for greater efficiencies and greater outcomes. The Civil Law division was created just last year, which accompanied what I'm sure the member knows was the removal of Civil Legal Services from SOA status, which was then combined with Family and Constitutional Law to create an integrated Legal Services branch.

In this fiscal, the reorganization of the division continues with the transfer of the Criminal Property Forfeiture office, Legal Aid, policy analysis and development branch and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner to the division. Also part of the division is the Human Rights Commission, the Public Guardian and Trustee SOA and the Manitoba Law Reform Commission.

Combining the branches and independent offices into one division streamlines the administrative structure of the department, and enables knowledge sharing and the development of best practices. The

amalgamated Legal Services branch along with the transfer of the policy analysis and development branch provides greater flexibility and search capacity in responding to legal service demands.

The Community Safety Division was established last year through the merger of the Corrections and Criminal Justice and that includes now provincial policing, Aboriginal and Community Law Enforcement and the new Independent Investigation Unit, or what we'll call the IIU. The reorganization of this division has improved corporate leadership for a more integrated approach to community safety; increased capacity to focus on the objectives of prevention, intervention and suppression; find efficiencies and drive innovation for greater safety. It places greater focus on the provision of planning and standards and evaluation, and will provide greater centralized co-ordination after service delivery.

Reviews of areas were undertaken within community safety to drive efficiencies and recognize resources that could be reinvested to improve front-line services. One example, just to be—just to put forward a practical demonstration, is what we're doing in probation services following the release of the OAG's report on adult corrections of workload analysis were undertaken and was completed last May to help inform the response to recommendations aimed at improving the management of offenders in the community. So the analysis included a review of probation officer caseloads, risk level by caseload and urban versus rural caseloads. Other factors that contribute to workload, for example, contact requirements, presentence report prep, supervision of conditional sentences, program delivery training, the role of specialty units and travel, for example, were taken into account.

So I've been briefed on this and it appears that opportunities to realign existing probation staffing to meet the standards and requirements have been identified and there's been some good work occurring. Among the changes that I've been advised of include the restructuring of centralized First Nations unit that's for a more focused and culturally responsive approach to working with First Nations across the province.

Just to deal with the courts. It's combined regional courts and Winnipeg courts. Those two branches existed for quite some time and there's a new branch called Court Operations. That's, again, for a greater focus and consistent delivery.

Criminal Law division has seen some changes as well. Victim Services has been transferred into that division with prosecutions. So in other words, we're pairing now Victim Services and prosecutions, which is very different from my last time here. But that allows a more co-ordinated and lean approach within the department and I'm very pleased with the progress in that regard.

I want to talk about justice reinvestment. The Innovations branch continues to work at finding efficiencies. There is a great many challenges in the justice systems of Canada, and I know I've been talking to some other leaders in Canada and, indeed, south of the border, and there are some commonalities and there are some challenges that I think will be successfully met by different approaches.

We have to, first of all, realize efficiencies with the greater use of technology. We have to reduce the need to transport inmates from correctional facilities to court and back again. We have to use video to a much greater extent, and Manitoba is well positioned to take that to a new level. Of course, it's not just about congestion in court facilities and demand on sheriff's officers, for example, but there are risks that can be reduced by not having to transport prisoners around the province.

The lawyer video program supplements the video court program by enabling the lawyers to meet with clients before court appearances via video, and that's been expanded to Milner Ridge. Milner is the second largest facility in the province, so with that addition the program is now offered in eight of our nine provincial correctional centres.

We've also done work on other fronts, for example, a new custody co-ordination model which, along with the video technology, helps to ensure a better use of judicial resources and reduced transportation costs for in-custody matters, and we're looking to expand that to more parts of the justice system.

We're looking at a more fully electronic court system. The receipt from police in delivery to counsel with complete disclosure in criminal matters has been recognized as a—as an area for delay in the progress of a case. So this year Justice working with the Winnipeg Police Services will be developing a method to electronically transfer disclosure information to prosecutors including updates to disclosure and then, in turn, electronically provide the disclosure to defence counsel.

\* (15:00)

Innovations has also been working with the Provincial Court to strengthen the court scheduling model to increase the number of disposition courts so that we can have a speedier resolution of criminal cases and, as well, we're going to not just continue, but enhance restorative justice principles in the year ahead by referring individuals to other resources when it can be more appropriately dealt with outside of the traditional courts. And in the weeks ahead, we will be introducing a proposal for a restorative justice strategy that is victim centred and we'll be looking for feedback to conclude a greater emphasis on those appropriate measures.

So this budget has an overall increase of \$9.7 million or 1.8 per cent. The government, since '99-2000, has more than doubled the capacity of Crown attorneys by adding 101 new Crowns, representing an investment of \$19 million for salaries. With associated costs, the total increased investment since '99 is \$25 million.

As part of the long-term commitments, Justice will be adding an additional 11 Crown attorney positions this fiscal and six support positions.

The budget also provides an overall increase of \$6 million for provincial policing compared to '14-15. It will support the police in its role as the provincial police service, and I know the member has an interest in this area. But the province has been terribly impacted financially by the unilateral decisions of the federal government including liquidation of RCMP severance for retiring members, and that's just one example of the difficulties.

The budget includes the new investment of \$1.3 million to support the new First Nation safety officer program, and that will replace the federally funded band constable program that was terminated effective March 31 by the federal government. The First Nation safety officer program represents a national first in First Nations policing and contains significant improvements over the federal band constable program. There's now going to be a new focus on qualifications and training, a clear legislative foundation and program parameters. Those were factors all absent with the former program.

The community safety officer program was launched in April; that was with the City of Thompson, and we are very keen to see that grow and we're going to look very carefully at how that's working for the citizens of Thompson.

The IIU is up and running, and the budget contains resources of \$1.4 million for the IIU, bringing the total investment to \$2.7 million and 14 staff. So I think, in conclusion, while we could talk about criminal property forfeiture in the introduction, perhaps the member will want to explore that area. I think that's been a very successful model in Manitoba.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister for those opening remarks.

Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement to make?

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Only briefly, Mr. Chairperson.

I want to thank the minister for his opening statement and to the staff who prepared it and those who join us here today.

The Estimates process, I think, is always a good process in terms of going over different issues within the department. This year, not unlike, I think, two years ago, we're a bit truncated in the process because of things that are happening in the House and how that happened. So I regret we probably won't have as much time on Estimates as I would've liked. I'll blame our House leader for that and he'll take responsibility, I'm sure, in terms of how this turned out.

But the—it'll be difficult to do a sort of systematic department-by-department or division-by-division sort of questioning, which I think we've tried to do in the past in years where I was the critic. It would be a bit more all over the map, to use the term, because of the time allocations that will be given. So the minister, I'm sure, will accept that and I hope the staff will accept the apology for that in advance as I know there will be some shuffling in and out as a result of that. But I look forward to the time that we do have and having the discussion about an important part of government.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the official opposition critic for those opening remarks.

Just so we're all on the same page, and I'm sure we've all heard this before, under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 4.1.(a) contained in resolution 4.1.

At this staff, we'd invite the minister's staff or at least some of them to come up to the head table, and once they're settled, perhaps, Minister, you could introduce them to the committee.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Joining us at the table are Deputy Minister Julie Frederickson; Aurel Tess, admin and finance; and Shauna Curtin, ADM of Courts; and Greg Graceffo, associate deputy minister of criminal justice, and Lavonne Ross from—acting ADM in civil; and Michael Mahon, the head of prosecutions—ADM, prosecutions and Victim Services.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Awesome. Thank you all for being here.

Another standard question: Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I guess Manitoba practice and given the short time frame globally would make the most sense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Globally has been proposed.

Is that acceptable to the committee? *[Agreed]*

Excellent. Thank you very much. It's agreed, then, the questioning for the department will proceed in a global manner.

All the resolutions will therefore be passed once the questioning has been concluded.

And wouldn't you know it, the floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister advise the committee whether or not his department at this stage has provided any advice or done any analysis on the potential, not consequences so much, but how the potential legalization of marijuana might operate in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, that's a good question to start with because the member's rightly identified it as a major issue that's going to hit the justice system of Canada, and not just justice of course, but how we—how this country is going to grow, distribute and retail that product. It raises obvious questions that I can have a discussion with the member about.

But I'll just say, initially, we have stated publicly that we do recognize it's an area where the general population appears to be getting ahead of legislators across North America and, in the result, it has put a very difficult challenge on the desks of legislators, particularly in American states where

their counterpart to a referendum, if you will, or citizens' initiative, has changed the law. And is my understanding in those states the change was not made in the respective state legislatures, and as well, it's out of sync with federal law.

So we have to deal with the challenge here in Canada, obviously, in a different way. And I think we have an opportunity to get it right. It's going to take a lot of work, a lot of consultation. And there are some that absolutely have to be at the table in those consultations, the provinces first and foremost and, of course, law enforcement.

We also have to make sure that we understand all of the impact of marijuana on our health and well-being. I'm particularly concerned, by the way, and I'm going to raise a very serious red flag with the federal government when the—when my counterparts are put in place, about the need to mitigate any impact on impaired driving, or on, you know, we can't start backsliding on the progress that we've made when it comes to impaired driving.

So there are these challenges, and I think we have to just roll up our sleeves and make sure that while we recognize that the citizens want to move in this direction, it has to be done safely. And that's our job.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Has the department undertaken any analysis or had discussion with, whether it's other states in the US that have gone through this or with their other provincial counterparts, on how a system like this might look, even on an initial basis?

I mean, what efforts have gone under way? And not just since the win of the federal Liberals and their platform, but I'm assuming that this would have been on the radar of the department prior to that. What analysis has taken place on how it might function in Manitoba?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, of course, the early years of countering drug-impaired driving had Manitoba at the table and, in fact, we were leaders in moving ahead with ways to detect drug-impaired driving. That's been recognized as requiring the legalization and recognition of standard field sobriety testing.

\* (15:10)

The—and the partners that we have worked with on that one, including MADD Canada and law enforcement, as well, have brought insights to our attention. So that remains an area of keen interest and one, by the way, that does have some very

serious challenges in terms of the ability to objectively measure the impact of THC's on the body and resulting impairment.

But I can say right from the minister on down, we've been paying attention to some of the impacts on the states that have had some experience, and we have to learn from those experiences, whether it's Washington state or Colorado, for example. They've gone before us and have had some successes and some, I think, some relative challenges that we will want to avoid here in Canada.

There are issues, whether it's labelling or whether it is zoning, whether it is—of course, the Americans have unique banking challenges because the federal government prohibits the dealing in marijuana by anything other than cash because it's still recognized as an illicit drug federally. And, by the way, that also has resulted in a lack of needed research on the impact of THC's on the body.

But we've also learned lessons about how this is not just about net, entirely to the good of tax revenues from a new product on the market. There are costs too. There are costs in law enforcement. There are costs in addictions and others. So we've learned about that. We've also learned about some of the challenges when it comes to protecting youth from this product.

So there are many issues that the Americans have identified and that we can pick up from and learn from. So we'll be moving ahead now with our department as a lead, looking and enumerating the issues that have to be addressed by the different departments of government.

It's one thing for Justice to be setting out what are many of the manifestations of a new drug policy for Canada, but we have to recognize there are many departments of government that were—are going to be engaged. Like, for example, there's a big question as to how this product is going to be regulated. Is it, like medical marijuana, going to be a federally regulated and marketed product or is it going to fall to the provinces? There are some constitutional questions that we are asking now that we are going to discern. Is this a product that liquor commissions across Canada are positioned to deal with, or does the federal government want some different marketing and distribution mechanism?

There will be issues for Healthy Living and for the Department of Health because of the addictions issues. There are issues for Jobs and the Economy.

There may be issues for Agriculture in terms of cultivation issues. So this really is a remarkable shift in public policy in Canada, and Manitoba is bound and determined to make sure that we are at the table and offering our advice and trying to make this work in a positive way.

I can tell you that I've just drafted a letter to my new counterparts, whoever they are, and some of the main points in that letter that we want to discuss with the federal ministers, or at least the minister responsible for drug policy in Canada, is sitting down and working through these issues.

I also understand that the federal government is very keen to move swiftly on this one. And that's something where we're going to have to be really careful about it, because we've got to do it right. Like, we—whether it's youth addictions or the impaired driving I spoke about or whether it's all the other challenges, this is going to have to be done right, and people have to be in the room.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The minister indicated that he drafted a letter to his counterparts provincially across Canada. Can he provide the committee a copy of that letter?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'd love to but, well, I think I need a minister to send it to first and then I'll copy it to him. And, in fact, we just have been looking at the draft today as well.

But other issues that we'll want to deal with the federal government about include the need to continue our efforts across the country in countering child pornography. There are new challenges with the Internet that affect the well-being of youth, and, as well, of course, we've got ongoing and serious issues when it comes to police funding and the availability of resources for officers on our streets and roads in Manitoba.

So quite a good little list of issues, and I hope to sit down and establish a good relationship as I have always tried to cultivate with my federal counterparts.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think the minister's suspense on the new Attorney General for Canada will probably end on Wednesday. Could he provide a copy of that—could he provide a copy of the letter after he's got somebody to address it to?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So at this point there hasn't been any specific discussion within the department about what

distribution would look like if and when—we're dealing with the when at this point—if marijuana becomes legalized, it's—his—initial feeling that going through the current government-run liquor branches would be the most likely distribution point?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** All I can say at this point, because it's really speculative and maybe isn't worth the discussion, but it had been commented by an official in Washington state, I believe, to the minister responsible for liquor control in Manitoba, that Manitoba and other jurisdictions with public distribution and retailing infrastructure was a much better position to actually get this right and do it safely. But, having said that, the federal government may have no interest in the provincial—either regulation or distribution of retailing of this product. So it really is premature.

We want to see their plan. How are they going to do this? I'm sure they have been doing policy work on this at the federal level. I read the—I think it's two paragraphs in their policy document and I've read it two or three times. And I was trying to tease out from every word in there what lurked in terms of what was coming our way, but there was very little in there other than, really, a commitment to a federal-provincial territorial process to work through these issues.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Has the department undertaken any analysis or given any advice to the issue of assisted suicide? I know that—I think the College of Physicians and Surgeons is undertaking a process where they're soliciting feedback on the issue. I think I saw some correspondence or advertising on that.

Is the department itself, the Department of Justice, providing advice or—to other departments of government or done an analysis on the impact of assisted suicide in—with the result of the Supreme Court decision where the clock is ticking, and I imagine a decision would need to be made fairly soon.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The timeline is short, and that's an area that we look forward to hearing from the federal government about and specifically whether they intend to keep that deadline. As I recall, I think it was a February timeline and—so that's one issue.

The other, though, is the role of Manitoba Justice, and it has been partnering with Health. Officials have a working group and, as a result, you can see the involvement in the discussion paper of

the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, and that's out right now for discussion.

So that really is the state of—I think the justices had a role in terms of legal advice, but I think the policy lead has rested with Manitoba Health.

**Mr. Goertzen:** But the government of Manitoba, not specific to the Department of Justice, hasn't taken a position as it relates to that particular court case. I don't believe that there were interveners? Maybe there were in the court case, but there's no particular position by the government of Manitoba on the issue of assisted suicide or the result of the Supreme Court decision.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, I think it's important to get the feedback. The College of Physicians and Surgeons has put a draft position out there and I know there'll be a lot of feedback on all sides of their approach. I think the role of Manitoba Justice will, throughout the process, be one of ensuring that whatever unfolds it's within the four corners of the Supreme Court of Canada decision.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Has the minister or any of his deputies or ADMs corresponded with any of their counterparts in other provinces or the previous Attorney General in terms of the court decision? Has there been correspondence going back and forth on the issue following the Supreme Court decision last February?

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, my advisers have been in communications with officials across the country. I think it was what's called a CSO working group on this issue so that there's some co-ordination across the country. But I think what's most important to my answer is the reality of a federal consultation process and a panel that is doing work nationally on this one and that really is a—should be a key focus for ongoing interest.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister provide the correspondence that's gone back and forth between himself or the previous Attorney Generals since this issue has arisen and, also, staff in his department with other officials in the province and the federal government regarding this particular issue and the court decision?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised that there may not be much, if any, written correspondence. It really is, I guess, just understanding where, sort of, everyone's at in the process. But I'll look to see, and

I'm not aware—I haven't been made aware of any communications at the political level but if there are I can provide them to the member.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'll move on to other topics not related to the federal government's—new federal government's policy or federal court decisions.

Electronic monitoring in the province, we've—we go through this sort of every Estimates period, and I know that his well-briefed officials will have all of the numbers because they will expect these decisions or questions to come.

Can the minister provide an update in terms of how many current electronic monitoring units are active and in use in the province?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The information I have is as of September 21st, I think there's been some update which I can advise the member of. But first of all with regard to domestic violence, I understand that eight domestic violence offenders have EM as a condition of their sentences as of that date. I was told today it was 10 but we'll just double-check on that one.

I have here too, as well, the auto theft EM summary which it goes to September 21st. There were 108 potential cases reviewed for the project, 79 individuals were outfitted, 35 individuals tampered with or removed their devices and 60 instances, actually, where offenders tampered with or removed devices—talk about 35 individuals resulting in 60 instances, so obviously there were some repeat actions there.

Eleven youths were re-arrested for auto theft and the devices were utilized to confirm their location in the offences. Other youths were arrested for break and enters with the device used to supply location information.

The department reports hundreds of instances where youth violating curfews where staff have regained compliance in over 50 instances where their sentence was suspended or charges were laid despite attempts to regain compliance.

I will just add that when I came into the position I asked the department to begin an analysis with a view to expanding the EM program to sex offenders, particularly to pedophiles, and that analysis is ongoing and—with a view to making sure that when we do it it's based on some best practices and a good solid research base. So that is a work in progress. *[interjection]* Yes, and I should add that a key piece

of that is consultation with the partners when it comes to sex offending against children.

I think, too, and I will—this is a file that's been around for a while in terms of the interest in this one and I've always been keen to see how this can go to work. At the same time, we always have to recall that this is only one more tool, and I'm afraid that sometimes observers may conclude that this is the answer to re-offending, when, in fact, all across North America, with the experience of EM over quite a number of years now, it's been, I think, definitively proven that this is only another tool that has to be accompanied by other measures to ensure safety and compliance, as well, and, as well, treatment impacts.

So it's just—it is another approach, and always what one has to guard against is electronic monitoring being a—providing some false sense of security. And I think the lesson is best taught when one looks at the numbers of those young offenders who removed electronic monitoring from—in the auto theft program. So—but having said that, I continue to have an interest in expanding this as the additional tool and we'll make sure we proceed on a firm basis.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Has the technology changed at all that the Province is using, not generally in the overall landscape, but that the Province is using since it undertook the initial pilot project several years ago?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, the department has been using the same system. It was—it's been recognized as a good system, GPS. I think it was a system that we partnered with Nova Scotia to pursue, and so we continue to have that relationship.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Does the minister know if any individuals who were engaged in the electronic monitoring program who had the ankle bracelet on them were charged with offences other than the tampering of the—obviously, if they were tampering with the device they would have been charged—but those who had been charged with offences other than that while they were under electronic monitoring?

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised that there was a myriad of charges that were laid aside from the tampering. And I'm—that—any time you enhance monitoring, you're going to see enhanced charges laid for breaches and for other offences. I think I referenced there were some break and enters that were identified as a result of the use of the bracelets.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister or his staff provide a bit of a historical listing of those who are under electronic monitoring and charges that they face? I guess it could include the tampering charges but I'm more interested in charges they would have had outside of the tampering.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, we might try to two—to have a two-stage answer to that one. We'll determine how much is—has to be teased out manually and how much is readily available, and perhaps we can give the member what's readily available and then we could take it from there.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And I suppose I don't need it from the beginning of the program itself. Whether it's the last, maybe the last couple years, I don't want the staff to sort of spend an extraordinary amount of time on this, but even the last couple years would be fine.

The experience with electronic monitoring, just in terms of how it's being used with domestic assaults, or of those who are under—who've been charged and convicted of domestic violence, is that in—something where it has to be specifically recommended by Crown prosecutors or is it open as a tool for the court to apply that? How does one come under, specifically for domestic violence, come under the monitoring of electronic monitoring?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, EM must be on orders. It must be on orders from the court.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So it's totally to the discretion of the courts. If they—if a judge or a multitude of judges decide to use it more frequently and suggested that 50 people have it, I mean, are the resources available, or where's the bottleneck in terms of allowing it to happen or not happen?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, if there was judicial interest in moving ahead with the—or with electronic monitoring in cases where, for example, prosecutions or Corrections wasn't advocating for that one, we would certainly look to see how the—how that could be delivered.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So it's a tool; it's an option that the judges have. They're aware of that; they can use that as a tool, and it—there's no constraint within Justice in terms of the resource. It's really driven by whether or not individual judges feel it's appropriate for that offender; is that correct?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, Justice has tried to contain the model to a certain number of units, but if the courts wanted to expand beyond that, then we would

attend to that one as a priority. But the—there has been a triaging of cases, if you will, or analysis of cases to identify where, in the view of our—the professional assessment of the department, it would be most useful to have electronic monitoring added to a condition.

That would be, for example, where there are individuals who are getting reinvolved and where this could make a difference in the view of our prosecutors or probation officers.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Has there been, in the time that it's been used under those with domestic violence charges—is there a sense that the offender is significantly different than those who use it for auto theft? Are they less likely to try to tamper, remove the device? I'm assuming the offender is different in terms of their nature, probably both, maybe, in age and other sort of characteristics, but is there a—less of a propensity to tamper with the devices for those on the domestic violence side?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The best answer to that question would be by, you know, review of the practices and the literature across North America, probably. In Manitoba, though, I can advise that our experience has been one where offenders have for—on domestic violence charges have illegally removed their devices, just like some of the youth with regard to auto theft. We've had an offender that had a new domestic violence charge while on monitoring. So, clearly, if you just look at those examples there, I think the lesson that this is just another tool is obvious.

**Mr. Goertzen:** In terms, then, of—I agree with the minister that it's just a tool. I don't think anybody suggested that there was any magic bullet in terms of preventing reoffenders or that would've been used already. But, you know, there's a look at expansion towards sex offenders. Is there an analysis that that particular group of offender might be, then, less likely to tamper with the devices or are there may be difference devices that've been looked at for those individuals if there is an expansion into that kind of offender?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The reason the department's been asked to do its work in an analysis on the appropriate use of electronic monitoring for sex offenders—or I should say, specifically, pedophiles, is to look at the additional—or what's the best bang for the buck, if you will, what population of sex offenders would best be suited to the addition of electronic monitoring. We know overall, generally,



sex offenders tend to be more compliant with the conditions, but that's only on a general level. There are individuals that I would like to see us focus on that could either benefit—or public safety would benefit from the addition of electronic monitoring for those persons.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is the feeling, then, that if it moves to being used with sex offenders that it would be those who've maybe done their entire sentence and this is—is a particular Criminal Code application where they're asking for additional monitoring even though they've completed their sentence? Is that, sort of, what the department is looking at, that it'll—won't be necessarily those who are on bail, but those who've completed their sentence and maybe haven't done programming? Is that what's been looked at?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, we envision that the EM application to sex offenders would follow the same approach as for auto thieves and domestic violence offenders, and that is it would be subject—it would be overseen by a sentence or it'd be tied to a sentence and a court order or a sentence and that anyone whose sentence is finished will, you know, there would not be an order available to manage whether with EM or any other intervention. So—and I think that's been an ongoing issue, obviously, that amendments to the Criminal Code have attempted to deal with, but when it comes to monitoring, it'll all have to be tied to an order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm hoping that if I ask about accidental releases, it doesn't cause a shift in staff, but it may, it will. So I'll just proceed, I guess, with that shift.

\* (15:40)

Can the minister indicate, from information from his staff, the number of accidental releases in the past 12 months?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** We had seven in '14-15, which was down slightly from '13-14, but I'm advised that to date in '15-16, there have been no accidental releases.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So, sorry, can the minister indicate when the last accidental release was that I guess under the '14-15 fiscal year?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, no. Staff just don't have the information here but we can expedite an inquiry for the member.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, I mean that would be helpful, just whatever they have for the fiscal year, I suppose, of '14-15.

The release, the institution or the location that they were accidentally released and the duration that they were released until being incarcerated, they could provide that information, which I think is sort of the standard ask that we've had in the past.

Has there been any difference in terms of how accidental releases are reported or how they're classified?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised that, by and large, this is a decision of law enforcement, of police, based on public safety and the need to get someone back into custody or have that person detained. In other words, it's a public safety question that provides the answer.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, and maybe just for clarification, or maybe it's my clarification, I'm not referring specifically but when the police notify the public that there's been an accidental release, which I don't think has happened very often in the past. More from a departmental recording perspective, is there something that's changed or anything that's changed in terms of when they determine that there's been an accidental release for the purposes of recording an accidental release?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, and I just noticed from my own notes as well that it's my understanding that the police are notified whenever one of these is identified, and then it's the police that do the analysis to determine whether there should be any public statement made.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, I don't think I'm maybe being clear.

The—in the past when we've asked for a list of accidental releases from the department, we've received that generally through FIPPA but sometimes through this process. And they range anywhere from seven to 15 or perhaps more, but I don't believe that all of those were publically disclosed to the police. I think it was the discretion of the police about whether or not they would actually make a public notification.

I guess all I'm asking is whether or not the—in terms of the internal recording mechanism for the department, whether any criteria has changed in terms of what is an accidental release.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised there's been no change.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the minister and his staff for that response.

On the issue of prisons, will this require a shift of personnel?

Okay, so we're just going to go through this, and there's been discussion out of Quebec regarding a federal court decision on pornography in prisons, and I think it was related specifically to television and the access that prisoners in Quebec had to pornographic channels or programming, and I believe the public safety minister there has made some proclamations about it. But my understanding is that the most recent federal court decision might be at odds with what the Quebec public safety minister is indicating in terms of not allowing pornography in prison, which I think the minister and his former minister and myself all—I think we're all in agreement with. But has there been a look at the federal court decision on pornography in prison in terms of what impact that might have in Manitoba?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** —I'm advised that our position continues in Manitoba, that pornography is not made available, and if it's identified it's dealt with and there's no decision elsewhere in Canada that will result in any shift in in our approach.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The Quebec safety minister has indicated they're going to put in parental software monitoring to ensure that this is—is that essentially what happens in Manitoba? Is that the kind of software that exists in Manitoba or is there something else that prevents—should prevent pornographic material from being viewed on the television?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, the member may be aware Quebec has very different, shall we say, standards when it comes to television and what channels can run. But here in Manitoba the jails limit the availability of certain channels. In other words, it's the channels that one would never expect pornography to be on that are available for inmates.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And what safeguards are put in place in terms of Internet access? Is it the same type of safeguards that are put in place to ensure it's not access on the Internet or?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, there is not Internet access for inmates of our facilities.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Do the—in the past we've had, I think, a listing of entertainment. The one that was discussed was video games; there was some sort of entertainment available in the different correctional centres. Is that still the case? Can we get a listing of video game consoles that are available, the titles of the games that might be available to inmates either on a regular basis or on some sort of a performance basis?

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that there are no—there is no gaming, as the member is talking about, in our facilities, with the exception of, in the women's correctional centre, there's the availability of Wii and I understand that's with a view to exercise regime.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And I'm assuming that there's not—*[interjection]* Oh, sorry.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I have a list of the games, and it looks—yes, it's mostly workout. It's fitness. There's—and in fact, it looks like the member may well have, if the Conservatives are the ones that have been doing the FIPPAing, but there's been a lot of FIPPAing in this regard, so I trust that the member may have a list of all of those. So *The Price Is Right*, I guess, isn't about fitness, but I think that's pretty innocuous. And there's some others there but I think the member will have a list of that. *The Legend of Zelda* is another one, of course.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I mean, I won't say with certainty that it hasn't been members of our staff who've been doing the FIPPAs. I haven't seen them if it was, but it wouldn't be the first time something happened within our party that I haven't seen. So maybe he could just, sure, go through it. The list can't be that extensive and maybe just read into it.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** *Dance Workout; Rolling Stone: Drum King; The Price Is Right; Mario Party 9; The Legend of Zelda; Zumba II; Gold's Gym Cardio Workout; Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?: Back to School edition; Michael Jackson: The Experience; My Fitness Coach; Madagascar Kartz; Just Dance 2, 3, 4, '14 and—like 2014-2015—Donkey Kong Country Returns; Karaoke Joysound; Mario Kart Wii play; Mario brothers Wii; Super Paper Mario; Cardio Workout; Wii Sports; Wii Fit Plus; thinkSMART: Power Up Your Brain.*

And that is as of September 15th, so—and I understand those were provided through FIPPAs several times but perhaps not.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are you done?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes. Oh, sorry.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Didn't know if you had more to add.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And I'm assuming then that, because of the restriction on pornographic material, which support obviously, that there's limited access or no access to pay programming, combative sports, the sort of things that can be available through pay-per-view?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised the member's correct.

**Mr. Goertzen:** So I want to shift to the issue of sheriffs in Manitoba. This is like a Wii workout; this is even better than there.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Did you have more to add to your—yes, honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can the minister just indicate how many sheriffs are employed in Manitoba, and if he could just maybe give a bit of a description of the range of work and services that they do within the justice system?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The estimate for salaries and benefits is 9.627, which is an increase over the earlier year of 51,000. There are 105.7 FTEs, which is the same as '14-15, and in terms of their duties, while there is a—while there are some civil responsibilities, for example, the service of garnishing orders, serving other court documents, including evictions, for example, could be family-related orders. So that's one area of work.

The other area of work, of course, is court security. That's what they are most known for, been significant enhancements to that area over the last number of years, as I recall.

The other area, though, is the transportation of prisoners, whether it's to court appearances or back or—and there may be medical appointments, other required oversight of inmate transportation.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The serving of court orders, does that sometimes involve sheriffs going out rural areas or secluded areas? Do they generally go in teams of two or do they sometimes serve those individually?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that the sheriffs are to travel in twos when there is a requirement to serve documents. There may be instances where there are

more than two, for example, where police would accompany an individual service visit depending on risk.

**Mr. Goertzen:** And that risk assessment is done—who does the risk assessment? Who decides whether or not they will be accompanied by RCMP or perhaps other law enforcement?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that the senior sheriff's officers do an analysis on a daily basis of the tasks that are set down for the day and if there is a risk that's identified then the appropriate measures are taken. That may involve calling in the police. And then on the other hand, if the police identify a risk they can—they would advise senior sheriff's officers so that the risk is managed.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Are there any sheriffs who carry side arms, who carry guns?

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that our sheriff's officers are routinely equipped with defensive weaponry which would include pepper spray, batons and jackets. The department also advises that they are—it's an ongoing task to re-evaluate the safety of sheriff's officers, and there has been some discussions about whether sheriff's officers should have different weapons, and that is being evaluated and whether that would be advisable either in particular circumstances or more generally. So that is a work in progress, I understand.

And, of course, in different parts of the country, sheriffs are deployed in different ways. I do recall that in Alberta, the sheriffs do have highway traffic responsibilities there, so that might result in a different risk analysis of their weaponry needs.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm aware that—and maybe it's the terminology issue—I know that the sheriffs in Alberta are sort of a traffic unit, and I think a pretty robust one, not that I've met them personally in that way. But the—what's the view of the landscape of Canada generally? The sheriffs that perform similar tasks to the sheriffs in Manitoba, are they generally equipped with side arms?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that as a result of the ongoing analysis that in jurisdictions where the duties are the same as the duties in Manitoba, there are not side arms, but where there are other more extensive responsibilities, for example, traffic enforcement, there may be side arms. I think there

are three jurisdictions where, perhaps, there is that different job description.

**Mr. Goertzen:** If there's a decision to move towards arming sheriffs either consistently or just providing them access to weapons when they—to firearms when they need them, does that require a legislative change or is it simply a matter of giving them peace officer status? What's the mechanism for making that happen?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that, well, the outcome of the analysis is premature, but if there was an interest in making a change, it would require appointment as peace officers. In other words, it wouldn't require a legislative change; it would just require an appointment change.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is there a time frame in terms of when the department looks to report back to the minister for—as a—with a recommendation on this potential change? Or has the minister given the department any particular deadline or time frame for reporting back on that?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, I'd more—I'd fairly recently raised this with—and had this discussion with the department, so it would be my expectation that over the next few months at the outside we would have some completed review. I would also expect that there would be some consultation with those that are in the job and have differing views.

There has been some communications to me, one or two, some interested in this area, and I rather likened it to the need to make sure that the—any analysis was done carefully as happened with the natural resource officers back in the day. Of course, you can't compare; the two are entirely different. But we just want to make sure that we do our due diligence in answer to the inquiry by—I think it was just one or two people. I don't think it was some sort of a formal response for a review, but we thought it was useful to have that kind of review nonetheless given the developments in other places in Canada and make sure that the safety of our sheriff's officers is job one.

I mean, nothing can get in the way of the safety of those who go out there for the greater good. So that's the purpose, but the timeline, we haven't set a strict time—date on the receipt of it, but I'm advised that we could reasonably do that in the coming months.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Was the decision to do the analysis—and I agree that—I mean, analysis is important. So I'm

not in disagreement with the minister or the department on that. Was it—did it come out at the request from the union that represents the sheriffs?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** There had been an email, I think, as I recall, or there had been some—a communication of some court that—some kind that came to my attention. I can't honestly remember what the form it was. But I had an interest in the subject matter, and that's why I raised it with the department. But, again, the department does have an ongoing analysis of safety in any event, but I think that there was some responsiveness to that interest.

It wasn't from the union. It wasn't from an organization. It wasn't from a large number of people. I think it was from one or two individual—*[interjection]*—sheriff's officers.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Does the department that—track of, and I suspect you do, incidences where sheriffs are put at risk or where they report that they've—there's been some sort of a—an incident or an altercation where they have had to use the weapons that they currently have? Is there tracking of that, how often that happens?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised that the senior officials aren't aware of any incidents or any act of violence against sheriff officers in the recent past. I should just add for the record, consultations will also have to take place with the union even though they may not have been part of any inquiry. And the union has been very diligent in working with the department, and in my earlier posting as well, to ensure safety of their membership.

**An Honourable Member:** How many postings have you had? Two or three?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Three, well, a bunch of little ones.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Terms of contraband within jails which—*[interjection]*—good, doesn't require a shift. Can I just get an update on the number of incidents that have happened either within the contexts of the year or the fiscal year, however the department tracks it. Oh, it did require a shift. Thought I was okay.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm just wondering if the member could repeat his question, just as we've got the new staff here.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, of course. Just in terms of contraband incidents within the correctional system,

how many times contraband—I know that that's defined widely; it's not just drugs, but how many incidents there have been in 2015.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I have the numbers. I have—2012, we had 486 incidents; 2013, we had 431; and 2014, we had 418, which was a continual decline. I don't have the latest numbers here at this table, so we can make inquiries to get that and provide it to the member.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member and—the minister and his staff on that.

Does he have anything that reaches further back than that, or did the department track this in 2000, for example?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** We'd have to go back and ask that question. I think I may have asked that and I think it would require—as I recall, I don't think that number was around. We'll look to see if it's easily acquirable or not and let the member know.

**Mr. Goertzen:** In terms of critical incidents that happened within the correctional centre, and I know that's also defined broadly but I think that's the term that's used, can you provide the update on the number of critical incidents that happened within the correctional centres? If he has the breakdown by institution, that would be great as well.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, we can look to see what we have in terms of any breakdown. Looks like there may have been a FIPPA request, and I don't know if the answer is there or not or if it's in the works. We'll look to see; it may be that there has been a FIPPA put together that has that information. I'll let the member know.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, I mean, and regardless if there's a FIPPA—and I don't know, maybe it was our staff who did it, maybe it isn't. They're very independent staff, so that's good. But if—regardless, if we could just get the results of that, that'd be helpful.

Questions—a few brief questions on the issue of cameras on police. Has the department examined that? I mean, is it left completely to the Police Commission on that determination or has Justice itself done an analysis on the issue and whether they'd like to move towards having cameras on police officers?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** We've—this really requires some discussion about where the demand or the interest in police-worn body cameras comes from, and it is in large part from what south of the border I've

repeatedly heard referred to as a crisis in policing. And we're really talking about situations like at Ferguson where there has been a lack of confidence in policing and allegations of bias.

And, as a result, a lot of American jurisdictions and including some states have looked at police-worn body cameras as the answer. In other words, interest in police-worn body cameras isn't driven as much by an interest in stronger evidence collecting but repelling allegations of wrongdoing or bias on the part of police officers.

The other observation we have to make about police wearing body cameras is that the challenge is not about the purchase of the cameras themselves. They're very cheap and, in fact, some companies are prepared to almost give them for free. It's the storage of the information and what to do with that information once it's in the hands of the public authorities. And, in fact, in Seattle, there was a major crisis when the television station and an individual, I don't know what their term is, but FIPPA'd the—all of the footage related to interactions between police and citizens of that city. And so there was no way to really manage that, and now efforts are under way south of the border to figure out what to do with the information.

Of course, we're talking about an enormous amount of information and a lot of questions about how, then, the information is not only managed, but how should police deal with these cameras. For example, what if someone asks them to turn the camera off? What do you do about informants? So those are all issues that are being looked at. There are some police forces that have sent a very strong message that if there's going to be any move in this direction it has to be done very, very carefully. And I think there's a lot of concern on the part of the officers, like, even, you know, going to the washroom, for example. But the storage of the information is really the serious challenge that has to be managed.

So here in—I have a very real interest in the police wearing body cameras and the usefulness of them both in evidence collecting and transparency for the general public. I've heard anecdotes of how that actually just helps behaviour on both sides of the camera. I've heard from reports from the US. Some jurisdictions in the US have required police wearing body cameras right across all police forces in the state. I think it was Louisiana. And then you have others that are working much more closely with the

police forces to develop pilots and to make sure there's a comfort level and that there is strong protocols to guide their deployment.

So here in Manitoba, as a result of my interest in this one, I met with Rick Linden of—the chair of the Manitoba Police Commission, and I asked if he would be interested in providing some guidance on how that could be at least piloted in a limited way in Manitoba with a view to introducing, at least, to the law enforcement community and how there could be checks and balances and the issue of information management dealt with. At the same time, I understand the Winnipeg Police Board is interested in a pilot there as well, and I understand—*[interjection]*—and the RCMP nationally are doing a study, as well, for an application this side of the border.

So I think it's a very live issue and I think it's one that has good potential. I think that is the future. It's just a matter of getting it right and not undermining good law enforcement and recognizing, as well, that in Canada there's a very different accountability approach. For example, here in Manitoba, we have the IIU for one, but we also have LERA. We have the Police Commission model here now, a lot of advances that some American counterparts have said they were very jealous about. So police wearing body cameras in the absence of those accountability measures certainly would be much more supportable, but at the same time, I do think there's a value in terms of evidence gathering, and I have a particular interest in the area of domestic violence.

So I think that we could try something like that here in Manitoba, but we'll—I think it's important to do it on a pilot basis with the full participation of the police force and the respective commission. So if Winnipeg moves in this direction, I certainly would be prepared to work with the Manitoba Police Commission and develop that as a pilot that could help to guide its expanded use down the road. I look forward to meeting with the Winnipeg Police Board in the weeks ahead. I think we've got a meeting coming up, and it's an issue that I'll put on the agenda with them just to make sure we're all co-ordinated and we're all moving along together with both the Justice Department, the board and the Manitoba Police Commission.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the minister for the response. I mean, I agree and I heard one of the other committee members say, you know, there's nothing easy about some of these decisions, and I don't

disagree with that. I—you know, in looking at the issue, some of the concerns I would have, obvious here, are, you know, police.

We think of the issues that happen in the States, whether it's Ferguson or others, but there are many times, most times, 99.9 per cent of the time, where police are doing other things, they're talking to potential witnesses, they're dealing with members of the public, and I know that there's often times when those are—people are giving information to the police who might not necessarily feel comfortable if they're on camera, and what impact does that have on them.

And so I understand that this is—it's complex, nor do I think it's a good idea to sort of question police in slow motion. You know, that's one thing when you're watching a football game, when you question a receiver on five different replays at super slow motion, that they didn't catch the ball, but the police are reacting in real time to instances. And I think we have to be careful not to question everything they do as though it's a replay in a football game, because that's not—the importance is much different, and the reality of what they're dealing with is much different.

Having said that, I do think that there is, and the minister is indicating, some willingness on law enforcement in Manitoba to at least explore the issue with all of those cautions in mind.

Can he be a bit more clear just in terms of when this pilot with Winnipeg police might be taking place, and in what fashion that would be? Would it be with a limited number of officers, which I'm assuming, and maybe a particular unit? Is that the expectation?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, I can only speak directly to my conversation I had with the Manitoba Police Commission and in canvassing their interest and describing my interest in seeing Manitoba provide some leadership in Canada on police-worn body cameras and doing so in a way that is sure-footed.

But, when it comes to Winnipeg Police Service and whether they would be a part of a pilot, that will depend on Winnipeg Police Service and the discussions with the Winnipeg Police Association, the City of Winnipeg and the—well, by the police board itself.

So I was just heartened to hear that the police board had that interest. It just sort of coincided with my interest in trying something in Manitoba, and if we could do it with Winnipeg, I think that would be

great. But again, we have to have people in the room on this.

You know, I've heard all the different kinds of experiences. I heard one experience, for example, where the police went into a dwelling, and a fellow was shot by police, and immediately there were allegations that it was racially motivated. And I think all heck was going to break loose. The police were able to immediately release police-worn body camera tapes that showed that the individual who was shot was just about ready to plunge a knife into a woman on the floor of the dwelling. And that got rid of the—what would have—what could have been a riot in that particular community.

So that's—I think that's an example of how useful that might be. On the other hand, I did hear of the potential challenges if the information—if the footage is not carefully managed.

We have outfits for example, like Taser, that have applications where—when—if a Taser is deployed, first of all, you could have a taping. But as well, they're in the business of police-worn body cameras as well.

But I know these companies—and one has to be careful. These companies are very keen to do business with law enforcement and governments all across North America and beyond, and they're willing to make a deal in terms of the management of the information, so how that would work would really require some analysis. So that's why I think Professor Linden could be very helpful, and if Winnipeg wants to talk about this, the timing really works.

So we'll see where this can go, but I don't think this is a technology that we should ignore. I think it's one that can go to work for the general public, one that can go to work for stronger evidence gathering, and I'm particularly keen to see this when it comes to domestic violence where you really are compelled to look for as much independent evidence as possible so that the victim need not testify.

So, at the same time, we've, you know, provided, you know, hand-held cameras for domestic violence situations. But this could provide a whole 'nother' great opportunity in law enforcement.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Just while we're talking about the issue of policing, can the minister provide a—an update on the current complement of sworn officers at WPS, and also cadets if they're going through that information?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'll just provide officers that aren't funded through MPI, for example, or to support civilian positions and—because we have some of those now for the disclosure unit, and I'll deal with the cadets after.

The current authorized complement for WPS is 1,450. The Province has approved \$14,514,000—'15-16—to partially fund 40 officers and to—that's partial funding—and fully fund 133 officers. That includes three for the flight support unit and three for the integrated warrant apprehension unit.

I'm advised that the current complement of cadets is 60.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I believe that during the 2000 election campaign, not that I'm looking to refight that campaign, that the commitment by the NDP was to add 50 more police officers for Winnipeg and 25 more cadets for Winnipeg as well.

Can the minister just confirm that commitment and whether that commitment's been fulfilled?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, the commitment was 50 more officers, and we're now at the equivalent of, what, 23, and so now the discussions with the City are in light of their request that we not add more officers. We have entered into discussions to conclude an arrangement whereby the election commitment is delivered in ways that meet both their five-year plan and our objectives. In other words, the City has requested that the election commitment not be implemented as enunciated during the campaign.

So what we need to do is—and we've had these discussions, actually, and I've had the discussions and staff have all had the discussions, and the view is to conclude an arrangement that meets everyone's mutual needs in light of their different shift in policing priorities in the next short while because we want to get this completed.

Just to conclude, this will be also one of the discussions that I have when I meet with the Winnipeg Police Board, but the interest of the Winnipeg Police Service now is not in officers so much as in crime analysis and smart policing, and they have a different approach. They do not have an interest in just adding more to the complement. They want to do a different style of policing which really has emerged since the election. So that works for us; that's fine. We'll see how we can complement those efforts. We had a presentation on their Smart

Policing Initiative, and I'm entirely heartened by this effort. This is a different approach that is gaining momentum, not just here in Winnipeg but in other jurisdictions across the continent, and we're keen to partner with Winnipeg to help to deliver on that.

Our investments in the disclosure unit help our priorities as well in terms of swifter justice. Our investments that we can make with the City in analysis is also smart justice, and we want to help them. Their multi-year plan is a very good plan. When I read it I thought this really is in sync with where we have to go. It's really about hot-spot policing now. It's about data analysis, looking at the types of offences, where they occur, time of day, and then a deployment based on that one, and also involving a different way of officers having more control over their own beat.

So we want to make it work for them and for us. I've seen numbers as a result of their Smart Policing Initiative which really has been focused in the St. Boniface area and the decrease in crime is quite astounding.

I might add that I think that, I mean, we've seen a 41 per cent decrease in crime severity over the last decade in Manitoba, and some will say, well, that's happened other places. Well, actually, Manitoba has led the country in the decrease in crime severity. I think a big piece of that is the strong work of police and a move to a more analytical-driven policing.

And, of course, our reduction in auto theft, which was a partnership with Winnipeg police and MPI, I think, is another big piece of that. But we've got to continue this trend, and the way to do it is by a data-driven approach to policing deployment. It's being proven all across North America.

I've seen these different trends, you know, when I was here before. It was community-based policing and cops on the beat, walking around, having some ownership of their district, and that was working in places like New York and, as well, coupled with what they were called—it was called broken windows policing. I think that those approaches are part of the new Smart Policing Initiative. It actually is called SPI, and what we're seeing, the add-on, though, of other data-driven components, and I met with the data analyst, the lead at the City of Winnipeg, and I was amazed at how they were crunching the numbers to actually have what they call predictive policing based on patterns of crime outbreaks. So I think we're into a new era that we want to be a part of and

we'll use the election commitment to help to achieve that.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think sometimes the longer the answer the less comfortable the minister is, I think. It would seem to be a bit of a tell, but not. It's an odd thing obviously that, you know, the minister—government, not the minister—the government, the NDP made a commitment to one thing and now they're indicating that, I guess, they didn't research the commitment that they made in 2011 for 50 officers because the police don't really want it now and it's changed.

But moving on to that, the second part of that question was about the cadets, and there was a commitment of 25 more cadets, and I think probably the minister forgot about that portion of the one I'd asked. So has that commitment been fulfilled, the 25 additional cadets?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, that commitment has been—we've committed up to 75 and we've provided the funding. The challenge has been with the City of Winnipeg to fill those positions. It was great to go to a graduation, but they've had problems of I don't think retention so much as—or not as much recruitment so much as retention, and it's maybe not that bad of a story except for the complement. But these individuals are getting experience on the street and are getting promotions and getting other opportunities in law enforcement not just here, unfortunately, but sometimes here. So we're good on that commitment but we do want to see those positions filled and will have a discussion with the police board about what opportunity—you know, is there any way we can help them in that regard. I don't know, I think it really is a human resource issue and—but what a great way to enter the area of law enforcement.

By the way, that commitment that was made in the election remains just as strong for the City as it is for the Province. With regard to the officers, at the time the commitment was made that was the state of play. There was hope and expectation that there should be an emphasis on more officers. But leadership has changed, policing methods have changed at the City and so there's a different shift and we have to respect that. We can't just put money in the budget for more officers and they're not going to have any take up of them—and they don't want—if they don't want them.

But now, I'll just add as a footnote, what we're seeing all across the United States—and now it's



coming into Canada and we want to be there—is this notion of justice reinvestment where we're moving money from—through traditional policing to data-driven policing and, you know, analytical approaches as well as community mobilization based on the model that we have called Block by Block.

But it was really born and raised in the province of Saskatchewan next door where we get into more preventative proactive work and envelope families that are at risk of criminal activity and other challenges with, you know, co-ordinating efforts across social service agencies and justice and police officials. So we're going to see, I think, a growth of that Block by Block—or community mobilization effort. It's not just block by block in William Whyte area, it's also in the city of Brandon.

So that's—those are big initiatives, and the other is with regard to justice reinvestment. We're—it's absolutely critical that we begin to shift from low-end, low-risk, particularly first-time offenders to serious repeat violent offenders.

We have a violent crime rate that we have got to beat down, you know, despite our efforts on crime severity. But we have got to put those resources where they're needed most and—so we are advancing our efforts through the Innovations branch towards this need for justice reinvestment and, you know, looking at the remand populations that, you know, people that are in the Remand Centre for a week or two and what are the barriers to guarding against that? Is it just a processing or are there some that just have to be there? And so that's what we're doing now.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Goertzen:** The minister indicated, you know, things change after an election. We've heard that with the PST; things change, so we had to bring the PST even though we said one thing.

And, you know, policing officer commitment now, that changes. And so I guess change is the constant. But he mentioned that they were good to go on the—*[interjection]* And I can hear one of the members saying—defending the PST increase. That's good; keep doing that. Just keep doing that. That's wonderful.

The minister indicated they were good to go on the cadet issue, and he'd said that there was up to 75, so but he didn't tell me what the number of current cadets are. So I'm assuming that the current number is 75?

**An Honourable Member:** Sixty, and funding for 75.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Oh. So that commitment hasn't been met either, then?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, the Province's commitment is the funding and that's what we can provide. The bodies, the city has to provide. And so we're good for the 75. The city is up to 60 and I sure hope they can get to 75 as soon as possible.

**Mr. Goertzen:** We'll look back at the platform and see if that was the commitment.

The—we're probably running a little short of time for today. We'll have tomorrow to continue on, but the—I just want to talk a little bit about outstanding warrants. Can the minister provide an update in terms of how many outstanding warrants there are in the province? We've heard different estimates that range between 15 and 20—some thousand. Is there a more current number that the minister can provide?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised that there's been almost 2,500 arrests and almost 3,500 warrants have been executed of individuals with outstanding warrants. But I believe the member was asking about outstanding warrants today, and I'm advised that that's not a number that law enforcement tabulates collectively, but we can make further inquiries in that regard. But that's information I have with me today.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is that because that—it isn't available to be tabulated in that way or there's just a decision that it's not going to be tabulated in that way?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I'm advised, and I assume in part because the number changes even throughout a day, but it's not a number that, collectively, law enforcement provides to us. They don't tabulate it that way.

**Mr. Goertzen:** It was prior to the 2011 election, although sometimes these elections blend into one another, but I—pretty sure it was before 2011 that legislation was passed. It was initially initialized by the opposition. I think the government took on the initiative to prevent individuals with outstanding warrants from collecting EI or for collecting—sorry; welfare payments, not EI.

Now, I understand that the operational side of that is not within your department but obviously there would be inquiries to the department about whether or not individuals have outstanding warrants. How many inquiries have come to the department from the department responsible within

government as to indicate whether or not welfare payments should be suspended while there's an outstanding warrant?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, I'm advised that the connection with EIA is between the Warrant Enforcement Unit and the EIA directly. In other words, Justice is not an intermediary in that relationship. So the police have direct access. That's an effective way of doing it.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I assume the minister has an interest, though, in this issue. I mean, is there no inquiry? He doesn't know the legislation was passed. He has no idea whether individuals who have outstanding warrants, as the law now allows, are not collecting EIA. Has there not been any discussion between the department and the outstanding warrants branch?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Yes, my—it's my understanding that EIA would have that information, or I assume that that would be information that they would have control over.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Would it concern the minister, being the Attorney General, and the issue, of course, the legislation was tied to the desire to get people to deal with their outstanding warrants and not provide them funds to essentially void their outstanding warrants, that there's been none, that there's been no suspensions of EIA for outstanding warrants? Would that concern the minister if that was the case?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, the policy change was one that I certainly supported as a member of the government and I think it's laudable, and we can make inquiries to determine the status of that initiative. But I—you know, the member could get it directly from the organization that has the information. But we can make inquiries. But I'm—I've been assured that there is a—there's an active exchange of information and that actions are based on information that comes from law enforcement.

And I might just want to give credit to where credit's due, and that is the department did set up the protocol as between the Warrant Enforcement Unit and EIA, which I think is a good way to make this work. But in terms of any numbers, you know, we can make inquiries, but, again, that can be obtained by the minister directly.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I am a little confused, though, because I think a couple answers ago the minister said they—he really didn't have anything to do with it. And then this answer he said there was an active

exchange going on that he was aware of and that the department set up the protocol.

Maybe he could just tell us, you know, what information he has in terms of how this initiative that the government, I think some would say reluctantly went into, is working out. There never has been an inquiry from Justice in terms of what impact this is having on outstanding warrants which might range in the number of 15 to 20 thousand, whether or not this has reduced it at all or had any sort of impact?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, the protocol that was developed between the Warrant Enforcement Unit and the EIA, I understand, was based on the notion that it's the Warrant Enforcement Unit that knows its business best and knows when the tool of withholding EIA payments would work for the—for their objectives. So that's my understanding as to what was behind linking the Warrant Enforcement Unit directly with EIA.

And I'm advised, as well, that the link with EIA can be helpful to the Warrant Enforcement Unit in identifying the whereabouts of some that are look—are being looked for. So—but I can make further inquiries with regard to the member's question.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, I mean, I'd be interested in the further inquiries. I think the last information that we had, which might go back three or four months, is that there hadn't been any, that in the, I'm going to assume, three or four years that the legislation has been in place though it might not have been proclaimed right away after it passed the House, that there hasn't been one suspension of EIA as a result of an outstanding warrant. Now, the minister, not to guess what his response would be, he might say, well, that's proof that it's working. I think it would be difficult to convince anybody that, whether it's 15 or potentially 20 thousand outstanding warrants—I'll go with that number because the minister can't provide anything different—that there's not one individual in those 15 or 20 thousand outstanding warrants that isn't both receiving EIA and wouldn't be someone who probably shouldn't be paid to try to avoid their warrant.

And it just seems strange to me that a government that seemed reluctant to pass the legislation initially, even though the minister says he supported the initiative, it wasn't in—it wasn't an initiative that the government trumpeted loudly, I can assure him of that. But in the years subsequent, far as we know,

on the most recent information we have, there hasn't been one. Would that concern the minister at all, that this is a—either a failed initiative or maybe an initiative of the government that they never really had any appetite for and so haven't done much with?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, we'll make the, you know, the inquiries if the member chooses not to go directly to the EIA sources or minister, but we'll make inquiries to determine what the status is. But staff have also said that they are aware of instances where warrants are just dealt with rather than have their EIA suspended. So, in other words, it's a hammer, if you will; it's a tool to have the warrants dealt with. So there may be some numbers there as well, but we'll certainly make some inquiries.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I look forward to the response. I mean, that is where we got the information from, that there hadn't been any actual payments withheld, and I just find it's difficult in the absence of knowing the outstanding number of warrants, which we'll assume again is between 15 and 20 thousand, that there hasn't been any that have warranted, to use the term, the suspension of EIA. So I find that difficult. The minister will provide more information, hopefully, tomorrow.

I have a couple of questions in the few minutes that we have remaining for today's session on the issue of recidivism. The government changed the definition of recidivism, as he'll know, from the previous definition where one was considered a recidivist—I believe that's the right word and if I'm making a word up, then he'll forgive me—if they were charged with an offence within two years after being released from a correctional centre in Manitoba. They changed it from that definition to an individual be considered a recidivist if they're convicted within two years after being released. And, of course, I think the Auditor General pointed out, in a report last year, that this has all sorts of consequences because of the slow nature of the court system and, in fact, one could suggest it provides an incentive, not that I suggest it's happening, but, you know, that there might be an incentive to slow things down, actually, to drive down recidivist—recidivism numbers. I'm not suggesting that that's the case, but it certainly plays into the question of how we measure recidivism.

Can the minister clarify for me, if an individual is released from a correctional centre in Manitoba, and let's assume that they are charged with an offence one year after and they go into remand at the Remand Centre or Headingley or wherever else

remand is being held, and they're still in remand at that two-year period, would they be considered somebody who is—would they be considered somebody who has reoffended? Would they fall under that recidivism number if they were in remand?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The measure of recidivism is really a mess across the country and beyond. Everyone uses a different measure, so there's been real effort to try and get everyone on the same page with the same measure, and the measure that actually does look at reoffending.

So before 2012, as the member has said, recidivism was measured by the number of incidents of alleged reinvolvement which—that was real misleading then because it was based on charges. And since 2012 there's been the calculation based on convictions.

So when the OAG you looked at this one in 2014 a number of changes were recommended. I don't have to go through them again, I assume that the member knows that. But not only is there a need to move to a common definition and one that really does look at reinvolvement, but look at not just a two-year measure, but a three- and a five-year measure for example, and, as well look, at separate rates for low-, medium- and high- and very-risk-high offenders—high-risk offenders. So that is the task at hand now.

Well—and perhaps the member doesn't want to get into the other issues around the measure of recidivism, but to answer a specific question, then, because the measure of recidivism now is based on convictions, a person on remand that is under charge only and not conviction would not be measured with that. And that—if he's convicted, that'll show up. And if it's outside of a two-year period, then we want to catch that in a three- and five-year period.

And I don't even—why did they call it recidivism? What's wrong with relapse or reinvolvement? But anyway.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, you've changed how the definition is measured, you might as well change the term of the definition. I'm fine with that.

No, I mean, I think, you know, in terms of how information is provided, my concern is that it's about providing the public some sort of measurement of what's happening. And I think the example of somebody not being considered, having reoffended or being recidivist, when they've come out of a correctional institution in Manitoba, whether it's the

Youth Centre or an adult facility, and they are charged within that two-year window, and they appear before a judge and the judge makes the determination that there's enough of a risk with that individual they shouldn't be released, they should be remanded into custody. And so they're put into custody, but because the system is so slow, within those two years they don't appear as somebody that has reoffended. In fact, it looks to the public on that one individual case that that's a success. Even though a judge has indicated they're such a risk that they're not even going to release them and they're sitting in remand. They're sitting in Headingley or they're sitting in whatever other remand centre across the street, I think it's misleading. I think the number becomes sort of meaningless if all of those—and, you know, we'll get into this tomorrow, that 70 per cent of the population in our jails are on remand. And so there's a reason why they're there.

I just find that the change of the definition to not even include somebody who is incarcerated after that two-year window is a false number. I mean, I think it's very misleading—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Sorry for the interruption, but the hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

### CONSERVATION AND WATER STEWARDSHIP

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Chairperson (Jim Maloway):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** I believe we left with a—the minister was actually just starting to conclude an answer, so I'd like to give the minister the opportunity to conclude that response.

**Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship):** That was days ago, it seems. I wonder if the member opposite would indulge me and possibly repeat the question, please.

**Mr. Martin:** Mr. Chair, we were on the—not surprisingly—we were on the subject of zebra mussels. One of the—the question had to do—I believe

the minister had indicated that he—that it takes the viewing of an advertisement 17 times before it changes behaviour. And I will agree that, yes, it does take a long time to change the individual's behaviour. And part of that is the whole Don't Move a Mussel campaign initiated by the government to help engage citizens and boaters, both recreation and commercial, and anyone else with an interest in our waterways to be part of the containment of zebra mussels. And I'd ask the minister when the government began its advertising campaign, its Don't Move a Mussel advertising campaign, and the budget allocated towards that advertising campaign.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** I thank the member for the question and the question in the House today because it did give us the opportunity to put on the record that the amendment to aquatic invasive species to The Water Protection Act was proclaimed today. I think that's the good news here and, you know, I know they would think that it should have been proclaimed sooner. However, they did have a role to play in that regard given the whole spring session, as we recall, I think, almost historic in that the budget itself didn't pass at the end of the—of that particular component of this session. But it also delayed passage of the act in itself very close to the end of June, as I recall it was. And following that, obviously, the department had to enter into a comprehensive process of consulting with the public, you know, and the public is a wide-ranging entity in itself. It includes First Nations people; it includes commercial fishers as well as recreational fishers; it includes municipalities; and on and on and on.

\* (15:00)

So, you know, we take that responsibility very seriously in terms of drafting effective regulations that are not overly onerous if it can be avoided on the public at large. This was a process, given the delay of the passage of the act, that we entered into in the months of July and August, quite frankly, when a great number of people are not so easy to find. They're out at their cottages or what have you. So, nonetheless, we followed through with that, and after much deliberation the regulations which are fundamental to the amendment to The Water Protection Act in itself were put into effect with the proclamation of the act today.

So I thank the member for allowing me the opportunity in the House today during question period to put that information on the record because it's important that Manitobans at large know this, are

aware of this, because the whole struggle against invasive species—struggle, which I might add, it seemed their minister of the Environment, Glen Cummings, more than 20 years ago had effectively given up on.

You know, we're not prepared to do that. You know, combatting invasive species is a complex thing. Obviously, you've got Lake Winnipeg and the Red River which drains the entire Red River Basin which goes off into the United States and then north up the Nelson across all of our hydro dams. This is a very large, complex, multifaceted waterway which now has the presence of zebra mussels which, you know, as I said, were in the Red River Basin years ago. Trying to, frankly, stop them from coming, given that each zebra mussel produces in excess of a million eggs that hatch out into what are known as veligers, that they can, I believe, grow to adulthood, each of those zebra mussels, and then reproduce themselves at that same rate—do the math. And considering that these veligers are invisible, stopping them coming up the Red, you know, I think I would acknowledge was a difficult, frankly, impossible task.

However, preventing that spread elsewhere in the province is a possibility, given that, you know, most of these other waterways are not connected to that particular flow stream, and I look to—you don't have to look far in Manitoba. In my own constituency just 60 miles or more to the west of Lake Winnipeg is Lake Manitoba that is so far free and, hopefully, we can keep it that way. You know, unfortunately, they've spread into Cedar Lake now, which is in essence upstream and I fear, you know, for the lakes further to the north and west of that. You know, so the challenge is there to prevent the spread; the other challenge being mitigation, obviously, for areas that are infested now.

So communication is fundamental to this. That's the whole idea behind the Don't Move a Mussel public relations campaign. It's, you know, communication in this regard has been in play for a great number of years now in Manitoba. I know—I believe in the year 2000 it was that the whole communications program within the department really kicked off and that wasn't specific, I don't think to just zebra mussels, but to discuss all the other different types of invasive species as well, which are many, I might add.

So that program, you know, has been in play for 15 or so years, and going up into this particular

budget cycle, 2015-16, I believe the budget for the advertising program itself was in the range of \$90,000.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Martin:** Well, I appreciate the member—or the minister for that long and extensive answer of—to confirm that the campaign started in 2015 at a cost of approximately \$90,000. I think the minister gives myself and my colleagues a little too much credit when he says that the six-year delay in implementing zebra mussel or invasive species legislation was the result of my and my colleagues' efforts in the House and will point out to the minister that there was law once on the books that said you couldn't raise the PST without a referendum and nothing stopped the government from doing that. So there is—where there is a—apparently with this government where this is a will there is a way, and so the government could've long ago passed legislation to do with this, in fact, could've passed it some six years ago.

It's interesting to hear the minister talk about the lakes and whether or not they are or are not a lost cause. I note the minister in the Interlake Spectator on October 15th said that it is not reversible. So I am wondering why—or where the minister—I'm sorry—can the minister provide some cost implications in terms of the infestation of zebra mussels? Surely, his department has done some analysis. I believe for the Great Lakes the cost on—the cost to the economy in terms of cleaning municipal infrastructure in drains and pipes is something along the lines of \$250 million a year. I'm wondering if the minister has undertaken any similar analysis to see what the cost implications are with the infestation.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Mr. Chair, if I'm belaboring the member opposite with long and extensive answers, I do apologize for that, but this is a complex and challenging issue. And getting all the information on the record and having a fulsome debate on it, I think, is important in terms of reaching a solution and, you know, I would hope we could do it without politicization of the event, you know. All of us together have to try and get the message out to our 57 respective constituencies that, you know, we have a problem here and that it's inherent upon each and every one of us to act accordingly to prevent the spread.

We're not going to do it in a punitive manner. We're not going to have, you know, decontamination units at each and every point on each and every lake or even each and every border crossing for that

matter. There are, I think, 25 to 28 border crossings into Manitoba. There are some 80,000 boats in the province of Manitoba. The challenge is monumental so we do need to communicate as best we can.

\*(15:10)

Now, in terms of how much money we've spent on this project, well, last year, for instance, the—my predecessor, now the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), took a very bold stance I think in trying to address the original discovery of zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg. And those were in some of the best-known harbours in essence around Gimli there, and the point is that the zebra mussels were discovered there but I—as I understand it, were not yet in the channel of the Red River in Manitoba yet, so hadn't been in—detected in the river but were found in the lake, meaning that it is highly likely that they were brought in by a boat and that possibly they could be eradicated and contained within those harbours. That was the essence of the undertaking there, which was, as I said, a brave attempt and well worth doing if it could have eradicated them for that period of time, anyways. As I'd said earlier, given their presence in the Red River basin, you know, coming up the Red River is inevitable, ultimately, but if you can delay that for a period of years, and I think our emphasis on communication going back 15 years is a good example of good work to delay, then that's worth endeavouring to do.

Now, the potash treatment ultimately wasn't successful in that veligers had spread into the main body of the lake. But the experiment in itself and getting that knowledge, I think, is what really matters here and was well worth the effort because we can project that elsewhere if necessary. And by monitoring in other lakes, you know, if we detected a zebra mussel in a—the immediate area of a harbour, that might be—that knowledge might be applied there as well. So, you know, I know the members opposite have been highly critical and scornful of that action, but I think it was a worthy endeavour. And rather than politicize it and try and, you know, cast aspersions on my predecessor, I think he should be recognized for undertaking that effort.

Now, in terms of Lake Winnipeg itself, the member is correct. This infestation will have impacts on infrastructure, and it's my understanding that the federal government, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which plays a considerable role in our province—we're not alone in this struggle—that the federal government has undertaken a study of

just that on Lake Winnipeg. So we will work in conjunction with our federal counterparts to strategize and obviously be in communication with First Nations or fisher associations or municipalities or the AMM itself going forward in the days to years to come in order to address this as we approach it. This is with us now. This will be an ongoing effort in the days and years to come.

Of course, as I mentioned earlier, in this particular infected stream from the Red, Lake Winnipeg to the Nelson are all these massive hydroelectric projects that have cost the people of Manitoba billions of dollars to put into place and that generate huge revenues for the people of Manitoba as well. Obviously, their infrastructure is in line, and it's my understanding that Manitoba Hydro, as well, is undertaking its own studies. So, you know, obviously, the department and the government at large will be in communication with the Crown corporation. Thank goodness it is a Crown corporation and will remain so as long as we have say over that. But we will communicate with them as to the best way to mitigate damage there.

Within the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship itself, you know, we have domain over the fishery. Obviously, that is one of our primary concerns, to work with the commercial fishers. Lake Winnipeg is very important to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, to Manitobans. We produce the vast majority of fish generated for that corporation, and this fishery is now being challenged by this particular invasive species, as has other fisheries elsewhere, a good case in point being Lake Erie in Ontario, and the result of their more than two decades of experience is that there will be changes. It's not going to destroy the fishery, but there will be changes inherent with it, and we will have to adapt to those changes accordingly, but we will do our utmost to do so in an effective manner as is possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the minister's confirmation, then, that they've—that his department has undertaken zero studies despite the concern that he talks about in terms of the—this invasive species, and been first identified in the Red River basin going back to 2009, and is leaving it to federal Fisheries and Oceans as well as Manitoba Hydro to do that work for his department.

Going back to a comment the minister made the other day, the minister referenced that in 2014-15 is

when they first created a separate budget line to deal with this issue in the amount of \$120,000, and with that money, the minister indicated it was to consign a zebra mussel expert, as well as two individual inspectors were hired to operate the equipment, according to the minister.

I'm wondering if that individual was on the job without pause during that—during the time frame of that initial hiring.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Well, the member opposite's suggestion that zero studies have occurred within the department is a little facetious, and I think he must realize that. We have an entire division, wildlife and fisheries, now that focuses their combined resources on the various different challenges that we face.

But I will make specific reference to Ms. Candace Parks, who is present with us at the table here. She is a zebra mussel expert and was working with us as far back as 2009, I believe, on a part-time basis, and then had—wasn't with us for a period of time for personal reasons, but in 2013 came back to the department in a full-time capacity, focusing exclusively on aquatic invasive species. So I would certainly characterize her work and the work of her cohorts within the department as studying the issue.

However, this is not a challenge that is unique to Manitoba. I repeat once again, aquatic invasive species span the entire the world and number in the hundreds, if probably not the thousands, of different types of species. Scientists have been studying this challenge for decades or more, so we're not going to put our finite resources into reinventing the wheel here and starting from the ground floor. We will capitalize on information garnered by esteemed scientists elsewhere across the world going back decades or more. Why would we not do that? That's just efficient use of resources, and as the member well knows, we're—resources are not finite within the government or within the department. We're—you know, the debate on finances I'll leave to other ministers; the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar) would be more likely to go down that path.

But I know that within our department we have—we are allocated so much money and we want to use it to the best of our abilities. So we work with other jurisdictions, other governments, other scientists, with our own scientists within the province, a great number of them whom are now on our scientific advisory committee, working in conjunction with our

departmental staff to do the utmost to do the best job that we can, and that's certainly what is under way as we speak now. And, of course, with the proclamation of the act and the implementation of all the regulations at this point, you know, our position is strengthened, but, again, it's worth repeating that we need the co-operation of people, and focusing on education and dissemination of that through communication out to the general public is what's most important now, particularly as we enter into a period of freeze-up, which will be with us for many months to come, in preparation for the coming thaw next spring.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Martin:** The minister advised that their specialist was unavailable to personal reasons, and those reasons should remain personal. I'm looking for time frames from the minister. When did the specialist vacate, on a temporary basis, the position? What date, and what date did they return, and in that absence, was that position filled by another individual, and can the minister identify whom that individual was?

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** As to the dates and the reason why Candace wasn't present over the entire period of time, I'm going to take that under advisement so that, you know, staff can have a discussion regarding the reason for that.

But I would just like to assure the member opposite that even in her absence that does not decapitate the department from a scientific perspective. As much appreciated as she is, still there are a great many individuals within the department, many of them with their Ph.D., I'm sure, that are experts as well.

And, even though the dedicated specialist for this particular field, for personal reasons, had to absent herself for a period of time does not mean that the rest of the department just threw up its hands and did nothing, because I assure the member opposite that's not the case. We have a great many people within the department all dedicated, all communicating with each other on a wide range of challenges not just this particular topic of the day.

That's the essence of bureaucracy. That's the nature of an effective, an efficient bureaucracy and that's how I, with my limited experience as the minister of this department, would describe it.

The people that I have gotten to know over the last five or six months have impressed me

immensely and I have complete faith in all of them, from the deputy minister down to, you know, the people in the field, that they are doing an effective job in garnering information from the various different stakeholders, from working with scientists, with working with, you know, people like the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium and so forth. All of these assets combined are working together; it does not hinge on the presence or absence of one individual, as highly valued as she is.

So, you know, as I said, the time frame we take under advisement, but I just want to assure the member opposite that this is a collective effort, collective within the department and, once again, collective, hopefully, in the minds of all Manitobans who have to bear a collective responsibility to deal with aquatic invasive species effectively.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Martin:** So I appreciate the minister indicating that that information will be forthcoming.

Just to clarify, the reasons for the leave are not what I'm seeking. I was just simply—the time frame that this individual was absent, not the reasons for the absence. And I appreciate the minister advising that the individual—that that position was not filled by any—sorry—was not filled during that absence.

I note that the minister, in defending the fact that they've left to the federal Fisheries and Oceans to study the impact of zebra mussels—I mean, it doesn't take much to know that we're obviously going to have a significant problem with the clogged water-intake pipes. Obviously, the impact on the ecosystem is going to be significant, including toxic blue-green algae, and then the impact on some fish species as water clarity increases and then, obviously, sunlight reaching through the water also increases.

The minister indicated that his department has undertaken studies. I'm wondering if the minister is—can table those reports at tomorrow's resumption of Estimates.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Well, I'll—I have some clarification. Between '09 and '13, the years that—in question here, Candace left us three times for reasons which I'm not going into and the member opposite is not asking those reasons and there's nothing unusual about them. But twice in the three times that she absented, her position, in fact, was filled. If I led the member to believe otherwise, I apologize.

I've been told just now that an individual by the name of Justin Shead, S-h-e-a-d, I believe is the correct spelling of the surname, that that individual, in fact, did step in to pick up her specific duties. And that individual, in fact, remains with the department. So that's even better news for us.

And the third time, as I'd referred to earlier, again, we mustered the more-than-capable resources of the department itself to do the work of the individual because, once again, it's a collective. It's not a case of individuals. We all work together and, once again, work with the information at hand, of which there is an extensive amount, given the impact of zebra mussels, in particular, goes back decades in other jurisdictions as I'd mentioned already.

So, you know, is the member opposite, is he suggesting that we reinvent the wheel here and go back to square one and start all our—the studies ourselves? I doubt that that's what he's suggesting here. I certainly hope not. So when you look at experiences elsewhere, in particular, challenges faced with infrastructure, clogged pipes and so forth, you know, why would we not go to the government of Ontario, for instance, or why would Manitoba Hydro not go to the government of Ontario and engage in a dialogue with them and an interchange of information which is, in fact, what's happening here.

So, you know, I'm satisfied that a wide range of players is doing their utmost to address these challenges and, you know, we'll continue to orchestrate that at the departmental level and observe it and participate in it to the best of our abilities.

The member made reference to water clarity and sunlight penetration and algae and so forth, he is correct. These—this particular aquatic invasive species, zebra mussels, does have that effect. It eats algae, and by doing so clears the water over time. And as I had said before, this will have an effect on the fishery. There's no question. It's not going to destroy the fishery as alarmists might like to say. That's certainly not our view as the government, but we do acknowledge that change is coming. The degree of that change, I guess, remains to be seen. In other jurisdictions it's had—I wouldn't call it marginal, if it were a 10 per cent drop in production. I'm sure our fish and our fishers wouldn't characterize that as marginal, but, you know, it's not a collapse of the industry. The industry will change and will adapt to it as it has in other jurisdictions.

So, you know, that's of great interest to myself, personally, having these large bodies of water in my



constituency. Not only am I the minister of the department, but I'd have all of Lake Manitoba in my constituency. I have a good portion of Lake Winnipeg in my constituency—not all of it now with the last redistribution of the borders which took place a number of years ago. Now the south basin is in a different constituency, in the Gimli constituency. But for the first two terms in office all of Lake Winnipeg, with the exclusion of the tiny little harbour area around Gimli—I don't want to put any false information on the record—but just around the harbour itself, I think, was outside of my domain as the MLA, but other than that the whole lake was in there, and I have a great many Aboriginal people in my constituency. There are nine First Nations communities, reserves in the Interlake and a great many Metis people as well, particularly fishing the Lake Manitoba fishery.

If you looked at the demographic of commercial fishers you would see that the vast majority of them are Aboriginal people. So, you know—and this is something that's very important to their livelihood, important to me as their representative. So, you know, I'm watching this closely. And I know a great many of the fishers as well, and a great many of them communicate with me directly. They know my phone number. They know where I live, and my door is always open and I'll always answer my phone if I'm available.

So, you know, that's under way. We will carefully monitor and observe the fishery as we go forward and we will always communicate with our fishers because they have as good an understanding as anybody, I would think, having spent their lives, having spent generations, in fact, in this field. So we trust their advice as well in this regard, and we will work forward to the best of our abilities, as I said.

So thank you Mr. Chair.

\*(15:40)

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the minister's clarity, then, that of the three absences, two were filled, and the most recent absence which was during the backdrop of when Lake Winnipeg was identified as being infested, the department did not fill that position during that time frame. Instead, it used existing resources, which I can understand. I mean, the department has seen about an \$18 million or 11 and a half per cent reduction in resources since 2012, so one can only imagine that has had an impact on the government's ability to deal with this situation.

In terms of clarity, Mr. Chair, the minister recently announced, in addition, \$500,000 to deal with zebra mussels a couple weeks ago. At that time, though, the minister was not able to identify whether or not that was new money or simply existing money within the department. I believe the minister's response when queried was that budgets are, quote, complicated, end quote.

I'm wondering if the minister has an opportunity to go back and look at the budget and to see his commitment because that's what all it is at this point, that no funds have actually been allocated. The additional \$500,000, is that new money or is that simply a reallocation of current resources within the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship?

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Well, just to—one of the first points the member made about the filling of the position the third time that it was vacated, I guess, was how he would describe it. And, as I'd said before, that individual, Justin Shead, who had stepped in the first two occasions, is still with us. So, as I said, this is a collective effort and a great many people work on this file and those people remain in place, so I'm not sure where the questioner is going in that regard. We've got qualified staff with us now, we've got a dedicated specialist, we've had people that have filled in that position that remain with us, you know.

I would also take issue with the member suggesting that the cuts to the budget have somehow compromised this. I would disagree with that as well. And, you know, I am a little surprised, given his previous career as a member of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which was a very fiscally responsible organization. I'm sure he would agree with me on that, you know, that a government, in general, is trying to be fiscally responsible and balance budgets and so forth. That's never an easy thing to do, but it is incumbent upon all of us and, you know, we're doing our utmost in that regard. And I know that the next time the budget's up for negotiation that now that I'm in this position I will try very hard for increases, and I guess time will tell whether I'm successful in that regard.

But the point is that whatever reductions were made within the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship, that these types of reductions were more oriented toward, say, upper management positions that we wouldn't—or didn't go out and cut front-line services. You know, the conservation officers themselves is a good case in point. You

know, there was no decision to reduce the number of COs in the field. You know, that's not to say that we've succeeded in filling all of the positions, because there are vacancies. And, you know, that's a reality of government—all governments, all departments, I think, across this country and going back into the past. That'll always be a challenge to fill positions, but, you know, it's our objective to do that. But I digress the resources at the front line to come back to this infestation of invasive species; that's not reductions were made, as I said.

As to the monies themselves, the member is repeating my line that budgets are complicated, and, well, they are. And I'm trying to get my head around the exact numbers, where the money comes from, where it goes. And the question specifically was the million dollars, I believe, that we recently announced that will be new money going into the program. Previous to that we had allocated, I believe, it was about \$500,000 specifically toward that, and we found that money within the department to put specifically toward this challenge given the fact that it was upon us. So money was reprioritized from elsewhere toward this, and that is a complicated procedure. As I made reference to earlier, budgets are complicated.

So—but, again, going forward into the next fiscal year '16-17, the additional million dollars that was recently announced is new money.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the minister's clarity that the additional \$500,000 is new money. But the minister failed to answer whether or not it would be new money taken from within his own department or would it be new money allocated to his department.

Given the history of his department just since 2012, I—it's surprising that the minister can indicate that it's new money considering that since 2012 the minister's department has gone from \$156 million down to \$138 million, which is a \$18-million reduction or 11 and a half per cent. And I'm quite shocked that the minister indicated that those cuts—and those are his words, cuts—were oriented towards upper management. It's quite shocking that the minister since 2012 had identified over \$18 million worth of upper management that he felt could be eliminated from within Conservation and Water Stewardship without having any impact on front-line services.

And if that is accurate, then I say congratulations to the minister. But it is somewhat unbelievable that there could possibly be \$18 million worth of upper management that could be reduced in such a short time frame by—since 2012 that the minister could identify for elimination in order to bring his budget, as he put it, into balance. Which, by the way, this government hasn't brought a budget into balance since the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) took over as leader, and nor are there plans to bring it into balance until—I believe the most recent date is—anyway, it's way off into the future. It's really quite meaningless because every time the date approaches, the government sets a new target.

\*(15:50)

Now, the minister's department has put out some—I believe it's about 23 aquatic invasive species bulletins to provide information, obviously, to the public and in an effort to educate the media and, by extension, the public.

I note that the—that it wasn't until September 25th, 2015, that those aquatic invasive species bulletin No. 14 indicated that it was illegal under the federal fishies—Fisheries Act to possess or transport zebra mussels. So in the 18 bulletins prior—from June 26th until September 17th, I believe there was 18 bulletins—it did indicate that it was illegal to possess or transport zebra mussels, but it didn't indicate the authority.

So has the Province been acting exclusively under the authority of the federal Fisheries Act in terms of the possession or transportation of zebra mussels in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Just in discussions with staff now, it's come to my attention the—it was the federal legislation which actually enables the passage of regulation at the provincial level, which is what in fact occurred in 1999, which there was the passage of a provincial regulation in regard to the possession of zebra mussels. So that's relevant.

The member made mention of balanced budgets and cast an aspersion on our Premier (Mr. Selinger), who had balanced budgets 10 times while he was the minister of Finance, which he did. The member opposite neglects to mention that one little factor the—called the global economic recession that kicked into place, probably the greatest financial challenge the world has faced in modern times, which resonated for years and years unfortunately, which

coincided with our Premier's (Mr. Selinger) taking up his current position.

But you know, our commitments to get back to balance are firm and, you know, compare favourably with, I think, the commitment of the member's own leader. Who—I don't know if he actually committed to coming into balance in a shorter time frame or not. But again, I will leave that to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar) to comment in that regard.

I think it is noteworthy, though, that the current government's practice of investment in infrastructure and training and all of that together, which in fact has been our mantra since we were first elected back in 1999. The member opposite wasn't here of course at that time but I was, and I remember one of our most famous premiers who was looking down upon us from the south wall as we speak, Gary Doer, who said, the endangered species, the building crane, has been once again spotted in Manitoba. Truer words were never spoken.

It was that commitment to infrastructure, something that had been neglected shamelessly by the previous government virtually over their entire time in office, which led to a profound decline in the state of our infrastructure. Which triggered that change in mindset, that commitment to investment in infrastructure and training, something that was picked up by even the former Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, who had a conversion on the road to Damascus, entering into that recession and his own string of deficits, that this was in fact the most effective way to counter these types of ebbs and flows of the economy, and in this case the global economy.

You know, the Conservative mindset is hunker down, cut spending, cut taxes, in effect reduce your ability to manage the economy, and leave it to the private sector and they're going to solve all the problems. Well, in reality, that's not the case. When recessions kick in, businesses actually scale down their operations, making it even that much more important that governments step up, even federal Conservative governments, step up and start making that investment.

\* (16:00)

And I think it's noteworthy that Manitoba, having followed that pattern from the very beginning, was in fact way out in front of the rest of the country, and all of North America I would think it's arguable to state, in that our economy was less

affected than others as regards the recession. And you know, we have a very stable, well-diversified economy here in Manitoba, and we were able to weather that, keep people employed, keep construction projects going and training initiatives rolling out. That's good management, and I'm proud that I've been a member of the government throughout its entire four terms, following down this path, and just recently the newly elected Liberal Prime Minister has, in essence, made a commitment to follow down that very same path in investing in infrastructure. So, you know, that is the logical course of action.

And when I look at the state of our infrastructure when we came into power in 1999, I was just shocked and appalled, frankly. Well, certainly, in my riding there—we hadn't seen any highways infrastructure investments in more than a decade. All of our roads, just with the exclusion of No. 6 Highway, were subject to restrictions—and the 65 per cent load restriction I'm referring to. And, in fact, we did a study. I think members sitting in the committee today were a part of that study called Vision 2020. Maybe the Chair was on that, I don't recall, but I'm pretty sure the current Finance Minister was on that. And so we did an analysis of our highways and we learned that if we continued to spend at the rate that the previous government was spending, we were facing a systemic collapse of our highways network. Systemic collapse, that's quite a legacy to leave upon leaving office.

And so, again, budgets are relative things. Investment, keeping people employed, that's important as well. And I realize I'm digressing a little bit, so I'll curtail my remarks at this point and return the floor to the member opposite.

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the member bringing up former Premier Doer, who also said—if you want to quote Mr. Doer—that we, the NDP, weren't elected to raise taxes, and that a promise made is a promise kept. So I think Mr. Doer made some comments that don't bode well for the minister. And his own federal leader, I recall, just recently in the campaign, said there was no excuse not to balance budgets. So, again, he seems to be offside with his federal master on that file.

Mr. Chair, so the minister has now indicated that Bill 12 has been proclaimed. I just want to confirm media—previous comments or previous statements in the media that the—sorry—that the on-site monitoring of vessels coming out of the water—sorry, the

watercraft inspection stations with decontamination units would discontinue effective October 11th. I'm wondering if the minister can confirm when the department ended the watercraft inspection stations.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** In regard to taking those difficult financial decisions that I'd referenced and member responded to, you know, conditions do change, and I think entering into a global economic recession or depression or catastrophe, call it what you will, this was without a doubt the greatest challenge financially on a global perspective which necessitated some very tough decisions.

But maintenance of investment in infrastructure to create employment and to keep our educational institutions, whether they be universities or technical colleges, or what have it—have you, actively engaged as well, in effect, the entire economy continuing to function, regardless of the economics of it, that's what keeps economies going. That's what kept a jurisdiction such as Manitoba not as impacted as others, and I'm sure that all leaders, hopefully, would agree to that. Certainly, former premier Harper came to that difficult decision himself and ran many a deficit despite his much vaunted desire not to do so.

And I'm not going to belabour that point. I'm sure the member opposite would like to stick to the issue at hand, and the question was the—when did the program actually end. October the 11th is accurate. That is when it ended, and in reality, you know, you have to look at the fishery at large. There's a sport fishery; there's a commercial fishery. The two are different, right?

The sport fishery typically ends sooner than the commercial fishery does. I know I'm in the lodge business myself—or was, years ago. I've since left it, but you know, by the middle of September, things are wrapping up because of the simple fact that it's getting bloody cold out there and it's no longer fun fishing when it's literally the ice is freezing on you as you're driving out to your fishing hole.

So, you know, the commercial fishery, those individuals are made of sterner stuff than me, I think, and they do stick it out because they're trying to make a living at it. And so, even though some commercial fishers may still be in the field, you know, going beyond the date that the program ended, that has to be viewed in itself, I think.

And there's a couple of relevant facts in this regard, the first being that those commercial fishers, when they remove their boats from Lake Winnipeg

at the end of the season, they take them home. They don't go sport fishing elsewhere in the province with those boats; those are their working craft. And the fact that they're removed from the water and are going to remain on shore over six months of winter when temperatures conceivably go below  $-40^{\circ}$ , that's what's relevant here. Those cold temperatures, in effect, are a form of decontamination and kill off any veligers attached and so forth, so the member opposite has to bear that in mind, that the sport fishery, by then, is largely, if not completely, over; and secondly, that cold temperatures are an effective means of decontamination; and, thirdly, that the commercial fishers, when they remove their watercraft, don't go elsewhere with them.

So the October 11th date is accurate, but there are practical reasons why it can be considered an effective time to end this particular program.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Martin:** I appreciate the minister's confirmation that on October 11th they ceased any additional inspection stations with decontamination units and that, I guess, the minister was advising that all boats are now decontaminated as a result of cold temperatures.

The minister, I'm sure, and his department saw a recent op-ed by a Mr. Forbes, an ecologist at the University of Winnipeg who works on fish and wildlife issues. Mr. Forbes noted that given the rapidly diminishing resources devoted to water science and fisheries in Manitoba, it is particularly irksome that the Province squandered half a million dollars of its much ballyhooed potash treatment in Gimli harbour in June 2014. It failed, as every competent biologist knew it would, having no material effect on the infestation of Lake Winnipeg by zebra mussels. The primary purpose was to provide the Minister of Conservation with a photo op.

I note that Mr. Forbes' comments aren't unique, Mr. Chair. Dr. Eva Pip, a water-quality and ecosystem expert with the University of Winnipeg, noted that we saw this coming for years, but didn't adequately put in the resources. The problem is irreversible. In fact, it's a catastrophe. It's a disaster.

Colleen Sklar, executive director of Lake Friendly projects, noted that we are going to start to see—instead of our beautiful sandy beaches we are going to start to see sharp shells changing the nature of our beaches and how we use them. We are going

to see implications in how we access our lakes. Rocks and shorelines will be impacted and changed.

So—and then last but not least, the minister's own department biologist within the Department of Manitoba Conservation in The Western Producer noted, and I quote, not only from a staff and financial resources perspective we were ill prepared. Not very high praise coming from within the minister's own Fisheries Branch that an issue that the minister indicated that his party was aware of since 1990, since it was identified—zebra mussels were identified in the Red River Basin since 2009, and then the—his predecessor talked about a rapid response protocol. And despite all of that, an individual within his own department goes on the public record stating that not only from a staff and financial resources perspective we were ill prepared for this detection. So it's quite shocking, Mr. Chair, that this issue is where it's at.

All that being said of that—as the minister himself has on the public record—that the invasion is upon us and is, frankly, not reversible. So we need to, obviously, look forward in terms of next steps. The minister has indicated that the science project is a no go on a go-forward basis. The—one of the options being put forward by Mr. Forbes indicates that research in the US since the invasion began has focused on natural controls. Zebra mussels are eaten by an array of predators, including crayfish, perch, sucker carp and diving ducks. But one fish is uniquely suited to devouring large quantities: the freshwater drum or silver bass. I'm wondering what the—if the minister has reviewed those comments and, more importantly, whether or not his department has come up to—come with any conclusion as to the role of natural-occurring predators. We're obviously not talking—we don't want to make a bad situation worse by introducing other foreign species into our water systems. But those—that freshwater fish does exist already in Manitoba and it's obviously not going to be the solution.

There is no single solution. I think that we only need to see what's going on south of the border, and it has been going on for a number of years even if this government failed to ignore it during that time frame. But, again, I'm asking the minister whether or not his department has reviewed that option of terms of natural predators and, if so, what the conclusion was in terms of that as one of the tools to use in the fight against zebra mussels, and then the government's, obviously, next steps to ensure that tool is a reality given that the Winnipeg drum can

take a considerable long-length of time to grow to a substantial size.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Mr. Chair, you know, just as an aside to the member's continued criticism for the reductions that we've taken in the department, you know, in our firm commitment to manage as fiscally responsibly as we can, you know, I just have to wonder, like, \$18-million cut was a hard hit to take, but if we were to, God forbid, see that change in government and their leader come to power and talk about the cuts that they're going to make, a half-a-billion-dollar cut to the budget, my goodness, I could see entire departments of government being eliminated, not step-downs in their budgets, but virtual elimination and hundreds, if not thousands, of people losing their jobs.

So, if the critic seriously wants to go down that path and have that discussion, then I'm willing to and I'm sure many others are as well but, you know, I'll let that go for the time being.

You know, the main question was regarding Mr. Scott Forbes, who considers himself an expert, I guess, in a great many things and I appreciate the articles that he puts in the paper. It's always nice to have all sides, and he certainly has his side. But for him and others to make such disparaging remarks about the former minister I really think shows his hand, or their hand. This was not some frivolous attempt. For him to refer to it as a photo op, I take offense to and, you know, my respect for him in using such questionable language is lessened as a result.

\* (16:20)

This was not a photo op. This was a entirely legitimate effort that was made on the recommendation of a great many people. That science advisory council that I have referred to in the past, that I have just appointed even more scientists to, this was their advice, to make this attempt and I can list experts: Dr. Renata Claudi, a renowned expert; Dr. Gerry Macki; Dr. Jeff Long; Dr. Scott Higgins of the IISD; Justin Shead, whose name has been mentioned here earlier; the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Patricia Ramlal. All of these people said that this was a viable attempt. And the minister's wrong—or the member is wrong when he says that it was unsuccessful, because it wasn't. It, in fact, was successful in eradicating the infestation in the immediate area of those harbours that we targeted. It was successful.

The fact that there were veligers out in the main body of the lake, you know, is beside the point in terms of whether or not this worked. And the fact that this experiment, now proven technology, can be taken to other areas and applied in conjunction with good vigilance and monitoring and so forth, that's the other side of this coin.

You've developed this technique; you're monitoring other lakes. This may very well work in other scenarios. It won't work in all scenarios. It may work in just a few scenarios. It remains to be seen, but going down this path, taking the advice of all of these esteemed experts, the science advisory committee collectively, I think, was the responsible course of action. And if Mr. Scott Forbes thinks that this was a photo op, then, with respect, I vehemently disagree with his take of things.

Other experts, you know, as I said before, Dr. Eva Pip, I have a great deal of respect for and will always listen when she speaks. But with the greatest of respect, her use of language, catastrophe and so forth, I disagree with. Colleen Sklar, I think, was closer to the point when she said things are changing. That's what we've been saying all along, that, you know, the influx into Lake Winnipeg was coming given their presence in the Red River watershed.

And, you know, changes will happen. We will adopt to these changes to the best of our ability and we will survive, as will the great Lake Winnipeg. It will survive.

As to the use of freshwater drum, again, that Mr. Scott Forbes has put on the record, the fact is we're not going to eat our way out of this problem. Freshwater drum are not going to eat all of the zebra mussels and solve this problem for us. But, you know, I take the point and it's not something that just came to our attention thanks to Scott Forbes. Our fisheries managers and scientists are aware of this, and we are considering putting some kind of a limit or a reduced number of harvest on this particular species. But that in itself has to be put into effect with great care. Any time man or humankind starts to intervene with Mother Nature, experimenting with species, you have to be careful, I think. The one example that comes to mind is somebody brought rabbits to Australia. There were no rabbits in Australia. Well, somebody thought that would be a good idea. Boy, were they wrong.

So any time you artificially intervene with one species and try and terraform, or whatever language

you want to apply to it, you have to do that with great trepidation and care because things can go south on you. You put a limit on one species, people will draw harder on another species as a result. So, yes, you do have to be careful what you ask for because, you know, once mistakes are made, then it's very difficult to reverse that.

There are other species as well that may very well prey on zebra mussels. We could discuss them as well, I guess, if the member opposite would like.

But I think the point is that, you know, you have to be careful when you're manipulating Mother Nature. That's the lesson, I think, that humankind has learned numerous times in the past. And, you know, we'll take Mr. Scott Forbes' advice to heart, but, you know, I will have much greater faith in the science advisory committee and with much greater faith in the staff within the department.

So thank you for that, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** I would like to ask the minister what the department's policy is regarding zebra mussels and float planes, not only the cleaning up of the outside but the fact that the floats frequently have to be drained in remote locations before they can do their takeoff again. So I wonder what your policy is regarding that.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** I thank the member for the question. It's a very relevant question, to say the least. You know, planes can take off and land in these—any body of water and are—have the potential of being a true vector when it comes to spreading.

So some of the limitations in controlled zones, for instance, these type—planes, float planes will not be allowed to harbour for more than 12 hours, which limits the time the zebra mussels have to attach; in fact, it's my understanding that that doesn't give them sufficient time to attach.

In the controlled zones, we're also encouraging the—well, mandating the use of antifouling paints, not sure of the chemicals—I believe a copper-based paint is something that naturally repels zebra mussels and prevents them from adhering.

\* (16:30)

And then, of course, you know, some of these planes, if they're like some of the boats that I had up in our lodge, they may leak on occasion; and, if they do so, then, you know, it's mandated that that water be extracted from the floats and then disposed of on land. So those are some of the controls that are

implemented in order to address the threat that float planes have.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I appreciate the answer from the minister, and just a point of clarification. It is very common when these float planes go into remote lakes, before they leave, they're often heavily loaded, they make a point of making sure the floats are pumped out. And so you're telling me that that water that they currently just pump out back into the lake now has to be collected and disposed of on land? Is that what your policy is? How are you going to enforce that?

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Well, it's law now that, yes, in the control zones they are required to pump their floats out and dispose of it on land, and it's frankly in their best interest to do so. They're a part of the business in those areas, and as I've said time and again here, we're not going to put in place a punitive regime as a solution for this problem because, frankly, given the number of lakes, given the number of operators, given the number of planes in this province—if there's 80,000 boats in this province, I have to wonder how many planes there are, and maybe we have that answer, I don't know. But, you know, people have to get the message that collectively they all have to be part of the solution here. If we think we're going to police our way out of this, then we're deluding ourselves just like anybody who thinks that the freshwater drum is going to eat us out of this problem is also deluding himself, you know. So that's, in essence, what our approach is.

You know, of course, there are, you know, repercussions for people who deliberately, maliciously violate the law, and I guess we'll do our utmost to address that should it occur. But co-operation is key. Communication is key. And it's my understanding that, you know, people who operate float planes in this province have been aware of this problem for some time now and have been proactively engaging, you know, the officials as to what their correct course of action should be. So I would just go on the record and like to commend all of them for their proactive behaviour, for their having the right approach that all of these lakes are collectively our property, as Manitobans, as Canadians, and it is incumbent upon all of us to do our utmost to be proactive, to co-operate. That's how we're going to move forward on this. So thank the member for his question.

**Mr. Martin:** I'm wondering if the minister can advise—I know zebra mussel's been identified and

confirmed to exist in Lake Winnipeg, Cedar Lake. Have—are there any additional water bodies in which they've been identified since the public announcement at Cedar Lake had been infested with zebra mussels, and at what point, I guess, how late in the year does, sort of, monitoring go? Obviously, freeze-up is a factor and that, as the minister identified, with the stoppage of the portable decontamination units effective October 11th. So which—are there any additional water—what water bodies are currently infected by zebra mussels, and at what point does monitoring cease until, obviously, freeze-up concludes in the spring?

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** And specific to the question, to date it's just Lake Winnipeg, Cedar Lake and the Red River within Manitoba now that have shown to have zebra mussels. So no other water bodies to our knowledge.

As to monitoring and so forth, we continue to monitor and they—what I've been told, as zebra mussels become inactive at temperatures lower than 10° C, so that's relevant as well even though it's open water, if it gets below that. However, erring on the side of caution, to this point we continued to monitor.

**Mr. Martin:** You know, I know the minister was dismissive of Dr. Forbes and—though he did indicate that he did appreciate his—that he did appreciate Dr. Pip's comments. I'd like to note that Dr. Pip has indicated, in relation to the zebra mussel issue, that it's beyond the point now being able to do anything at all about it. When we do have a problem, then it's like, well, who knew? Well, we did know—know, indicated Dr. Pip. She went on to indicate that even last year we were already beyond that point when we were dumping those chemicals into an already-polluted lake.

What's especially striking, though, is Dr. Pip's comment that the Province was warned years ago, long before zebra mussels appeared in the water that it had to do something about the invasive species then. No one believed it was a problem back then, she said. This wasn't taken seriously enough, and this was how we seemed to react to every environmental crisis here: that we don't have a problem. Our reaction is: why should we worry when we don't have the problem, Dr. Pip was quoted as saying. She went on to indicate, by the time the provincial government, quote, cottoned on to the problem, end quote, the zebra mussel infestation was already on both sides of Lake Winnipeg's south basin.

So, again, the minister talks about alarmists and such, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe I would categorize Dr. Pip as an alarmist in her comments. In fact, the minister himself, as I previously indicated, in the Interlake a spectator said that it is, quote, not reversible, end quote. So unless the minister likes to include himself in that broad category of alarmist, I don't see that as being an accurate portrayal.

I'm wondering if the minister can indicate whether or not there are plans. He had indicated that previously, that the Province is in possession of five portable decontamination units, whether or not there are plans to acquire any additional portable decontamination units to assist in the fight against zebra mussels.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Mr. Chair, and I just—I'm going to take some issue with his choice of words. I didn't—I don't think I'm trying to characterize either Dr. Pip or Dr. Forbes as alarmist. I think I've said repeatedly the great deal of respect I have for Dr. Pip in particular but just because I have the utmost respect for them and so forth doesn't mean I or any Manitoban for that matter has to necessarily agree with each and every word that they say.

And, you know, using language like catastrophe, that does upset people. That does instill alarm into, you know, your general Manitoban. So you know, personally, I would prefer refraining from that type of rhetoric and—but they're individuals, they're experts, or I guess they are. So that's fine. If they want to voice those opinions, that's their call, not mine. But I will respectfully disagree with that particular choice of language in regard to this problem.

Myself, as I've been quoted several times now as saying it's not reversible, well, I'm not going to dispute that. The—when zebra mussels were detected in the Red River basin, it was inevitable that they get here but the point is that, you know, it's not a catastrophe, that the lake is doomed or anything like that, that some people like to say, and some people are encouraging that type of rhetoric. Not mentioning any names, of course, but that's not the message, right?

The lake is going to change. That is undeniable but this has confronted other lakes elsewhere have experienced this, some going back literally decades, and they're still in existence, still functioning as sport fisheries or commercial fisheries or areas where

people go just to be on the beach. That's all still there, so language like disaster, respectfully, I have to take some issue with.

As to the member's question about the number of units, currently there are five. And, you know, we've made a commitment of new money, which is well-known now. And we are entering into I guess a grace period in the sense that freeze-up is imminent. The lakes will soon be frozen solid for the next four to five months or more. We've added new resources to our science advisory committee, as I've made mention of already. Dr. Trimbee from the University of Manitoba, as well as Dr. Margaret Docker, who is a biologist at the University of Manitoba, so we're an equal-opportunity government engaging both those esteemed educational institutions, the U of M and the U of W. And not to leave out our federal counterparts, we've got Dr. Jim Reist of Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well to advise us and that's what's key here.

That's the message, is advisory board. We're seeking their advice. We've given additional monies toward the challenge and based on their advice, you know, we will plan our response for this coming spring, and that may very well include additional units. But until we have that conversation, I'm not going to put any numbers prematurely out into the—onto the record today.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** One of the things that is of very considerable concern in the identification of zebra mussels in Cedar Lake is that Cedar Lake is a large lake. It's connected to Moose Lake. It almost certainly means that zebra mussels will, if not already, soon be in Moose Lake, and Moose Lake, there are fishermen there who are going back and forth with the Saskatchewan River. We now have the whole area of the Saskatchewan River delta near The Pas a concern that the zebra mussels might, although they are not maybe very good at working upstream, nevertheless that, partly because there's boat traffic, partly for other reasons, it would be, you know, within the realm of the possibility that in the not too distant future zebra mussels may be going up the Saskatchewan River and into Saskatchewan and causing problems there.

So I'm just wondering what the plan is of the minister to address this concern. As the zebra mussel spreads from Cedar Lake and presumably to Moose Lake, and we hope not beyond, but, I mean, how is the minister going to stop it?



**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** I want to thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for the question. It's a very valid and relevant question.

It does present a challenge when you have two lakes contiguous to each other like that. You know, boat traffic from one to the next, that will be the vector that spreads it if that should come to pass. And, you know, again, that's where the whole communication side of things comes into play here, you know, convincing the fishers themselves, whether they're commercial or sport fishers, that that particular action can be catastrophic, that that is in effect the only way the veligers can spread, because it is correct they don't swim; they float with the current. They do have some ability to propel themselves, but it's—that's not essentially how they get around. It's—so that is a challenge.

And, you know, either further upstream of there, that's the conundrum, frankly, that we face across the board is this kind of traffic, and the only thing that's going to prevent the spread is to educate the people and to have them co-operate to the best of their degree. If Moose Lake, which is upstream of Cedar Lake, if they're clear and Cedar Lake is not, then people have to be aware that travelling in that direction could be highly problematic, to say the least.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Speaking of this concern, one of the corridors that I believe is a critical corridor is the corridor from Dauphin River up to Lake St. Martin, and from Lake St. Martin to Fairford River to Lake Manitoba. And that's a critical corridor, again, for the same reasons, that there's a lot of people and boat and fishermen traffic back and forth along that corridor. And it would seem to be a very critical corridor to pay some attention to.

Has the minister had any inspection stations along that corridor or done any, you know, particular publicity campaign along that corridor?

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** I thank the member for the question. As regards the area up in The Pas there, there have been—there is signage being put in place on docks where fishers come in, for example. There's been information and communication disseminated. The decontamination unit, there was one in The Pas. So steps are being taken in that direction. And, obviously, with advice from the science advisory committee, maybe we can make that even more effective in the coming season.

And I do appreciate the member's question in regard to that other corridor, from Dauphin River to Lake St. Martin to Lake Manitoba terrain, that is obviously very familiar to me, given that it's in my constituency in its entirety. So the same applies there.

Now, how much boat traffic there is up the entire length of the Dauphin River to Lake St. Martin is debatable. It's not an easy boat trip to take at the best of times, given shallow waters and rocks everywhere—not impossible. Getting out of Lake St. Martin into Lake Manitoba, of course, there's the Fairford River Water Control Structure that you've got to get over, so you have to take your boat out of one lake and drop it into the other one. So there's that barrier to consider as well.

But, as I said, that's a very good question, and I appreciate you raising it. And it's something that, you know, we will take to the science advisory committee for their consideration, if, in fact, they're not considering it already, which I suspect they probably are. But we will confirm that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** There are fishermen, I believe, who fish both in Lake Winnipeg and in Lake St. Martin, and so there would be travel of fishermen back and forth. There's a lot of fishermen who are fishing just downstream of the Fairford dam, and so the concern is that whether it's boats or whether it's fishermen moving, you know, bait or gear or what have you, which may be contaminated, that it would be, you know, a fairly easy thing to happen, and I would suggest there needs to be some particular attention along that corridor which—as the member should know well.

And the other thing is that it's my understanding that under federal legislation there is—which came into effect this summer—a fine of up to \$100,000 for people transporting zebra mussels or, I presume, the larvae from one lake to another, I think is where it would apply. And it seemed to me that the minister might get a few people's attention if he, you know, let people know that there was that kind of a fine for—that this is really serious stuff. And I am—far as I'm aware, I've never heard the minister talk about this. And just to bring that to the minister's attention. You know, a billboard with watch out for and don't get a \$100,000 fine might get people's attention, for example.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** Again, thanks to the member for River Heights for his advice in this regard. He's correct. The federal fine is \$100,000 max, and our

finances range from \$250 up to \$100,000. Again, though, you know, and maybe that's warranted, that threat. But my approach from the very beginning has been to try and engender that co-operative spirit within all Manitobans that I know is there, the collective responsibility to do what they can to prevent this.

Lake St. Martin that you—the member specifically mentioned—the commercial fishery is a winter fishery so it's only after freeze-up that the commercial harvest kicks into place there. Mind you, there are a number of First Nation communities in there with the inherent right to fish for food, which is not limited to winter. So there's the threat of spread in that regard. But, you know, your point is well taken and, you know, the whole \$100,000 thing is a significant, you know, threat. So, you know, making that part of our public awareness campaign to a greater degree is good food for thought.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Very quickly, I believe the minister's responsible for climate change. Will the minister have a plan to take to the international meeting in Paris that's a Manitoba plan for climate change?

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5 o'clock, committee rise.

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (14:40)

**Madam Chairperson (Jennifer Howard):** Order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now continue consideration of the Estimates for Executive Council.

Would the First Minister's staff and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

As previously agreed, questioning will proceed in a global manner, and the floor is now opened for questions.

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition):** So we'll just continue with some questions on this New West Partnership deal. We know that the other Prairie provinces entered into an agreement some years ago which was designed to provide them with a number of benefits.

I'd like the Premier to outline what benefits he feels will accrue to Manitoba as a consequence of not being a member of the New West Partnership. Why did he make the decision not to be part of the New West Partnership?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, it's not a question of making a decision for or against the New West Partnership. It's an agreement by the Council of the Federation to work on the internal trade agreement to strengthen the ability to trade among all the partners to the federation, which is the level playing field that everybody's seeking.

And certainly people in the community want to see a level playing field. They don't want to be restricted as to where they can trade to any subset of jurisdictions. They prefer to have the ability to provide their goods or their services to any jurisdiction in Canada, and that's what we're doing, and we've made progress in that.

As I indicated, this summer we passed an agreement and signed an agreement that allows apprenticeships and credits for apprenticeship and Red Seal qualifications to be accrued regardless of where somebody works in the country and to harmonize the requirements for those apprenticeships. That levels the playing field for all working people in the country. And we did the same with labour mobility before that.

So there was an agreement by the Council of the Federation to work on internal trade. And there are—there is a committee of premiers that is managing that, and we're working on that. So that's something that is to the benefit of every province and territory in the country.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, it's possible, I think, for the Premier to work on those things at the same time as we're in the New West Partnership, but he hasn't explained why we aren't. And obviously other provincial leaders felt that it was beneficial to their jurisdictions when they formed the arrangement in the first place. So again, there must have been some thinking that went into why the government did not decide to accept the invitation to become part, along with Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC, of the New West Partnership.

I'm curious as to what good reason the Premier would put on the table here today as to how it would disadvantage Manitoba to be part of that arrangement at the same time as he was proceeding with the other initiatives he alluded to in his earlier answer.

**Mr. Selinger:** As I said, the premiers of Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland and Manitoba are the code leads on a major initiative to modernize the cross-Canada Agreement on Internal Trade. That's a focus that was prioritized by the

Council of the Federation, and that's the program that we're working on for the country and to have a program completed early in the New Year.

Our exports, as the member knows, move east and west, as well as south, and we'd prefer to, at this stage of the game, to work on national efforts which will allow us to reduce trade barriers in all directions for Manitoba. And we think that that's something that will bring good benefits to the province, but also to other jurisdictions as well, which is why we have premiers from the east and from the west, as well as central Canada, that are prepared to be involved in this committee to work on this while our officials are meeting and our trade ministers and job—and in our case, the trade and Jobs and the Economy ministers have been involved in that, as have all the ministers designated by their respective provincial governments.

So—and progress has been made there. We've made some significant progress on this. We talked about it earlier in question period today. Manitoba was the first jurisdiction to allow for the free flow of wines across the country into all the various—into our jurisdiction from whatever other jurisdiction grows that product and markets that product across the country.

As well, the member will know that with the new federal government there will be a First Ministers' meeting, and we will be discussing these among other economic priorities for the country very soon.

So, in the meantime, we have arrangements with other jurisdictions, including Saskatchewan, to improve our ability to provide each other with the goods and services that are in our mutual interest. That has included a standardization of the regulatory requirements for trucking between Manitoba and Saskatchewan. That has included very significant hydro sales. And those are measures which will increase prosperity for Manitoba and provide products at a very competitive price to the other jurisdictions that wish to purchase them.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) alluding to some progress, but it seems like it's more regress lately. The announcement by the Saskatchewan government some months ago that they would be using preferential practices or limiting their opportunities to supply certain goods and services within the New West Partnership to their partners mean that Manitoba not being a partner has

the door slammed in their face on that opportunity, and that isn't good for Manitoba small businesses.

So the Premier hasn't explained how this approach that he's taken for some number of years is working to the advantage of Manitoba businesses. And it becomes increasingly apparent in—with recent events that there is a real risk to Manitoba's economy and to Manitoba small businesses that the being on the outside of the fence looking in at the other provinces co-operating as an approach the government's taken isn't helpful—far from it.

\* (14:50)

So here we have a combined GDP of probably now well over half a trillion dollars in the New West Partnership, and we have governments to the west of us that are working on joint purchasing arrangements, successfully saving dollars on the purchase of goods and services for their ratepayers, working smarter, increasing efficiencies, lowering costs to taxpayers and delivering services more effectively. We have British Columbia announcing that centralized purchasing has assisted them in saving—this is four years ago—over \$150 million in their health-care budget, working on combined purchases of various products and goods without, in its early days, an understanding here, at least, that we were going to be excluded from the process. But lately it seems to be the approach that's being taken.

At least in Saskatchewan, I would be concerned that this limiting of our ability to bid—in fact, eliminating, not limiting—eliminating our ability, Manitoba's companies' ability to bid on goods and services to provide them to Crown corporations in Saskatchewan may be just the start. We're talking about so far Saskatchewan Gaming Corp., the government insurance, opportunities corp., power corp., telecommunications, transportation company and SaskEnergy. These aren't small entities; they're big entities. They do a tremendous amount of business. They contract for hundreds of millions of dollars of goods and services and now Manitoba companies won't have the chance to participate in the competition.

How could that possibly be good for Manitoba businesses?

**Mr. Selinger:** We have received correspondence from our Heavy Construction Association of Manitoba. They're very concerned about a protectionist approach to procurement. They support a pan-Canadian methodology through the

Agreement on Internal Trade. They ask us to pursue that and they want to—and we will clarify where Saskatchewan's at with this and we're in the process of doing that. Our minister will be talking to their minister and certainly our officials will talk to their officials, but they, the Heavy Construction Association, urgently wants us to urgently press for a focus on internal trade reform among the provinces to build a stronger, more competitive economic climate. Erecting trade barriers assists no region or province in Canada; that's the approach they're taking.

So, I hope the member's not asking us to join an organizational entity that is erecting trade barriers. I hope he wouldn't be doing that. I wonder if that's what he's suggesting at this stage of the game.

**Mr. Pallister:** I'm suggesting we join the New West Partnership—let's be clear on that—and have for some time, as has the party I lead. But the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) now saying that he will, or his minister will, take some action. Yet this procurement action plan was announced on March 27th of this year, and if no action was taken since that time, I would be disappointed.

Would the Premier outline what action was taken after the release of this position was made public by the Saskatchewan government fully six months ago?

**Mr. Selinger:** The announcement—they had a broad announcement, but it was on September 17th that they announced the specific role of the seven Crown corporations, and our minister's in touch with their minister and I'm sure they will have a discussion and they will continue to meet. All the ministers are meeting on how to further internal trade in the country, and the officials have been working on that for several months, so there's no tardiness in this regard. We've been working for over a year as a group of provinces through the Council of the Federation to strengthen our internal trade policies. We have not been focusing on how to encourage protectionism. We've been looking at ways to encourage more trade across the country.

It's still not clear to me. The member says he wants to join the New West Partnership. Does that mean he's endorsing a protectionist approach in this regard?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate the Premier taking the opportunity to practise asking questions in this

venue, Madam Chair, but I understood the objective of this process was for him to answer questions.

And I'll ask him again. He's failed to outline any advantages that might accrue to Manitoba businesses or the Manitoba economy by being shut out of business opportunities with Saskatchewan Crown corporations. He's failed to answer the question about what action he's taken on this, and if this position paper was released on March 27th of this year, it said, procurement by the Saskatchewan government—it said, procurement action plan increases fairness and consistency for Saskatchewan businesses, and it outlined that Crown corporations would be maximizing all opportunities available within the Agreement on Internal Trade. These actions, the Premier is now accusing Saskatchewan of taking protectionist action when, in fact, they're operating within the requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade.

So why is he attacking the government of Saskatchewan for doing something that's within their right to do when—and failing to register any actions he's taken which would clearly demonstrate that he's willing to stand up for Manitoba small businesses, which is what he should be doing?

When did he take action on this, or is he simply deferring to the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief), who claimed the other day he was totally surprised by this when it's been going on since March?

**Mr. Selinger:** The member obviously didn't hear my response. I said that the provinces, including the province of Saskatchewan, have been working on improving internal trade within the country for over a year now. They've made significant progress.

I've outlined some of the progress that was made as recently as this summer when the Council of the Federation met where they announced greater support for the ability of people to get Red Seal trades credit for work they do in a variety of jurisdictions, not just in their own jurisdiction. So that ability to transfer credits across jurisdictions is an important improvement for labour mobility and qualifications recognition for tradespeople across the country. That's just one practical example that follows up on labour mobility achievements that have been made in the past through the internal trade agreement.

And as I indicated earlier today, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have signed agreements on

harmonizing trucking regulations for the use of our infrastructure which will allow vehicles to move across borders more seamlessly, with less regulatory red tape, than we've seen in the past. Those are just some examples.

And, you know, I want to make it clear we're not criticizing the government of Saskatchewan. I'm asking the Leader of the Opposition what his position is on trade. He seems to be standing up strongly for something which looks protectionist.

It was only September 15th that they announced that there might be a role for the seven Crown corporations in doing local procurement. We're not actually aware of any local procurement that was being done.

And to be clear about it, the member has—the government of Saskatchewan has said they will consider sourcing local work through the New West Partnership, but they're not restricting themselves to that exclusively; where warranted, they're leaving the door open to securing services and goods elsewhere throughout the federation and, indeed, elsewhere as required. So they're not being—they're not suggesting that it's all or nothing with respect to how they proceed through the New West Partnership.

So let's be clear about that. When you take a look at what they've been saying, it's not as black and white as the member—the Leader of the Opposition portrays. It says, for example, in their release of September 17th, we'll primarily source from north–New West Partnership Trade Agreement provinces and from the rest of Canada and globally as warranted. So they're leaving all their options open on how they procure for any of those Crown corporations that they've listed, and the first time they were listed was September 17th.

In the meantime, long before that announcement was made, Manitoba has been part of a working group to look at how we can strengthen the internal trade agreement for the entire country. It is, after all—the federation is in part an economic union. That was part of the original concept, and it was always the intention of the Fathers of Confederation to encourage trade across all the members of the federation, and we're pursuing that vision today in practical terms, and I've given very concrete examples of how we've—what we have achieved there and we can talk about additional things that we can do in the future.

**Mr. Pallister:** So again the Premier (Mr. Selinger) seems unwilling or unable to answer the question.

The government of Saskatchewan issued a release in March, on March 27th of 2015, sending signals that they were planning on changing their procurement practices to limit them, and the Premier has failed to outline a single course of action he's taken. No communication whatsoever, he's given us no evidence that he took any action at all.

The government of Saskatchewan has—had made it clear at that time that they were going to take action in terms of changing their procurement policies, and the message was clear in the document they distributed at that date which said, Crown corporations will maximize all opportunities available within the Agreement on Internal Trade; Crown corporations will follow the requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade only where required to do so. That is clear, and there is a clear indication, because of Crown corporations' special treatment under the AIT, that the practice they were going to follow would favour other than Manitoba because we are not members of the New West Partnership. That would be clear to anyone reading that.

\* (15:00)

Obviously, the Premier didn't read it. If he would have read it, he would've taken action. I'm sure he would have taken action to protect Manitoba's interests. But he failed to do so, and now he cites a press release from six months after that fact, which outlines that now, not having heard any objection from Manitoba at all, the Saskatchewan Crown corps are going to prefer western contractors who are members of the New West Partnership over those in Manitoba.

Now, we're talking about a lot of business here that Manitobans will be cut out of participating in and doing, at least competing for, because of the inaction of the government opposite and the Premier and his minister. Now, if the Premier and his minister did take some action in that six-month period, I'd like to hear him outline it. Would he do that now?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'm not sure the member has actually heard what I put on the record. We've been working through the Agreement on Internal Trade Working Group for several months now, if not a year, to increase internal trade within Canada with all the jurisdictions so there's a level playing field. And those are the actions that we've been involved in in

an ongoing way. That includes Saskatchewan, who has been an advocate for strengthening the internal trade agreement, and we've been working with them on that.

So the reality is that this is the way we've been working together across the country. We've been doing it for several months, long before any announcement was made by Saskatchewan, either in the spring or in the fall. And that's been the mechanism through which we've been co-operating with all jurisdictions. And I pointed out to the member that we've had some significant accomplishments in that regard. All the provinces were very supportive this summer of the new agreement that we had for trades, being able to get recognition for their work experience in jurisdictions outside of their home province. And that makes it easier for trades to get their Red Seal qualifications. That's an important improvement on internal trade for the country. And it shows that the premiers are working together to be able to do these things.

The premiers have also worked together on procurement of drugs, bulk purchasing of drugs, which has saved about a half a billion dollars for consumers in their respective jurisdictions. We've been doing bulk purchasing as a group of provinces, which is another way of securing drugs at a lower cost point for their citizens in their provinces that require them. That's an example of how provinces can work together to reduce barriers, to co-operate and to access goods and services that are essential to people's health in this case, at a better price point. So that bulk purchasing program has been very well received across the country, and we've worked on that with all the provinces, including Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Pallister:** Let's be clear then. The government in Saskatchewan announces it intends to do things to favour its own people, in March. No response from the government of Manitoba at all. In September they go further and announce Crown-sector procurement preference policies which will apply to Crown corps: Saskatchewan gaming, government insurance, opportunities corp., power corp., telecommunications, transportation companies, SaskEnergy. That was way back September 1st.

Here we are now two months later, and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) says they're on it, but they're not on it; there's no evidence they've ever been on it. And now we're talking no action whatsoever since March 27th. Then he tries to claim that the door's not closed, but SaskPower's request for quotation

documents says this: NWPTA region supplier—and that's your Northwest partnership guys, okay?—NWPTA restricted, it says right on the tendering quotation. To be eligible to participate in this RFQ, the contractor must be an NWPTA region supplier. SaskPower will not accept a quotation from a contractor who SaskPower determines is not an NWPTA region supplier. Wow, that seems like the door's been slammed pretty shut.

Now, Manitoba companies are contacting us. I expect they're contacting the Premier and his members too, and they're very concerned because we're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars of tendering opportunities and the door just got slammed on Manitoba companies, and the Premier talks about things that have happened over the last seven or eight years that are effective changes and, no doubt, wonderful things. But they're not relevant to the question I'm asking him, which is why did he take no action whatsoever in an effort to protect Manitoba's small businesses from what apparently is a closed-door approach on buying goods and services being adopted by Saskatchewan?

If he fails to take action going further, I would submit to him that he is risking further action being taken by his cousins in Alberta and by the Liberal government in British Columbia. It is critically important that he stand up and take action now with his premier colleagues, not just on a negotiation on AIT but on the actual practices that one of the New West Partnership provinces is proceeding to adopt. And it appears his friends in Alberta are already adopting a similar practice when it comes to beer. These are not progressive steps and I am very concerned that the Premier's taken no action whatsoever to communicate the views that I'm hearing from Manitoba small businesses, that they would like to see a strong expression of interest in joining the New West Partnership and an opportunity to bid in the tendering process on the goods and services that they would like to provide and that they produce.

In the interests of Manitoba workers are their families, I just—I would ask the Premier to describe what action he has taken or at least commit, having failed to take any action, at least commit to undertaking immediate action to address this important situation.

**Mr. Selinger:** I've pointed out what action is being taken. We've agreed, as a Council of the Federation, Manitoba, along with Saskatchewan, Newfoundland

and Ontario, has been involved in improving internal trade arrangements across the country, and that's an important way to level the playing field to allow businesses to compete for contracts wherever they are in the country. Saskatchewan, under the Agreement on Internal Trade, if Saskatchewan decided to proceed as they've suggested they will in this most recent announcement, Manitoba could do the same thing. It's—a reciprocal action is completely provided for. We prefer to work on a trade agreement that allows the whole country to work together, not get into an exercise in balkanization.

We always have had, within our trade agreements, the ability to do procurement for Crown corporations with respect to indigenous or Aboriginal economic development opportunities within our respective jurisdictions and also for regional economic development purposes. So there's nothing new in that regard. And Manitoba can do set-asides, as Saskatchewan can do that, to ensure that there's the ability for communities which have often been left out or members of those communities that—which have often been left out to participate in the projects that are done by the Crown corporations. So, in that respect, there's nothing new here. I mean, these are long-standing provisions that have been made available.

Saskatchewan's announcement that they're going to do that local procurement is something that they have not completely closed the door on. If you read their correspondence, they say that they will continue to source globally and across the country as warranted. So they leave the door open to all the possibilities going forward to be able to secure the goods and services they need to do the respective projects that are being undertaken by the Crown corporations in question. The dialogue will continue, as it has for the last while, between the Crown—between the various governments, through their trade ministers and through the Council of the Federation and the four premiers that are involved in that. And we will look for ways to continue to do that.

Now, this does not mean that local community benefits agreements can't be structured, as I've indicated, for indigenous communities, for regional economic development purposes. Those potentials have already been there. And, in fact, the government of Ontario has looked at, in the internal trade agreement, a component incorporating local knowledge into its procurement requirements, and that may have been one of the reasons Saskatchewan has pursued the approach they're taking. We're

working with all those jurisdictions, but we also have the ability to ensure that indigenous people get opportunities and indigenous communities get opportunities through our Crown corporations. And we've done that for the benefit of those communities and for the benefit of all Manitobans.

So in that respect, we can follow the exactly the same practices, but we prefer to do that in a way where we're all co-operating on the internal trade agreement and then where we do the local procurement preferences, we do it for regions of equity, of—addressing issues of high unemployment levels in certain communities, in terms of issues with respect to making sure that indigenous communities or specific regions of the province can have access to opportunities that otherwise might not be available to them.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) acts like it's business as usual, but it's unusual business because it's restricting the ability of Manitoba companies to participate in tenders, which was not the previous practice, as I understand it, unless the Premier wants to put other information on the record. It was not the previous practice of the Saskatchewan government to do so. Regardless of his reference that they had the right to do so, they have not, and they've allowed Manitoba companies to participate, which would be the right way to trade in my estimation.

\* (15:10)

Now, it appears that at least for these initially, at least for these Crown corporations, there will be a change. In fact, the government of Saskatchewan says that itself. It says, in a press communiqué sent out in the middle of September, new changes to government Crown procurement, it's referenced—I'm sorry, it's referenced by the Saskatchewan Construction Association and it says, and I'll quote and I can table it after for the Premier, but it says, today the provincial government announced that Saskatchewan's Crown corporations will now take advantage of exemptions within the Agreement on Internal Trade to allow preferential treatment for businesses within Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC, the three provinces that are part of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. This, I remind the Premier, is the agreement which he was invited to put Manitoba into many years ago and has failed to do so for some time.

The communiqué goes on to say, Madam Chair, this means that effective September 1st, 2015, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, the Saskatchewan

Transportation Company, Saskatchewan Government Insurance, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority and Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation will primarily source procurement from NWPTA companies. It goes on to say, in order to procure from other parts of Canada—that would be us—or the world, the Crowns will need to justify that the skill set or commodity required is not available within the New West Partnership area.

Now, that is going to basically eliminate Manitobans from being able to participate in the provision of a wide array of goods and services. This doesn't seem to me to be positive news, far from it. It's quite alarming,

And I guess I—again, I've asked the Premier (Mr. Selinger) several times what action has he taken in respect of this specific issue. He goes into generalities about the Agreement on Internal Trade but doesn't answer the question.

I'll ask him again. Because it was clear this was coming down the pike back as early as March, because the government communicated on several occasions in the interim seven months, what specifically has the Premier or anyone in his Cabinet had to say about this issue that they've communicated to Saskatchewan by way of a concern? Anything specific, would be good to have that on the table.

**Mr. Selinger:** Clearly the member hasn't understood the answer that I've been providing him for several responses now, and that is that we've been working on internal trade together, all the provinces. And the premiers that have been leading that initiative have included Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland-Labrador. And we've been working to make sure that whatever arrangements are made for procurement allow as much trade as possible. And there is some room in there for local preferences or local knowledge, and that applies in Manitoba as it applies in Saskatchewan. So all of these things are what's being discussed actively at the table, they've been discussed before the announcement was made, and they will continue to be discussed.

Provinces are working towards getting some further progress by the spring of 2016. Progress has already been made, as I've already enunciated. There have been agreements arrived at on labour mobility. There have been agreements arrived at on apprenticeship credits. While apprentices are seeking their Red Seal credits in other jurisdictions, these are significant accomplishments that should be

appreciated by all involved, because it allows Manitobans, as well as Canadians from other provinces, to benefit by these new arrangements which reduces the barriers to internal trade.

And where a preference is being expressed by any jurisdiction, that can certainly and will be discussed at the table, the ongoing table, to see the applicability of it and the appropriateness of it under the internal trade agreement. That's where these things are discussed, and that table has been ongoing and active for over a year now.

So it's a question of being able to deal with the broad approach to it and also the specific approach. It's not either-or. Both things go together as we try to strengthen our internal trade arrangements in all of our jurisdictions across the country.

**Mr. Pallister:** So, while the Premier rags the puck and refuses to answer the question, I have to conclude that he's taken no specific actions whatsoever to communicate concerns to the government of Saskatchewan on this practice they've now adopted to exclude Manitoba companies completely from bidding on the provision of goods and services.

What that means is that items will not be provided by Manitoba companies because Manitoba companies won't have the opportunity to bid on the provision of those items, and that's a lose-lose for our people and certainly for the Saskatchewan government as well. We'll miss the opportunity to have a more competitive process.

The Premier's had the chance over a number of years to be inside the New West Partnership; he's refused to do so and now it's coming home to roost. Unfortunately, for Manitoba companies who would like to bid on the provision of some of these services, and I'll outline some of them for him so he can consider the circumstances that are going to be faced by Manitoba companies in these industries, we will no longer be able to bid. According to the government of Saskatchewan, they don't want quotes, they won't accept quotes, they won't take quotes on the provision of these goods and services because we're not a New West Partnership member.

And all this talk about working with the premiers of other provinces on a national agreement falls by the wayside because Manitoba companies are out of luck when it comes to providing services such as IT equipment, furniture, office supplies, forms, stationery, building and janitorial supplies, promotional advertising items, garage equipment,



building and construction services, consulting services, repair and maintenance of facilities and equipment, cleaning services and IT services. And this is just a few of the things that SGI buys. Manitoba companies won't have the chance to even bid on providing these services. This is not a small thing.

Other corporations—Crown corporations buy a wide array of goods and services as well, and they tender; they shop, less secretly than the government does for Tiger tubes, but they shop. On communications planning, on temporary staffing, health-care services, asset performance reviews, auditing services, recruitment services, software design, risk assessment, strategic planning. They shop, but now they won't be shopping in Manitoba, and Manitoba companies and the people who work for them won't be able to do the work, all because the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) decided, and refuses to put on the record a single reason as to why he would not have Manitoba at the table with our partners Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Again, I'd like him to outline one significant advantage that he can put on the record that will offset the tremendous potential losses to Manitoba's economy and our small business sector by being outside of the opportunities to provide these goods and services to our next-door neighbours.

**Mr. Selinger:** I've pointed out to the member opposite that we have a new breakthrough with the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan on a very significant power sale, never been done before. It started with a 25 megawatt sale; it's now accelerated to an additional 100 megawatt sale, and it's part of an overall memorandum of understanding which could lead to 500 megawatts of power sales to Saskatchewan. No other government in the history of this province has been able to achieve that kind of an outcome with respect to trade and energy with a companion jurisdiction to the west of us. That's very significant.

And the—it's worth hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue to the people of Manitoba through the Crown corporation that they own. It's their Crown corporation; it's our Crown corporation and it benefits all the people of Manitoba.

The Leader of the Opposition is the biggest anti-free trader that we have in this province right now when he says he would not build any Manitoba Hydro for export purposes, which would exclude

being able to enter into any arrangements with Saskatchewan.

If the member really believes we should be part of the New West Partnership, why does he not reverse himself and stand down from saying hydro should not be built for export purposes? That would allow us to continue to have that sale with Saskatchewan and pursue additional sales in the future, as Saskatchewan moves to reduce the amount of energy it provides itself through lignite, which is going to be—coal is being clamped down on by the federal government. Even the Harper government was putting a sectoral approach in place which was going to put greater regulatory requirements on restricting the use of coal and lignite in the production of electricity.

So we've accomplished a major trading relationship with Saskatchewan on electricity sales. The Leader of the Opposition is opposed to that and has come out on the public record saying Hydro should not be developed for export sales, including to Saskatchewan or any other Canadian jurisdiction. I think that's a tremendous mistake which will severely hurt the economy of Manitoba. And he knows that and it's time that he reversed himself on that.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I think, Madam Chair, that the Premier has no idea what his own agenda is. He has committed to the people of Manitoba to balance the books on a regular basis and failed to do so, committed to not raising taxes and successfully done that more than any other jurisdiction in Canada. And—so he's got nothing left but to ask questions about my agenda or try to misrepresent it and I get that; I get his desperation. I'm glad to—that he's choosing to use this opportunity for preparatory work.

\* (15:20)

But, that being said, he keeps citing the Agreement on Internal Trade, and there's a lot of concern within his senior bureaucracy that he is not in compliance with the Agreement on Internal Trade. Certainly, we've highlighted numerous times his lack of transparency, even insofar as citing a deal on a hydro export to Saskatchewan which he refuses to make public.

And this is the trouble with this Premier, speaking of double standards. He speaks about exporting raw power to Saskatchewan but won't tell Manitobans the details of the deal. What's

particularly sad about this, Madam Chair, is that, you know, he can crow about sending discount power elsewhere, which will, of course, assist our competitors in many respects, whether in the US or in Canada.

But now, for example, with SaskPower, we're cut out of providing any number of services to them. Again, they don't want us to bid. They've said that to bid, the contractor must be a north–New West Partnership region supplier. They've said that SaskPower will not accept a quotation from a contractor who's not. So the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) bragging about shipping deep discount power to Saskatchewan, while, at the same time, Saskatchewan doesn't have to accept bids for services from Manitoba companies, from Manitoba small businesses. There's nothing fair about that.

Reclosers and control boxes—we won't be able to supply them. PVC pipe, conduit and bends—no, our companies in Manitoba can't supply those either. Security fencing—no, we're out of luck, on the wrong side of the fence. Waste incinerators, standby generators, broadcast cabling, line construction and salvage—nope, none of those things. Manitoba companies just don't get to bid on those services anymore because the Premier's intransigent on this issue because he refuses to really partner with anybody in respect of trade or a number of other fronts. Auto desk maintenance renewal, office cleaning, office shop space, welder training courses, IBM system storage, replacement and salvage work, air handler replacement—now, these things are just words to him, maybe, but they're not to me.

These are things that employ people. These are things provided by small businesses who skill up their people so they can provide a competitive service and offer it to customers. And now we're no longer going to have a customer because the Premier is resistant to building partnerships with our neighbours.

Each of these services is provided by people who work here in Manitoba and would like to have the chance to compete for jobs. And they're having that chance taken away and it—and I'd like the Premier to accept the fact that he's part of the reason that this chance has been taken away because he's refused to step up to the table and partner with our neighbours. Every other Canadian province has entered into a partnership, economic and social partnership, to the advantage of their shared

jurisdictions but one, and that is this one, and that is this Premier's fault.

Fibre optic test modules, cross arm replacements, air handler replacements, spectom—spectometer reply—spectrometer replies—you can say that fast three times, Madam Chair—these are—none of these will be provided by Manitoba companies—pump supplies, cold section parts, new combustion section parts, mobile transformer supplies, information on technology consulting services, office cleaning services, cable vaults.

I don't pretend to know exactly what every one of these categories means, and I don't even know, frankly, Madam Speaker, if there are 25 companies or three that do these things in Manitoba. All I know is, none of them, if they exist here, get to participate in competing to provide these services or products, none of them. They are now all excluded from any Crown corp bid process.

Now, is the Premier at least not going to admit he's somewhat concerned and commit today to some course of action to address this issue directly? Will he not commit at least to calling Brad Wall tomorrow or today and raising his concerns about this issue?

**Mr. Selinger:** We are working on the Agreement on Internal Trade, including with the Premier of the government of Saskatchewan. And we work together to ensure that we can increase or reduce trade barriers across the country. And I've given a couple of examples of that to the member already with respect to transportation.

We've harmonized our transportation regulatory requirements to allow our trucking industry to move more seamlessly across the border with Saskatchewan. That's an important accomplishment, never been done before between the two provinces. We've harmonized across the country our requirements for apprenticeship qualifications to allow for credit from apprentices working in a variety of jurisdictions back to their Red Seal qualifications in their home provinces. Never been accomplished before. We've got, for the first time in the history of the province, very significant hydro sales to the Crown corporation SaskPower, which has never been accomplished before, which allows us to keep our rates among the lowest in North America, significant competitive advantage for the business community of Manitoba. When their power rates are lower, they have a significant competitive advantage on that.

And the member full well knows that Manitoba trades more with other provinces than any other jurisdiction and continues to work with other provinces on how we can improve our ability to trade with each other, and we are doing that, and we're doing it with all the governments, including the government of Saskatchewan. And our ministers will be in touch with each other, have made attempts to talk to each other and have talked to each other and our—certainly, our officials are working at the table on the Agreement on Internal Trade, where they're trying to accomplish even more by the spring of 2016.

So the member is sadly misinformed when he says we're not a part of any trade agreements. We're part of the economic union of the country. We're part of the federation. We're part of trading relationships with every—all of the jurisdictions to the east and west of us and as well as the territorial governments to the north of us. We work with them all. We haven't picked favourites. We said we're willing to work with all of you because we do more trade east and west than most—all of the other jurisdictions. It represents a greater proportion of the trade we conduct, and we love doing business to the west of us; we like doing business to the east of us; we like doing business to the south and to the north of us as well. And we'll continue to do that, and we work with our industry partners, including the manufacturing association, to further our ability to allow Manitoba companies to have a well-trained workforce and modern technology and the ability to compete effectively and competitively with all these companies in other jurisdictions. And the results are showing in terms of Manitoba's job creation record, between its economic growth performance being the second—among the top three in the country if not the second best in the country.

We know that the provinces to the west of us in the New West Partnership, particularly the prairie ones, have had a tough time with the global reduction in oil and gas prices, and it's been a challenging time for them, and they're working their way through that. And both Saskatchewan and Alberta are forecasting deficits, and we want them to do well in their economic growth as well. We're working with them on ways to do that through the Agreement on Internal Trade, and we will continue to do that.

So let the member have no doubt about it: we are in a trading relationship—all the partners of the federation, and we will continue to do that, and we'll

continue to look at a way to improve that ability to trade with all the partners of the federation. We're committed to that. We're also committed to making sure that local companies can have an opportunity to provide goods and services not only across the country but inside of Manitoba as well. And every jurisdiction has the ability to do local preferences or set-asides, particularly with respect to indigenous peoples or regional economic development. There are some restrictions on that depending on the trade agreement, but those—the ability to carve out those kinds of activities from trade agreements has always been there and will continue to be there, and we'll look at ways to generate more opportunities for those communities in Manitoba to benefit from economic opportunities in this province which is one of the best-growing and fastest-growing economies in the country as we speak.

**Mr. Pallister:** Actually, the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) wrong on that and he knows it. Of course, he's read the Conference Board report, likes to cite it in part for his purposes, but he knows that the conference board itself has said that it's—Manitoba's prospects look good, and that's nice; we're all happy about that, but he also said the reason for that was not that the government was doing anything right at all but rather the crude oil decline was adversely affecting our neighbour provinces more than our own. So the Premier's citing short-term stats and projections when he knows his record is ninth on job creation and economic growth since he became Premier and that long-term record is one that reflects the failure of his economic strategies very well. His antipathy to the private sector has also been most apparent. His willingness to jack up taxes despite saying he wouldn't has adversely affected many small businesses, and small-business optimism remains at record low levels. His preferences for regulation and regulatory approaches that discriminate against small businesses is well understood and well known by the small business community, and his propensity towards spending beyond his means is something that is actually very frightening to anyone who understands basic financial management and has led to a lower credit rating for our province.

\* (15:30)

Now, the concerns that we have are about the loss of business opportunities as a result of the practices being adopted by Saskatchewan Crown corporations currently which will exclude Manitoba companies from bidding on jobs on the provision of good and services—goods and services.

The Premier (Mr. Selinger) speaks about longer term goals, Kumbaya, trade with everybody, but actually trade is usually done on the basis of smaller agreements than the world all agreeing on the same thing at the same time.

So what we're asking him to do is take action to express, at the very least, our concerns, as, on behalf of Manitobans, we are certainly doing, that these kinds of practices will limit the ability of Manitobans to participate in what should be a very open and fair tendering process. It appears that the government of Saskatchewan is adopting one, at least with their Crowns initially, which is not as fair and open as we would like, somewhat similar to the approach the government has taken on many of their purchases of Tiger tubes, limiting it to a narrower field, so to speak.

Now, would the Premier undertake to take some—rather than speak in vague generalities about meetings he's going to go to in half a year's time, business will be lost, business opportunities will be lost in the very near future if these rules are allowed to continue, which restrict Manitoba companies from not being able, whether they are in Brandon, whether they're in Winnipeg, whether they're in Winkler, Morden, Steinbach, Portage la Prairie, Swan River, Dauphin, you name it, wherever they're located, they are not going to be able to participate in the bidding process for hundreds of millions of dollars of goods and services which they might like to participate in. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) should know this full well.

Now, I'm asking the Premier if he would undertake some action, on behalf of the member for Brandon East, to save him the embarrassment of having to defend the inaction of his own government on this important file. Will he commit to taking some action on this file immediately and addressing the concerns that are being communicated to us and, I expect, to members on the other side too, from their residents and their small businesses about this serious issue? Will he do that?

Sorry, I couldn't hear you, Drew. Do you have something to say?

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, the member has completely misinformed the public.

First, let me just start, when the member served in government, his taxes on small business were 9 per cent, and he called that competitive. Ours are zero. Our tax regime for small business is infinitely

better than anything ever accomplished or promised in the past, present or future by the Leader of the Opposition.

Corporate taxes, 17 per cent when he was in office, now 12 per cent. Capital tax entirely eliminated in Manitoba. Those are all business-friendly policies never accomplished by the member of the opposition when he was in office and never promised in the future and never supported. Even in all the days he's been in this Legislature, he's never indicated any support for those very significant tax reductions to business in Manitoba.

And then on the training side, we've made a very significant commitment to training Manitobans for the good jobs that are available in this province at the college level, at the apprenticeship level. We've quintupled the number of people in apprenticeship training in this province from around 2,000 to about 10,000, very significant increase in opportunities for young people to get trades.

We've expanded the number of people that are completing high school in this province, very significant increase; more to do there, but we've made a very significant commitment to do that. We've built skills labs and shops in many of our high schools to allow them to have access to modern equipment and training, and we're working with our post-secondary—our high school system, our secondary system, and employers. I attended a very good event at Tec Voc High School where they were partnering with the aerospace industry to allow the young people at Tec Voc to get skills that will enable them to fulfill good well-paying jobs in the aerospace industry.

These things have never been done before in the province, and we're proud to be part of the solution which allows us to grow our economy. So we can—we have exceeded anything the member ever opposite even imagined was possible during his time in public office, including currently.

So that's the reality of what's been accomplished in Manitoba, and it is no surprise that Manitoba has been one of the top 10 performing economies during the recession, one of the top three performing economies in the country, with one of the lower unemployment rates, a steady record of economic growth. When other provinces have gone through some difficult times, we've been able to continue to have steady economic growth and increase employment opportunities within this province at a time when the population was growing as well.

So the economic story in Manitoba has been well recognized by commentators across the country, and it is also considered to be a very good place to invest. The overhead costs of doing business in Manitoba are considered among the best in the midwest region of North America and remain extremely competitive. And the member ought to know that. If he doesn't know it, I invite him to do some further research on it so he can get his facts straight.

With respect to trade agreements, we are working on the Agreement on Internal Trade, and we haven't just been posturing like the member opposite who just woke up to this issue recently when he made his comments. We had meetings in Toronto on internal trade in June, the first week of June, the first 10 days of June of 2015. We had a subsequent meeting in Toronto on trade in the first two days of October of 2015, and there are conference calls scheduled for the internal trade working group in November, the first week—this week—of November and the middle of November, as well, with another meeting scheduled at Christmastime. So there's been very significant work done on improving internal trade arrangements and some significant accomplishments which have been achieved.

And at the same time as we're doing that, we're making it more possible for our goods to flow to markets, whether they're east, west, north or south, with our very significant investment in infrastructure, which the member opposite promises to cancel. Those infrastructure projects, whether they be CentrePort, in terms of strategic infrastructure, whether they be improving the interchanges on the Perimeter with Highway 75, whether they be improving Highway No. 1, improvements to the west of us as well as to the east of us, all of those and the Yellowhead Highway improvements, all of those things make it more possible for Manitoba companies wherever they are in the province to move goods and services to market, including in the Interlake, including in eastern Manitoba, north-eastern Manitoba, western Manitoba and southern Manitoba. Those are all very significant investments that will allow those communities to have a stronger economy, including flood protection, which the Leader of the Opposition has opposed investing in as well.

So, if he wants to talk about trade, we're putting the conditions in place in terms of infrastructure. We've put the conditions in place in terms of a more competitive tax regime, we've put the conditions in

place for young people to have access to those opportunities. We're growing the population and we're involved in the internal trade agreement with all of our partners through the Council of the Federation to look at how we can level the playing field and make it more possible for trade to occur in all jurisdictions.

That being said, there is a role within all trade agreements for certain forms of local procurement. That's possible in Manitoba. That's possible in other jurisdictions as well. They usually pertain to allowing for indigenous opportunities, as well as regional economic development opportunities. And those set-asides are done deliberately to ensure that those communities have access to opportunities they might otherwise not be able to have access to.

**Madam Chairperson:** The official Leader of the Official Opposition—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister).

**Mr. Pallister:** Thank you, Madam official—Madam Chair.

I suggest to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) that he knows he is going to present himself to Manitobans and can't do it on his record, so he continually tries as best he can to ignore the facts. And the facts are these: the Auditor General last year, if the member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) would like to read the report, would know that the government of which he's a part has an epidemic of untendered contracts. That's not smart shopping.

Now Saskatchewan, I suggest, is using a practice which perhaps may be a backlash because of the Premier's inability to shop fairly himself. These Tiger tube contracts that he bought untendered, his Minister of Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation bought \$9 million worth of those over a half-dozen years, and they were—none of them were tendered. One of the competitors for that particular service is a company that's located in Saskatchewan.

Does the Premier think that perhaps by failing to address the needs of Manitobans to get good value and tender properly for products and services such as the Auditor General had itemized in her report, by failing to do that, has the Premier provoked the government of Saskatchewan in his failure—dismal, I might add—to shop intelligently, by discriminating against a Saskatchewan company, as he—has he been part of the reason that this has come about, this action by Saskatchewan which clearly limits

Manitoba's—eliminates Manitoba's small businesses from competing on tenders?

\* (15:40)

His own officials say that's he's breaking the Agreement on Internal Trade. I expect they're referencing a lack of transparency. We know that he's covered up the untendered contracts for years. The contracts, for example, for the Tiger Dams, the \$9 million worth of contracts were never put on the databases as is required by The Financial Administration Act until this year August 28th, years after the rules say they were supposed to be there.

So the government's clearly, under this premier's leadership, breaking its own rules on tendering, not being transparent. Transparency is, after all, one of the major keys to the Agreement on Internal Trade, it requires that—AIT requires transparency. It says that information should be fully accessible through publication and notification to interested businesses, individuals and governments. This ensures exposure of potentially unacceptable policies and practices to public scrutiny.

Yet on this Tiger Dams issue, this information was never made available until years after the contracts were given to friends of the NDP—a friend of the NDP, by the minister. Repeatedly that was the case. Half a dozen contracts, all given to a friend of the ministers, a personal friend and donor to the NDP, none of them made available.

Is this how the Premier (Mr. Selinger) proposes to negotiate a better agreement on internal trade? Is this how he proposes to have, you know, positive changes made when he himself won't abide by the existing rules? Is that the credibility that he stands to present in a negotiation on improving internal trade, and finally, if he doesn't abide by the rules on internal trade, what credibility does he have in standing up to Saskatchewan's practices here of eliminating the opportunity for Manitoba small businesses? Where's the credibility in his position?

**Mr. Selinger:** Yes, well, the minister knows full well that when a community's at risk of imminent flooding, the department's financial assistance and disaster assistance officials make timely decisions to protect communities and secure the appropriate equipment to do that from a variety of sources.

In some cases, it's Tiger Dam tubes, in other cases it's Aqua Dams. In other cases, it's HESCO Barriers, in other cases, it's sandbags. In other cases, it's super sandbags and those technologies are

deployed as rapidly as possible to protect communities.

And so we've gone over this before, and I just remind the member that you know, there's a timeliness requirement when the communities are at imminent risk to respond to that, and it's amazing to me that the member opposite would not protect those communities because he thinks that there should be a tendering process that would go well past the date when those communities would be flooded in the absence of the immediate actions taken by our disaster financial—disaster assistance officials in partnership with local communities that let it be known what materials and what technologies they need when their communities are at risk for unprecedented flooding events.

So there's no question that we put the safety of communities first, and the member may not want to do that, but that's—shows why he shouldn't be government, because those communities would be underwater following the procedures that he was advocating.

Where tendering has occurred, firms from out of province, including Saskatchewan, can be the low bidder and can be the successful applicant for that tendering process. And then the decision is made whether that tender is awarded and in the case of the Tiger Dam tubes for the Interlake, that was—became moot because the federal government had already provided those types of equipment to the community, and how they proceeded with their tendering process is currently under investigation.

We know there was a complaint from Saskatchewan about the federal—the Conservative government's approach to that. They made it very clear that they thought the tendering approach that was taken there was something that put them at a disadvantage. It was not the case in our tendering process, by the very fact of the matter that they were the one that won the tender, but it wasn't necessary to proceed with it because the federal government had proceeded to provide that equipment through another set of procedures.

So, when we talk about trade, it is important to recognize that we'd done a number of things to make Manitoba competitive in terms of trade. I've mentioned the tax measures we've taken, I've mentioned some of the training measures we've put in places with our colleges and universities and secondary schools. I do want to mention that we have the World Trade Centre in Manitoba, one of the

best ones in Canada. I don't know that there's one in Saskatchewan at this stage of the game, but we do have a World Trade Centre with capable staff that are working on trade relationships around the world as we speak.

We put organizations in place, such as the Composites Innovation Centre, which allows new technologies to be developed and new techniques to be developed for materials that will allow our companies to be very competitive in the—not only the aerospace sector but in other sectors where light, strong materials are required for transportation, for example, which will reduce fuel costs and make the vehicles safer.

So we're looking at a variety of ways to make sure that we're competitive. And we'll continue to do that as we move forward, including working on the internal trade agreement, which we all agreed, as a group of provinces, was something we wanted to work on together as we moved forward. And we'll continue to do that, and we'll continue to work with the federal government on trade opportunities going forward, as well, while protecting our ability to do measures that will allow indigenous communities to benefit from opportunities in a growing economy, as well as regional economic development measures, which will allow communities that have historically been left out to participate.

So we'll strike the balance on better trade arrangements while ensuring that they're more inclusive and allow more people to participate in them, and those measures will make a big difference in the province of Manitoba, where we do have one of the best growing economies in the country with one of the lowest unemployment rates with one of the best job-creation rates. And those are the facts that are on the table today.

And our infrastructure investments are making a big difference as well. This was a record summer: this summer we saw over \$1 billion of infrastructure investments rolled out all across this province, in the city of Winnipeg, Brandon, all the major urban centres, as well as rural Manitoba; created 9,000-plus jobs this summer alone; lifted the economy by over \$1.1 billion; and put down the kinds of infrastructure that will allow goods to move to market more efficiently, more effectively in the future, which strengthens our economy not only today but the future as well. And that includes strategic infrastructure such as CentrePort and some of the infrastructure announced which will support

CentrePort, the companies in CentrePort, to do a good job of exporting their products through better infrastructure, whether it's south, east or west and even north as we go forward.

So we look at working with all of our partners in the business community as well as in the education sector as well as in the trade sector to improve opportunities in this province, and the results are there. We've seen more people living in Manitoba than we've ever seen before. We've seen more people working in Manitoba than we've ever seen before. We see the second lowest unemployment rate in the country and one of the highest participation rates in the labour market. And we will continue to strive to do that even as we grow the number of people in the population that are of working age.

**Mr. Pallister:** Quite a dissertation, Madam Chair, I'm sure you'd agree. Not a single reference to the question I asked the Premier (Mr. Selinger), however.

What we have learned today is that the Premier is not concerned about job loss consequences as a result of the procurement practices changing in the government of Saskatchewan and their Crown corporations; that he has no concern, not enough concern to act on it, anyway, that he's made no effort whatsoever to contact the government of Saskatchewan on this issue; that he apparently is content to have a meeting in March of next year to discuss other trade issues while Manitoba small businesses are excluded from participating.

He just put something on the record. I want to give him the chance to correct the record because I think he did it in error, and I wouldn't want it to stay in Hansard. He said that the Tiger Dams contract was won by Tiger Dams, and then it didn't—they didn't need to be purchased because the federal government went and purchased them later. But I was of the understanding that all the contracts that were awarded to Tiger Dams were untendered; that is, they were given to them without competition. They were given to them. In fact, 80 per cent of the flood-protection devices bought by the government were bought by that one company without a contract on a single occasion.

Now, if there was a tender competition that the Premier alluded to, which Tiger Dams won, that's news to me. But perhaps the Premier's aware of it, and if he'd like to put that on the record and table some evidence that there was a competition that Tiger Dams won, it would be a first in the last seven

or eight years in Manitoba flood procurement history. Did they win a contract or have they never won a competitive tendering contract?

**Mr. Selinger:** I do want to indicate that the member's characterization of what has happened is completely inaccurate, no surprise. He obviously hasn't listened to what we said.

\* (15:50)

What we're talking about here is—and I want to correct the record on this. There was a call on internal trade on November 3rd and 17th of 2014 as well as a meeting in June 8th and 9th of 2015 in Toronto and a subsequent meeting in October 1st and 2nd of 2015 in Toronto. So there has been ongoing work by our people on how to improve internal trade agreement, and with some significant milestones which have already been achieved with respect to our apprenticeship opportunities all across the country and, prior to that, on labour mobility.

And I indicated earlier to the member that there's also been bilateral arrangements made with Saskatchewan for trucking regulations, and there's been a very significant sale of hydroelectricity to Saskatchewan, never accomplished before, which has huge benefits to Manitoba at a time when the Leader of the Opposition is saying he would not produce or develop hydro for any export sales anywhere, period, which would guarantee much higher prices in Manitoba for Manitoba consumers, and businesses, quite frankly.

And I do point out to the member opposite that when we harmonized the hydro rates in rural and northern Manitoba to have one rate for the cities as well as rural and northern communities, that was a tremendous competitive advantage to businesses all throughout the province. When the member was a—when the Leader of the Opposition was a member of the government before, they had a higher rate for rural Manitoba companies, families and communities. They had a higher rate for northern companies, families and communities. That's what the regime that they had in place when it came to hydro rates. We harmonized that with one single rate for all Manitobans, all companies in Manitoba and all businesses in Manitoba, and that allowed them to be more competitive, and that significant advantage is because we have a Crown corporation.

The member opposite said he wouldn't sell the telephone system and then promptly did, and so Saskatchewan has a Crown corporation, SaskTel,

that they can do specific measures with. We don't have that advantage anymore because the member opposite squandered that asset on behalf of the people of Manitoba when he sold it off. We won't do that with Hydro and we won't allow him to do that with Hydro or any of our other Crown corporations, including Manitoba auto insurance, the Public Insurance Corporation.

So action is being taken before this issue even came up. It has continued to be taken after the issue has arisen. It will continue to be taken in the future as we discuss internal trade, and that will include all of our partners, including Saskatchewan, of which the Premier of Saskatchewan is one of the four premiers sitting on the internal trade agreement. And where set-asides occur or specific local procurement policies are put in place, they will be done in the—within the parameters of the internal trade agreement in such a way that it allows us to further level the playing field for all businesses but then to provide opportunities for indigenous communities and regional economic development opportunities as well. So those are the things that we'll be looking at on how we can improve those relationships together.

So—and then he asked for the specific information with respect to Tiger Dams, and my understanding is that there was a tender that was put out for about \$5 million of Tiger Dams in the fall of 2014, that tender was not awarded because the federal government had already moved on providing a similar product, and I read into him the record before other tenders that have gone out for floodfighting protection in Manitoba.

There was a tender done for 1 million sandbags in September of 2011. There was another tender that went out for 1.2 million sandbags in the spring of 2011.

In other cases, there were untendered contracts when the untendered emergent request for quotations, they called it, when the extreme flood event was occurring and was in process and they needed access to those materials as rapidly as possible.

So we've tried to ensure that those things are done. For example, Aqua Dams were purchased by tender in February of 2011 for \$2.5 million, 600 tubes, 40 cargo trailers, and I put this on the record already. Super sandbags were secured in February of 2010, 10,000 sandbags; that was a tendered contract.



But there are cases where they are untendered as well, and they're untendered when there is an emergent issue for quotations to respond to communities that are fighting imminent threats to their livelihood, to their ability to survive as a community. But in the case where there's time and there's no emergent threat, tenders have been done in the past and they will continue to be done in the future as we work forward on these matters.

So I've explained this to the member in the past and I put it on the record in the past, and I offer it up as information again to the member opposite.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I'll offer up this little tidbit of information to the Premier (Mr. Selinger), if I might. Eighty per cent of the time, they go to untendered contracts for Tiger Dam products, never shopping and never complying, not once, with The Financial Administration Act of our province, in posting information. Not a single time. Not one time.

So perhaps this is the reason that the Premier's credibility is shot when it comes to having any discussion with anyone who is actually looking for integrity in discussing a trade agreement. If he can't comply with his own rules in his own province, how could you possibly trust him to actually enter into a trading relationship which requires transparency and openness?

Eighty per cent of the time, hidden from the public view all the time, 80 per cent of the time given to one company, one special company, through one special minister, and now he appears to be interested in aiding and abetting that practice. Rather than offering up some argument for greater transparency in the future, he's running away from it.

Now, 80 per cent of the time these contracts for Tiger Dams or related flood protection devices were given to the Tiger Dams provider without any shopping at all. I could see the Premier hiding behind the excuse of emergency one year, but when you're buying these things every other year, wouldn't it make sense to plan in advance and have a supply available so that—and shop for the supply, rather than simply waiting 'til there's a so-called emergency and then rushing out to buy them from your friend who's the sole distributor, Tiger Dams, regardless of cost?

Wouldn't it make sense to use the market for what it's designed to be used for to provide better deals for Manitoba taxpayers? And wouldn't it make sense not to hide behind those who actually fill the sandbags and do the protection of their friends and

neighbours and use them as an excuse? That seems like a real sacrifice of integrity and character, on my part, when I listen to the Premier do that.

Eighty per cent of the time, one supplier, and the contracts all entered into with that sole supplier and always kept secret and covered up. Could the Premier explain that? Isn't that a violation of The Financial Administration Act? Isn't that breaking the law?

**Mr. Selinger:** As I've already explained to the member, when what they call an untendered emergent request for quotations is entered into, when they have an extreme flood event that's in process, and when they do that, they make—they purchase additional equipment. And sometimes it's Aqua Dams, sometimes it's super sandbags, sometimes it's sandbags, sometimes it's Tiger Dams. All of these are different products to meet different circumstances. And there's abundant evidence that those products have served a very valuable purpose in protecting communities.

We're extremely fortunate in Manitoba that we've seen no loss of life because of our flooding in this province having directly impacted people in communities. So this is a real testament to the local volunteers and the local emergency operations committees. And you know, when provinces are at risk in their communities, they take the necessary measures to protect those communities. And Manitoba has been in the forefront of doing that.

And then looking at prevention measures as well, which is why we've launched a major infrastructure program in Manitoba, and one of the key components of that infrastructure program is to increase flood protection for communities that have been consistently at risk in previous years of flooding, including communities in the Lake St. Martin area, includes—communities in the Lake Manitoba area, including communities along the red—the Assiniboine valley, all the way through to Brandon and up to St-Lazare. All of those communities have required protection.

In southwestern Manitoba, we've been putting additional protections in place as we've rebuilt the infrastructure down there, the roads and the highways and the bridges. And all of these are measures that have cost hundreds of millions of dollars, but they will show significant benefits in the future in the same way that our investment in the Winnipeg floodway has shown very significant investments.

\* (16:00)

The original initiative taken by former Premier Duff Roblin to build the floodway to one-in-99-year protection served us until 1997. And it even served us then. But it was very, very close to a major disaster occurring that required us to upgrade the quality of protection for floods around the city of Winnipeg, so we moved from a one-in-99-year protection level to a one-in-700-year protection level at the same time as we provided ring dikes in communities in southern Manitoba and at the same time as we provided individual flood protection out there.

And similar approaches are being taken to the people of the Assiniboine valley. And these things are being done in a way that allows those communities to be protected. I've said this before, a community under water is not going to have a very good economy, if any economy at all when it's persistently under water. But, when you make these investments, you will then allow these communities to have the confidence that their economies can be rebuilt and strengthened as we go forward.

And we've done that. We acknowledge we haven't been perfect in the execution of that, but we've done it in good faith to ensure that Manitoba communities are protected in the future, because Manitoba has been at the receiving end of several different watersheds in this province where extreme weather events have occurred.

And those extreme weather events in North America are becoming more frequent, more intense, and more severe as we go forward, which is why we also have a commitment to climate change. Because if we can, as a global community, tackle climate change, including participation from the Province of Manitoba, we can stop these climate change events which are causing natural disasters around the world from intensifying and causing—putting more communities at risk.

And so we have a responsibility to do that not only for Manitobans but for other communities around the world, and we—that responsibility is both, first of all, in prevention, to try to reduce our carbon footprint which we've done by building hydro and exporting it. And I note the member opposite, again, has now—has said on the record that he would not build hydro for export. That would prevent—that would allow millions of tons of carbon to be emitted where hydro could be used, which would put us even more at risk.

So that decision would not only threaten our economic prosperity and our ability to keep hydro rates low, but it would also affect our ability to protect ourselves from climate change in the future. So we're doing that in a prudent way while protecting our boreal forest and our indigenous communities and working in partnership with them.

So all of these things are part of the discussion that we're looking forward to in terms of the future vision for this province. We see—we have a future vision which is inclusive, which wants everybody to have an opportunity to participate in the economy, which wants to continue to grow the economy, which we're doing among the best of any jurisdiction in this country.

So, with respect to the Tiger Dams, the member knows full well that there was a tender put out for Tiger Dams in 2014. That was for \$5 million. It was not awarded because the federal government had already stepped in and done their own procedures to provide similar equipment.

There have been other times when tenders were not used when there was a severe extreme weather event that was occurring that put communities at risk. And our disaster people responded to local communities' need for equipment and protection, and we provided it. And it has made a great difference in those communities and allowed us then additional time to start putting permanent solutions in place—or longer-term solutions in place in terms of permanent dikes and permanent flood protection, and we've invested in that as well.

And my colleague here from east Brandon knows full well the difference that made on 18th St. in Brandon where, in the 2011 flood, there were triple super sandbags built up there, and the water was at the top range of those super sandbags and very seriously threatening the communities in Brandon, and we had to evacuate some of those communities.

But now, we've—through our budget process, we've put money in place with the City of Brandon to protect that area. We put a permanent dike in place, and in the flood of 2014, the community was much better protected from that flood, and that permanent flood protection great—gave greater confidence and security to the people of Brandon.

There were other measures that had to be taken with sandbags, but the extent of the response was far more measured and far more controlled because we

had built that permanent flood protection there, and we are now proceeding to do that with other communities in Manitoba.

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Chair, well, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) seems to believe that the simple, dull repetition of erroneous talking points adds an element of truth to them, but he's wrong in that.

The excuse that he uses for \$9 million of untendered Tiger Dams contracts being purchased is that it was an emergency every single time, and there were a half dozen of these deals signed with a friend of the party, a party pal of his. Nine million dollars was spent without ever attempting to get a sense of what the value could be that could be derived by actually going to a tender. And so no tender at all—again, no tender at all—was actually put out. Untendered contracts are required by law to be put on a computer in the Leg. Library within 30 day of awarding. That's under The Financial Administration Act, and that act was violated, breached, broken, disregarded, disrespected, totally thrown in the garbage by the Premier and his colleague the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Ashton). And the Premier says it was an emergency, so it's okay to break the law. But it isn't okay to break the law, whether it's an emergency or not.

He argues that it was an emergency, so it was okay to untender the contract for Tiger Dams a half dozen times, and I don't think that's a very good argument, and I would have your agreement, Madam Chair, because Treasury Board procurement rules—and you're very—

**Madam Chairperson:** Order. Order. Order.

We had a discussion in this committee earlier, and I don't know if the member who's speaking was here. I think it was another member. I appreciate that I'm a member of the House and there are things we're going to talk about that have—that I may have been involved in, but while I'm in the Chair, there's no reflection on the Chair and no attempt to bring the Chair into the proceedings in this committee. So I appreciate that's a difficult line to draw sometimes, but I think if we can do that, we're going to be able to proceed in a much more orderly way here, and so I'd ask for the co-operation of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister) in doing that. Thank you.

**Mr. Pallister:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand the sensitivity. I really do.

So former Finance ministers would understand Treasury Board rules. Former members of Treasury

Board would—should understand Treasury Board rules. The Premier should, as a former Finance minister, understand Treasury Board procurement rules especially. What they say, among other things, is in spelling out the requirements for emergency-related untendered contracts, is that they define an emergency as follows. They say an emergency procurement strategy must not be used where poor advance planning for operational goods or services has resulted in a requirement deemed to be urgent but does not meet the criteria for an emergency, and it must not be used for the purpose of avoiding competition between suppliers or to discriminate against any supplier, good or service.

So many members on that side of the House have served in Treasury Board. Some have participated as chairs of Treasury Board, as Finance ministers, such as the Premier and others. They would know that the repetitive use of untendered contracts and using the excuse of an emergency where one does not apply and where the definition does not apply under Treasury Board rules would be a violation of the Treasury Board procurement rules themselves. It's very clear.

Now, the Premier says all these Tiger Dams were bought because it was an emergency, but it wasn't an emergency, not by the Treasury Board's own definitions, Madam Chair. So, in 2010, for example, March 11th, there was another \$2-million–\$2.1-million Tiger Dam untendered contract given out to a party pal, a friend of the minister's, no competition whatsoever. The Premier's refused to answer questions on whether it was approved by Treasury Board or not. I'd invite him to put that on the record. He has refused to say whether it went through the Treasury Board process, but whether it did or did not, the Treasury Board procurement rules should be followed. They spell out the requirements which should be followed by any agency of government.

Now, interestingly, the first flood bulletin in 2010—I repeat, this contract was given out on March 11th, 2010—March 11th, 2010—for \$2.1 million, another Tiger Dam untendered contract. The first flood bulletin was issued two weeks after the purchase date for the \$2.1-million untendered Tiger Dam contract. That is, again, a full two weeks after the Premier's excuse about an emergency was thrown around today. This—the flood bulletin came out, and it noted, quote, at this time, no properties are threatened. And, again, at this time, no properties are threatened. There's no possible explanation as to why

this purchase was awarded through an untendered contract. It doesn't make any sense. If two weeks after the contract was given out, a flood bulletin says no properties are threatened, how can the Premier (Mr. Selinger) claim an emergency existed and use that as an excuse for yet again putting through an untendered contract, coincidentally, a good friend of the minister's himself?

\*(16:10)

I mean, I don't understand how he can continue to repeat on the record something that is so blatantly false. It does provide an understanding to me, however, Madam Speaker, of the frustration some of his colleagues may have felt in respect of these issues, and it does provide an understanding as to why the minister might have tried again to push through another \$5-million untendered contract in 2014 in the absence of any immediate need. If he got away with it, simply put, if he got away with it before so many times, maybe he thought he could get away with it again in 2014.

So, you know, the Premier is hiding behind flood circumstances when, in fact, his own departments have said there was no such emergency that existed in respect of this contract being given out. I'd ask him to clarify for the record what other excuse he would like to put on the record, because clearly this emergency thing is not going to fly.

**Mr. Selinger:** Again, I think the member, once again, clearly hasn't heard the responses I've given to him earlier with respect to these types of technologies. The note provided, it suggests that there are opportunities for untendered product when there is an emergent issue that's—and by the way, two weeks, he thinks that's a long time? Two weeks could have been two days depending on what's going on and how rapidly the conditions change, so the reality is is that things can change very rapidly when you're looking at these kinds of situations.

Additional purchase of tube inventory during response to extreme flood event: I believe he was referring to the spring of 2011.

**An Honourable Member:** Ten.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, if he's referring to '10, let me go back and take a look at that. Product inventory acquired prior to 2010 spring runoff to ensure adequate inventory available for local jurisdictions to protect against potential flooding: 1,500 tubes, just over \$2 million. And that was based on previous experience with the product. They wanted to ensure

that they had the product available going forward, so it was based on previous experience where they had some confidence in the product. And so they looked at that in that period of time. Just prior to that, they also purchased sandbags a month earlier—in the previous month. And it looks like they also did some sole-source contracts a little later on—no, that's in January of 2011—to make sure that they had products available.

So different circumstances generated different responses based on the need to provide products to meet local inventory requirements based on past experience. And, again, there's a variety of different technologies that are being used there, not just one product, and those different technologies come from different suppliers.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** To the Premier, I met recently with Ron Evans, the chief of Norway House Cree Nation, and there's an issue there of a cleanup of debris at the two-mile channel and eight-mile channel sites. This was as a result of construction in the 1970s of the various infrastructure—water infrastructure, to increase the flow from the top end of Lake Winnipeg. There was also concern about the erosion around Playgreen Lake and the channels. Will this be addressed, and when?

**Mr. Selinger:** I'm going to ask the member to repeat this specific question again.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, there is a tremendous amount of debris that was left at the two-mile channel and the eight-mile channel site near the Norway House Cree Nation. Those are channels that were built, you know, in relationship to Playgreen Lake in order for the water to flow faster and have more flow from Lake Winnipeg down to the Jenpeg dam. The concern is that there's a lot of debris which has not been cleaned up and there's also a lot of erosion around Playgreen Lake and that these two issues need to be addressed.

**Mr. Selinger:** I'm going to ask you to speak up a little bit. You've got a soft voice, and I'm not picking it all up in the echo in the room.

**Madam Chairperson:** Can I ask the member for River Heights—and maybe we can have just some co-operation from all honourable members to keep the noise level as low as possible so that members can hear each other, and I'll ask the member for River Heights to put his question again.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I met recently with Ron Evans who's a chief of Norway House Cree Nation. He raised a major concern with the debris which was still there at the Two Mile Channel site and the Eight Mile Channel site, those were constructed in the 1970s to increase the flow of water from Lake Winnipeg toward the Jenpeg dam.

There's also concern about the erosion around Playgreen Lake and at the channels.

Will these matters, the cleanup of the debris occur and the erosion be addressed, and if so, when?

**Madam Chairperson:** The honourable First Minister—can I just ask—we're just not quite ready, we'll just turn off the mic, the honourable First Minister, thanks.

The honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Selinger:** I thank the member for the question, I know that Chief Evans has a deep connection to the land up there and is very concerned about the respect for the land and the preservation of the land including debris issues as well as erosion issues.

And my understanding is this, that since he's raised this issue, that Hydro officials have been up there with him inspecting the concerns that he has and looking at measures that can be taken to address that, and as we know there have been—the Norway House is part of a comprehensive settlement agreement with Manitoba Hydro.

But there's an ongoing ability to raise issues and find ways to address those issues within that comprehensive settlement agreement, there's also an arbitration mechanism put in place with an appointed arbitrator if they can't come to an agreement on it, but my view of this matter is that Hydro will co-operate with the Chief to look at these issues and see what important measures need to be taken to address debris and erosion issues in the areas that the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has identified today.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Thank you, my understanding is that there was some initial progress, but it seems to have stalled. So I—that's the reason for raising that.

Second issue I want to raise has to do with the Little Saskatchewan First Nation, and this is one that I've raised before, and it concerns the tendering of the house construction at Little Saskatchewan was one of the communities which had to be evacuated, or most of them had to be evacuated in the flood of 2011, and as of yet, as my understanding, there still

haven't been any houses built. There's been a plan, which the Premier (Mr. Selinger) knows about, to build—I think it's about 110 houses, but the tendering because of delays and delays and delays still has not happened.

The road has been tendered, but the houses have not yet been tendered, and it seems that it needs some push at the provincial and federal level to try and make this happen.

**Mr. Selinger:** Again I thank the member from River Heights for the query on this matter. I'm glad to know that the road has been tendered—as the member knows, there's been ongoing discussions between the First Nations in the area that were impacted by the 2011 flood, and those discussions are part of an overall approach called Operation Return Home with the participation of the federal government who have hired a person to be the lead on that, and the provincial government, where we have hired a lead person to work with the First Nations and the federal government to come to satisfactory arrangements that all parties are comfortable with and have agreement on.

And so if he's asking me is there a way that we can make an inquiry and find out how rapidly we can get the houses tendered, I'd be willing to do that on behalf of the member.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the Premier. The concern is that the current construction season could be completely lost if this is not moving forward quickly.

\* (16:20)

The third issue I'd like to raise is, I think the Premier is aware of a family from Somalia who have been on the front steps of the Legislature probably most days early in the morning the last month Guled [phonetic] and Farriah [phonetic]—Farriah Gelly [phonetic], Guled Farah [phonetic], and they have—you know, there was a judge's order, my understanding, for integration—reintegration of the children into the family, but the progress has been slow. I understand that the Premier is, I think, aware of the issue and has been interested in encouraging some level of mediation, and I would just ask: What's the status of that currently?

**Mr. Selinger:** I talked briefly with the parents this morning, and I understand they'll be meeting this week to have a discussion on this. And I know there have been other meetings in the past and, you know, it's a—obviously a difficult issue for the parents. And we're trying to find a way to see what the way

forward is on this with due regard to the requirements of the child welfare act.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The fourth issue I'm quite concerned about—the status of the roof at The Forks Market. It's been quite leaky. This has been going on now, actually, for several years. Some of the business owners are complaining about the water coming down on them. There is concern about the hardwood floors where there's water dripping and the integrity of The Forks Market structure. And, clearly, that roof needs attention, and I just want to make sure that the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) aware of this issue and is looking into it, I would hope.

**Mr. Selinger:** I appreciate the member raising this issue with me. I—you know, we can certainly raise it with The Forks development corporation which, as the member knows, is a tri-level corporation with participation from all three levels of government. The Forks is a place I visit frequently, as recently as this Sunday, as a matter of fact, and the roof wasn't leaking, I can report, even though it was inclement weather out there, but we will look into it and see what measures they're taking. They have a strong management team there. I don't know if the member's brought it to the attention of the Forks development corporation himself, but we could certainly inquire as to what measures they're taking and what needs to be done if the roof is leaking in that facility at The Forks Market.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I'm sure the administration is well aware of this issue because whenever there's a heavy rain there's usually a lot of buckets come out to catch the water coming through the roof, so I would hope that they are aware of the problem because they are very quick with the buckets.

There's a climate change conference, my fifth question, and that is coming up soon. I am concerned that Manitoba has not presented a climate change plan in quite a number of years, and the one that was going to meet the targets, you know, was, I think, in 2009. The Premier announced that targets were not going to be met, but we haven't had a subsequent plan presented in the years since. And, you know, Manitoba will not look good if we don't have some sort of a plan to address climate change and follow-up to, you know, what we've discarded.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, the International Institute for Sustainable Development has done extensive consultations on behalf of the government in the community to look at different ways that we can

continue to attack and mitigate climate change, not only in Manitoba, but globally as well, and we are planning to attend the conference on the invitation of the Prime Minister and be part of it.

Subnational governments or provincial, state and regional governments have played a strong role in the past on being innovative and finding ways to reduce carbon emissions. The member will know that we kept our emissions flat for a decade while the economy grew 37 per cent, but we have seen some increases in the last few years. But that's at a time when our economy has been relatively robust in terms of its growth, and we are looking for ways to reduce carbon emissions. And we've done some work on that and we look forward to bringing that forward.

We do want to work with the federal government, which has now made a commitment to bring all the parties together, the provinces and territories, along with the federal government to have a strong, unified Canadian voice on climate change, and we look forward to being part of that solution. So we will have a plan that commits us to a target. We'd like to get a clearer understanding of where the federal government is on that, so there is some new activity going on here with the change in the federal government. But we're looking to be a partner with, as I said, along with other jurisdictions, on how to move forward on climate change. We like a focus on green jobs. We like a focus on innovation. We like a focus on participation by all the different sectors of our community that are involved in various forms of economic activity.

And we also think we have some experiences we can offer to other parts of the world on areas where we've had good success. For example, we've had excellent success on green buildings, reducing the carbon footprint of buildings. We've had some good success on an ethanol mandate. We've had good success on some of the things we've done with respect to protecting the boreal forest, Pimachiowin Aki, as well as other areas of the province in terms of increasing the amount of protection.

So we look forward to being part of that solution and doing further consultations on—with Manitobans once we come up with a set of targets that we're agreeing on as a country. We'll look to further consultations with our partners in the community to find ways to move forward on that, and we think we can do more together and we think we can be part of the solution.

Manitoba's emissions, as the member knows, are—we're among the more low-emitting provinces because we have the great advantage of Manitoba Hydro, which provides 98 per cent of our electricity in this province, and we export that hydro to other places, and we look forward to finding other innovative methods going forward. The member will know that we're very involved in recycling and waste reduction. He will know that we're involved in reducing pesticides in public places, including playgrounds. He'll know that we're looking for other ways to save Lake Winnipeg and reduce nutrification there. So there's—those are some of the things we've done, and we've expanded or created up to 10 parks; 11 have been created since 1999.

So we have a number of ideas on how we can move forward because Manitobans have given us the—their insights on that, but we'd like to do further consultations with them and look at how the provinces and federal government can agree on a target that will 'annow' us to make a contribution to global climate change mitigation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Mr. Gerrard:** One of the reasons that Manitoba didn't meet its targets was that there was a failure to address the agricultural emissions, and the agricultural emissions grew rapidly. So I hope that this will get some attention from the Premier (Mr. Selinger) in the planning that's done.

The—one of the things that is of significant concern with regard to zebra mussels is the possibility that the zebra mussels could spread from Lake Winnipeg up the Dauphin River to Lake St. Martin and then to Lake Manitoba. And that corridor is of significant concern, and, of course, given the problems that there have been in the last number of years at Lake St. Martin and the evacuations, you know, it would be a terrible thing if Lake St. Martin had zebra mussels as well.

And so I'm—you know, there have been inspection stations at other places, but I'm not aware of any at the Dauphin River-Lake St. Martin corridor, and I just want to ask the Premier whether he's paying attention to this corridor to do what he—can be done to reduce the transmission of zebra mussels.

**Mr. Selinger:** I would like the member—if I could, I'd ask the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) to identify the corridor he's specifically concerned about again.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Okay, well, this is along the Dauphin River. The Dauphin River goes from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg, and the Lake St. Martin, and then you have the Fairford River, and then you have Lake Manitoba.

And the issue may be less that the larvae will go upstream, because I think that from what I have learned that the, I mean, they easily go downstream but less well go upstream, but that you have boats moving back and forth along this corridor, and if there is going to be a spread to Lake Manitoba, this is one of the corridors where you've got a lot of boats and fishermen moving back and forth that needs to have particular attention.

\* (16:30)

So, you know, I know that there's been inspection stations in Selkirk, but I'm not aware of any inspection stations along this corridor, of any particular effort to make sure that the zebra mussels don't spread through this corridor.

**Mr. Selinger:** Well, again, I thank the member for the question and drawing his—our attention to that specific corridor. I mean, the logic of what he says is intuitively correct, but it's hard for any invasive species to go upstream versus downstream. Nonetheless, we shouldn't take that for granted, and we can ask the Minister of Conservation and his department officials what measures they plan to take specific to that corridor.

But as the member will know, we brought in—new regulations were proclaimed today with respect to zebra mussels in the province of Manitoba, and we have doubled the amount of decontamination units that we have out there and we're going to launch a public education campaign for all people that are involved in aquatic activity using boats because it does appear that this invasive species has wound up in Manitoba due to some type of human activity with respect to boats. Although, there's no absolute way of verifying that because the larvae have been found in the Red River as well, which is—does flow, unfortunately, into Lake Winnipeg.

But, if he is saying that we should ask what measures can be taken specific to that corridor, that's not an unreasonable request at all and we'll certainly bring that to the attention of the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

But the member should know we have tougher regulations. As proclaimed today, we have more

decontamination units and we have plans for further public education in this regard.

And we also have put together a science committee on zebra mussels now with the participation of the president of the University of Winnipeg, Dr. Annette Trimbee, as well as other scientists that have a real interest in this issue. And we'll be looking at all the best scientific advice we can get on how that can translate into public policy to strengthen our response to this invasive species in Manitoba.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Again, with regard to zebra mussels and quagga mussels it's my understanding that as a result of federal legislation which came into effect, I believe, this summer, that there is currently a fine of up to \$100,000 for anybody caught transporting zebra and quagga mussels. Well, that is quite a significant fine, and I think if more people were aware of the size of the fine it might send a message of how important this is. And to my knowledge, the government has not, you know, been talking about this and there has been probably very, very few people in Manitoba who are actually aware of this.

So I would make the Premier aware of this size of the fine and suggest to him that he look at including reference to the size of the fine and some of the advertising so people know how serious an offence this can be.

**Mr. Selinger:** I thank the member for calling attention to the fact that the fine can go to a maximum of \$100,000. That's a very severe fine for sure, and the regs also list the species which are considered invasive, including the addition of aquatic plants. And they prescribe general cleaning measures for watercraft as well as identifying aquatic invasive species control zones.

So we'll pursue with the Ministry of Conservation and Water Stewardship the specific corridor that the member mentioned and see what plans they have for that.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I believe, at this point in time, we—I know there's been a great deal of back and forth over the last number of hours in Executive Council here in the Chamber. And at this point in time we're prepared to move forward and go to the line by line.

**Madam Chairperson:** Okay, the last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is item 1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 2.1.

At this point, we would ask that the First Minister's staff leave the Chamber for the consideration of this last item, and, of course, we thank you for all your work in providing information over these many, many hours.

The floor is now open for questions.

Seeing none, we'll move to consideration of the resolution.

It's resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,679,000 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This concludes the Estimates for this department.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the committee are the Estimates of Education and Advanced Learning.

Should we take a brief recess to allow the minister and critic the opportunity to prepare for the start of the next set of Estimates? *[Agreed]*

So we are in recess until I call you back.

*The committee recessed at 4:36 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:46 p.m.*

**EDUCATION AND ADVANCED LEARNING**

**Madam Chairperson (Jennifer Howard):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Education and Advanced Learning.

Will the ministerial and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

As has been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner, and the floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Thanks to the minister and the deputy and the staff for coming in.

First question I guess is, was the minister and his department able to get me any of the answers that I had requested the other day?

**Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning):** My understanding is they're still forthcoming.



**Mr. Ewasko:** Can the minister share with me the number of graduates last year at the University of Manitoba?

Just for clarification, we'll just go with undergrad degrees.

**Mr. Allum:** While I appreciate the question. I hope the member will understand that, given the context in which we're deliberating today, that I don't have the specific details for the U of W. I can give him the specific details for our system-wide if he's interested in that.

**Mr. Ewasko:** System-wide, and you're meaning—can you just be a little more specific, what you mean by system-wide?

**Mr. Allum:** Yes, 2014 university graduates and 2013 college graduates is the best that I can deliver on short notice today.

**Mr. Ewasko:** We can start with that today, and then if tomorrow or the next time that we're in Estimates, if you could please provide the breakdown per post-secondary institution, please.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Allum:** Thank you for that, and I appreciate his patience in that regard.

So for 2014, university graduates, for bachelor's degree, there was 5,816—that's 5,816; for master's degree, that would be 866—866; for doctoral degrees, there were 142—that's 142; for medicine and dentistry, that's 143—143; and then certificate and diplomas provided by the universities is 424; and that would be a grand total of 7,391—7,391, a grand total, that would be your university graduates for 2014.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you to the minister, and so we'll look forward to tomorrow or the next day that we're in Estimates for the breakdown per institution.

I know that the minister mentioned today again in regards to the K-to-3 class cap size, and I'd like the minister to provide the House with the information or the background to basically why the decision for capping the K-to-3 class sizes to 20.

**Mr. Allum:** I thank the member for the question.

Of course, the rationale for the small class size initiative was really based on a number of things. One, he should know, is that was evidence-based, research-based analysis of how to improve outcomes for student success across the continuum of

education, and so we wanted to be sure in the first instance that a smaller class size provides a number of advantages for students at a very early age.

So, of course, we know that that one-on-one time between a teacher and a student—and he'll know that himself—is absolutely essential at the younger age. It's, of course, why we continue in the first instance to do early childhood education and this government is a very important part of what we do, and that not only extends to the early education unit in our own department, but it, of course, is across government in terms of our investments in child care, our support for child-care workers across the board and to ensure that parents have a safe place for their children while they're at the office or at work, as the case may be.

So what we wanted to do in the first in—was to make sure that was—that there was an evidence-based way of addressing the early years in the post-secondary system to ensure that students get that really important one-on-one time with the teacher, but it extends beyond that; it's also relational or relationship-based as well. We know that by having a more direct relationship with the student, the teacher, then, is able to dig down into deeper issues that probably wouldn't be possible if you had more children in the classroom, and so it helps to deal with a real relationship as well. So it's—that one-on-one time for instruction is absolutely invaluable as—he'll know that, of course. I'm not telling him anything that he doesn't know.

And then, but it's more than that. It's the relationship with the child itself that the teacher's able to develop so that they can begin to understand the context in which the child is entering school at kindergarten, able to have a proper appreciation of the family circumstances in which the child may or may not find him or herself in. And then, of course, to continue to build on that relationship throughout the year to provide the child with—and the student with the supports that they need that are in addition to or otherwise complement instruction. We know from the evidence that's been provided by Children and Youth Opportunities and the fantastic folks who do that, Dr. Santos, of course, and Jan Sanderson as the deputy minister being the two, is that brain development happens at a very early age and so consequently, our government made a commitment to ensure that children have the supports that they need, Healthy Child, Healthy Baby, early childhood education and commitment to child care.

So this, the K-to-3 initiative, simply complements that initiative, and, as I said, promotes student success initially from K-to-3 but I think has much longer-term value as the child progresses through the education system.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Basically, my question to the minister was what evinced—evidence-based research showed that capping K-to-3 class sizes to 20—why the number 20, and where else in the country do they—have they capped K-to-3 class sizes to 20.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, I would assume—I thank the member for the question, as it's a great question—assume that he's also, of course, conversant with the literature when it comes to early childhood education, the science behind brain development, and then you combine that with our understanding, ourselves, of the kinds of initiatives and actions that we need to take in order to ensure students' success. I think when you see that combination of research, I don't think it leaves any doubt as to the value of the initiative. I know that in my own experience, I had

the great, very odd, but very, very great experience of growing up down the street from Dr. Fraser Mustard, who has passed away now but who has been a giant and iconic figure in understanding earlyhood—early childhood development. He—as it happened, they lived down the street. I spent hours upon hours at their place and at their farm in Mount Forest, Ontario, and so we know that there's a huge body of evidence to suggest that when it comes to early learners, the more opportunity we can provide for those children in terms of—especially in relation to one-on-one class time and in those early years can make an extraordinary difference—

**Madam Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 2, 2015

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