

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

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authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 6, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

Routine proceed—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, I would like to highlight an incredibly disappointing and sad event which happened earlier today, right here. During this—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

An Honourable Member: I'd like to raise a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Madam Speaker: I believe the member is raising a matter of privilege.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying, I would like to highlight an incredibly disappointing and sad event which happened in this place earlier today. During this event I feel like not only my privilege, but the privilege of multiple members of this House was violated.

During voting on Bill 204, which stood in the name of the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), members from the other side made disparaging comments about female members on this side of the House. While myself and other women from the government side were voting, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) and the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) shamed us for the way we were voting.

Let me be clear: Only female members were targeted in this verbal attack. Male colleagues of my caucus were not targeted.

Every member of this House should be working towards gender equality, but, instead, the members from the other side have quickly established a pattern of sexist, inappropriate behaviour that impedes the privilege of every woman in this House. A member should be free to vote along with his or her

conscience and consideration. We should not be forced to vote a certain way simply because of our gender.

I would ask that the members, at the very least, withdraw their comments and apologize before this House.

By targeting only members of one gender, the NDP caucus is attacking the ability of female members of this House to stand on the same level as men of this House. The fact that this came from two male—or three male members of the other side is even more egregious.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), that my privilege as a parliamentarian has been breached and I ask that an apology be offered at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I have to say that I was there for the vote as well and I certainly did not hear any of the comments that the member—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —is speaking about in her matter of privilege. However, I think we should wait until we see Hansard, produce a copy of Hansard and just ascertain from there as to what was said and what was attributed to the members that she is alleging.

Other than that, it does meet the earliest opportunity and it does—it did end with a motion, so to that extent it would be in order, but I'm not sure there's any argument for a prima facie case having been made until we see the Hansard.

Madam Speaker: As a matter of privilege is a serious concern, I'm going to take this matter under

advisement to consult the authorities and we'll return to the House with a ruling.

Introduction of bills? Oh.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 207—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Kewatinook, that Bill 207, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, this bill addresses what has been called the last socially acceptable prejudice against those who are obese. It is time to recognize that discrimination, bias, and stigma directed toward those who are obese or who are physically different in one way or another is harmful and that our attitudes and our laws need to change.

This bill will include physical size or weight under the list of protected categories in Manitoba's Human Rights Code.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report Concerning Complaints about Judicial Conduct of Judges, Masters and Judicial Justices of the Peace, as well as the Annual Report for The Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Adjudication Panel 2015.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I rise today to table the Annual Basic Utility Bundle Cost Comparison for the year ending March 31st, 2016.

Madam Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Ministerial Statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Government Visits Northern Manitoba

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Madam Speaker, our government stands with all Manitobans, and as

MLA for Thompson, I am proud to represent northerners.

I'm always pleased to welcome my colleagues to the North, and I have certainly had many opportunities to do so. Our Premier (Mr. Pallister) came to Thompson this past spring to meet with northerners and genuinely listen to our concerns. This summer the Minister of Growth, Enterprise, and Trade (Mr. Cullen), the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education came at different times to Thompson and to other northern communities to meet with community members and discuss northern issues with groups such as Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.

My hometown of Thompson lies on Treaty 5 land, traditional NCN territory. NCN is a First Nation reserve located at Nelson House about an hour northwest of Thompson. NCN is active in a number of ventures in northern Manitoba. They currently operate a hotel and a grocery store in Thompson and are partners in the Wuskwatim generating station which I had the pleasure of touring in August with NCN Chief Marcel Moody and the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler).

Just last week, the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) and I visited Nelson House and met with Chief Moody, board members and councillors at their wellness centre. The minister of indigenous and northern affairs was also in Thompson and so was the minister from Selkirk—the MLA from Selkirk.

NCN celebrated a milestone last week as their 4.2-acre Mystery Lake property in Thompson was officially designated as urban reserve. I was happy to be part of community celebrations last week in Thompson with provincial, municipal and indigenous representatives as we recognized the efforts of all those who made this historic designation a reality.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I have been working hard to have meaningful dialogue with northern stakeholders so that we can create long, meaningful—create meaningful long-term relationships in the North such as—but there is much more work to do. But our new government is up to the challenge and will deliver results for northern Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Labour Relations Act

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, as a life-long labour activist, I know just how important strong and stable labour relations are for Manitoba. All Manitobans have the right to work in a safe and fair work environment and they have the right to be heard.

* (13:40)

The legislation that's currently in place makes sure that these rights are respected, particularly during a drive for unionization. I'm extremely disappointed that this Conservative government doesn't share this perspective.

Make no mistake, Madam Speaker, Bill 7, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, is a direct attack on working people in Manitoba. It removes language that protects workers from intimidation, fraud, coercion and threat. It's a direct attack on the rights of workers. One need only look at the Manitoba Labour Board's website to see instances of the very things that this legislation will no longer protect workers from.

The current legislation has some of the most restrictive certification requirements in Canada at 65 per cent of workers signing cards to allow automatic certification. These are requirements that the Conservatives set themselves in 1992 under the Filmon government. Even they recognized when the 65 per cent of workers had already expressed their desire to join a union by signing a card, the certification should be automatic. The system works and there's no need to tamper with it other than purely political payback.

Bill 7 will force a certification vote every time. It creates a situation where it's much too easy to intimidate and threaten employees before they vote.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has shown time and again that he's not on the side of Manitoba workers. He refuses to raise minimum wage. He openly discussed getting rid of project labour agreements. He's done nothing, holding his hands up as jobs disappear from Churchill and The Pas, and as OmniTRAX cuts rail service, threatening northern Manitoba food security.

Madam Speaker, our NDP team will continue to fight for the rights of Manitoba workers and against this government's attacks on Manitoba labour—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Village Canadien Co-op

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the 40th anniversary of Village Canadien housing co-op and celebrate four decades of safe and affordable housing in my constituency of Riel. This non-profit housing complex has 226 units and is located on two sites at River Road and St. Mary's Road.

Madam Speaker, in the mid-1960s, a group of concerned families recognized a need to expand on the quality, cost and shortage of housing for families, and set out to build a thriving co-operative. For 40 years, the Village Canadien has worked in partnership with the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg in providing housing in Riel.

Today we have a strong and active administration with dedicated volunteer advocates. They are a testament to the founding principles of managing a co-operative such as the Village Canadien Co-op. They are a strong leader and a voice for other housing co-ops in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, as the MLA representing Riel, I was proud to recently celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Village Canadien Co-op in the community. And I was delighted to be part of this celebration and meet many of the families in this vibrant community on a beautiful day.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the success and hard work of the co-op and applaud them for transforming a vision from many years ago into a thriving, healthy community for all families.

Madam Speaker, I thank the Village Canadien Co-op for providing a future of hope and affordable housing for many families in my riding of Riel and I ask all members of this House to help me congratulate them.

Rivers Train Station Restoration Committee

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): The community of Rivers came together on Friday, September 23rd, to mark the receipt of a \$25,000 grant from the CN EcoConnections From the Ground Up program which supports beautification projects nationwide.

The Rivers Train Station Restoration committee was one of four groups across Canada to receive a super grant. Hundreds of students from the elementary and high schools were joined by citizens and dignitaries just south of the agricultural grounds

along Highway 25 to help plant 235 little leaf lilac bushes. The trees form the outline of a labyrinth that looks like the front of a steam locomotive, paying tribute to the town's railway history.

Beside the loco labyrinth will be 14 stations for RV parking. A monument acknowledging the contribution of the community's railroaders will also be established.

Chairperson Donna Morken and her committee got to work in 2006 after \$400,000 was left as a bequest from the estate of Rivers farmer Bernard Goekoop to restore the train station.

The railroad is a—very important to us for all kinds of reasons; it's our history, it's our heritage, Donna Morken said in an interview with the Brandon Sun. The town was formed because of the railroad; we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the railroad.

The committee hopes to reopen the Rivers train station for good in 2017 to commemorate 100 years since the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway opened the first depot in the community.

Inside the building that was closed in the early 1990s due to declining use, there are plans for a tourist information booth, a community museum, the headquarters for the Rivers and Area Community Foundation and, of course, an office for VIA rail. Rivers is the only VIA Rail boarding station between Melville, Saskatchewan, and Portage la Prairie, as well as the lone point between Dauphin and the US border. Besides VIA, between 30 and 35 freight trains pass through the community daily.

Donna Morken and her volunteer committee are recognizing the past but are looking forward to the future and the promise of something new for the community.

It seems that the community of Rivers—pardon the pun—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Forum on Brain and Mental Health

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, this week is national Mental Illness Awareness Week. On Sunday, I held a forum on brain and mental health in River Heights. Four panelists presented. Dr. Bruce Holub of Guelph, Ontario, spoke eloquently about the importance of nutrition related to brain health.

Bonnie Bricker, mother of Reid Bricker, spoke out about the need to have peer support workers and

individuals to help with navigating the mental-health-care system, as well as the need to change legislation to make it easier for parents and friends to help.

Dr. Andrea Piotrowski, president of the Manitoba society of psychologists, spoke to the need for better access to psychological services.

Dr. Laurence Katz, medical director for Child and Adolescent Mental Health at the Health Sciences Centre, spoke of the important role of attachment and early support for children in the prevention of mental health difficulties.

There were many comments and questions from those who attended. I want to thank our panelists and to thank all who participated in an enlightening discussion of the need for better attention to brain and mental health.

We are all aware of concerns about stigma associated with mental health conditions. It continues to be a serious issue, and eliminating the stigma is important. What has received less attention is the stigma associated with obesity. Indeed, obesity has been called the last socially accepted—acceptable prejudice, and we have in our province bias, discrimination and stigma directed at those who are obese. It is time to move to address this because the belittling and denigration of those who are obese has, among other effects, a serious impact on the mental health of those who are obese. Indeed, careful studies have shown that people who have experienced weight discrimination are more than twice as likely to remain obese as those who do not experience such prejudice.

Today, to bring attention to and to address this issue, I've introduced Bill 207, which will include physical size and weight as protected characteristics in—

Madam Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions I'd like to introduce you to some folks that are in the gallery today.

We have seated in the public gallery from Neil Campbell School 40 grade 4 students under the direction of Mr. Alvin Dyck, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

On behalf of all members we welcome all of you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Affordability for Manitobans Cost-of-Living Concerns

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, this government refuses to take responsibility for its actions; it just wants to play the blame game. Its ministers won't take responsibility for forcing workers at Macdonald Youth Services to go on strike. It refuses to offer help to the North when it is in crisis, and the Premier refuses to protect front-line workers.

When will the Premier take responsibility for his actions? When will he work for all Manitobans?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank the member for the question, and I appreciate the opportunity to reference the fact that we are, of course, dedicated here to working very, very hard on behalf of all Manitobans and we'll continue to.

And I want to encourage the members—I've offered members of all parties the opportunity to be involved in the prebudget consultation process, which I think is a really useful opportunity for all of us to work together.

* (13:50)

Some of my most satisfying work as a parliamentarian has been when people set aside a backward-looking and excessively partisan approach and worked together for a better future, and I would encourage members to do that. It is an excellent opportunity to learn from Manitobans the difference, I think, between the decade of debt and deceit and dysfunction that we inherited from the previous administration—is that we trust Manitobans and are prepared to listen to them.

Ms. Marcelino: This government evades and avoids responsibility. Rates for MPI are going up, hydro rates are going up, tuition for students, going up, but it refuses to accept responsibility.

We know that when a government can only play the blame game, it is because they do not have a plan to keep life affordable for Manitobans.

When will the Premier actually sit down with Manitobans and find real ways to keep life affordable?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, I want to thank the member for the questions, though I do think that her point about placing blame and accepting responsibility is one that would serve her well to reflect upon.

I would suggest to her that a decade of debt has put Manitoba in a more vulnerable position. A decade of decay in social services has put Manitobans in an even more vulnerable situation. A decade of decline in terms of the previous government's mismanagement of our economy and distrust of Manitobans to spend their own money the way they see fit has created a situation that we are now facing and which she refuses to accept responsibility for, and I encourage her to reflect upon that because I think that in working together we can achieve better results.

I have great respect for a number of the members opposite who I know care as deeply about Manitobans' future as we do on this side, and I think that they have something to offer if they choose to set aside old partisan wranglings and actually work together for the benefit of Manitobans, something I encourage them to do.

Madam Speaker: The honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Marcelino: We don't see it as a decade of decline when the province rated second best in the economy among the country and second lowest unemployment rate. That was before they came into office.

Madam Speaker, this government won't accept responsibility. It cancels a rain-rail relocation study with no plan to build downtown Winnipeg. It ends projects that will grow our city and bring good jobs downtown. It provides no support to the North while they are in crisis. It refuses to treat Manitobans with respect. The Premier compares their requests to children wanting gifts at Christmas.

When will the Premier set aside the partisan games and provide a plan to grow the economy and build our province?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I, Madam Speaker, I—again, I appreciate the member's question. Her question in respect of Christmas is, I think, fair enough. I think there are a lot of children in the gallery who are looking forward to Christmas, and I also think they'll be asking for presents at Christmas.

But I think, like most children, they will understand that they may not get everything that they asked for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —because their moms and dads can't afford everything they ask for. The analogy is one that would serve the members well to reflect upon because, quite frankly, after 16 or 17 years in government the member in her preamble refuses to accept any responsibility whatsoever for the fastest increase in taxes on the very families that these children are from, on the fastest growth in provincial debt per capita, doubling of our provincial debt, a doubling of our Hydro debt, refuses to accept the responsibility for any of these actions that we must now fix, repair and rebuild. We are prepared to do that.

I have repeatedly and will repeatedly encourage members to be part of finding the solutions and fixing the problems—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Labour Relations Act Timeline for Second Reading

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): This question is for the new Government House Leader (Mr. Micklefield): When will this new Government House Leader call Bill 7 for second reading?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the question, and, yes, we on this side of the House are looking forward to debate on Bill 7 as well. And we're really looking forward to Bill 7, and we're looking forward to debate on Bill 7 because it was an election promise that we made to Manitobans.

Manitobans supported that decision to move Bill 7 forward, and in terms of this agenda going forward, we believe this is about restoring democracy, and we believe a lot of people in Manitoba want this, including a lot of workers in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Lindsey: The Premier and his minister are stalling on their own legislation to limit the time

that the public and members of the legislator Assembly have to voice their concerns about it. They're afraid to call their own bill. The minister is understandably sensitive about limiting the opportunity of Manitobans to express their views on this bill and on Bill 8.

I would ask them now: When will this government stop hiding and call second reading for Bill 7?

Mr. Cullen: Obviously, we have a lot of agenda items on our agenda here as a new government. We've been here for four days now, obviously moving legislation through—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: The people of Manitoba gave us a very broad mandate and a very broad mandate to get a lot of things done, and we are moving forward on that agenda with Manitobans. We are being upfront with Manitobans. We are currently involved in the largest prebudget consultation across the country, across the province, that we've ever had. We're offering Manitobans to join in that discussion, and we're looking forward to that discussion going forward.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Lindsey: The Premier has made a great show of parading his alleged trade union credentials, which apparently lasted for all of about two years.

When will this make-believe trade unionist call second reading of Bill 7?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I'm proud of my years in my union. I'm proud of representing the workers I served.

Madam Speaker, I know the member and his colleagues are having trouble grieving, and the grieving process is making it hard for them to understand that Manitobans made a choice in the last election. They caused the PC party of Manitoba to be tied for the highest total seats in the history of Manitoba. They chose that we should gain 21 seats, which is the highest seat increase in the history of the province of Manitoba, and they also decided that we were to receive 74,000 more votes than in 2007 while the NDP lost 90,000 votes in that year.

And I would simply conclude by saying I know they're having difficulty with the grieving process,

but they should not resort to lashing out in personal attacks. I would encourage them to be part of finding the solutions while we're in government they failed so miserably to find when they were in government.

Corrections Phone Service Charges to Inmates

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): The other day federal Corrections investigator Howard Sapers said with respect to inmates in federal prisons, and I quote: Family contact is a very, very important part of the safe and timely return to communities.

Does the Minister of Justice agree that this applies equally to inmates serving their sentences in Manitoba's provincial jails?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the minister for that—or the member for that question.

* (14:00)

I've had the opportunity to visit all of the correctional facilities now in the provincial correctional facilities in the province of Manitoba. I've met some incredible people, the correctional officers, all of those employees that work within those institutions.

We recognize, Madam Speaker, that after a decade of decline after the NDP government, that there's a lot of work that needs to be done with respect to this and some of the challenges that are faced in our justice system. But we are committed to making those improvements and working with the various stakeholders in our province on that.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, a notice that was posted recently in Milner Ridge Correctional Centre advised that a new company is taking over telephone service, and inmates will soon be required to pay rates many times more than Manitobans have to pay. It'll now cost \$3 for an inmate to make one personal call up to 15 minutes and it'll cost \$2 just to deposit funds in their account.

This will prevent many inmates from maintaining contact with spouses, partners, parents and their children. It will make it harder for inmates to readjust to life when they return to our communities. It will make it more difficult for correctional staff to manage populations. It will reduce public safety.

Why would the minister allow this new telephone provider into Manitoba jails?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I want to thank the member for the question, and it is a good one.

And after having visited many of the facilities and—we see that in many cases there was a need to improve the phone system within the facilities. That's exactly what we're doing, of many years where inmates were not even able to make a phone call out of the facility because it was shut down for whatever reason. And so we're making the improvements that should have been happen—should have happened many years ago. It's a start. It's a work in the right direction. But we will continue to improve services to protect the safety of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, the company soon operating at Milner Ridge, and I expect in other institutions, is based in Texas. Prison telephone companies have a terrible reputation across the United States for making it difficult or impossible for inmates to maintain relationships with their families. These companies earn windfall profits by charging rates many times higher than local telephone providers. The Americanization of our jails is the last thing that Manitobans need.

Will this minister commit today to reviewing the impact of this new Texas-based telephone provider on inmates' opportunity to maintain positive relationships with their families?

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question.

We believe in improving services for Manitobans, and that's exactly what we're doing. And we want to do so in order to protect the safety of all Manitobans, and that is what is happening with this new telephone system in Manitoba. It is more efficient and effective for those inmates who are looking to contract their lawyers, to contact family members and so on. It is a more effective system that will be in place.

Unlike members opposite, we believe in positive results and we believe in protecting the safety of all Manitobans.

Board and Ministerial Appointments Female Representation

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, we've heard from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that meritocracy is the cornerstone of his appointments and promotions for women. I'm interested, then, how the Premier defends his own argued meritocracy when he's chosen to do away with four women with profound professional, academic and community experience in just the last 12 weeks.

Does the Premier believe that women like Dr. Leslie Spillett, with over 35 years of community experience, and Angeline Ramkissoon do not enjoy enough merit to be on the police board?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for this question.

And I would just like to say that I'm very proud to work with a government that is supporting equality in women. We've got a strong plan to be putting forward in enhancing women's opportunities on boards and in governments and we have introduced many measures. We've also got our second Attorney General (Mrs. Stefanson) who is female in the province of Manitoba and the first female Indigenous Relations minister.

I'm very proud to work with this caucus and this Cabinet that supports women's equality in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, in the last 12 weeks, the Premier systematically removed two very talented, capable and intelligent female deputy ministers from his Conservative government: one indigenous and one woman of colour.

I think it's important to note in this House that one of these DMs played a huge role administratively, navigating Winnipeg-Manitoba through one of the worst natural disasters in the flood of 2001.

If not these deputy ministers, then can the Premier affirm and share with us which women, if any, have merit?

Ms. Squires: Madam Speaker, we have an ambitious plan to be recruiting and empowering women based on their merit. We have made several appointments.

We have a strong female leader in charge of our Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. We have so many strong women who are empowered.

And, Madam Speaker, I know that the women that we are working with and that we are in collaboration with that we're empowering, they're excited to be part of a team and to know that their voices are valued and that they are around the table because they have a strong voice, and we're excited to work with a solid, strong group of women who are empowered to lead in this province.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Fontaine: Yesterday, the Premier accused me of playing identity politics when I questioned him about Macdonald Youth Services workers, which is confusing, unless he thinks that as an indigenous MLA any question that I ask in this House is identity politics, which, by the way, is part of my job to ask questions.

When I juxtaposed the Premier's assertion of disrespect to the removal of two indigenous women and two women of colour from very important boards and critical government positions in only the last 12 weeks, I ask if the Premier feels that this is disrespectful.

Madam Speaker: The—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms. Squires: Madam Speaker, I have a question as well.

I would like to ask the member for St. Johns to apologize to this House, to apologize to the women who work in this building, the women who visit this building, for her encouraging of a misogynistic attack when she invited her friends, her union friends, to come up here and, you know, do harassment and a—do a misogynistic attack on the women who work and visit in this building.

And then for her to go out on the front steps and say thank you three—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: Three times she thanked those members for their misogynistic attack, and for that I ask that she apologize to all the women who work in

this House, all the women who visit this House on a regular basis.

Fossil Fuel Report Tendering Inquiry

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, the Minister for Crown Services waved around a report last week that implies that burning fossil fuels is a good choice compared to clean hydro. That in itself is ridiculous, and a \$50-per-ton carbon price means that the report is not worth the price or worth the paper it is written on.

I ask the Minister for Crown Services: How much did this report cost and was it put to tender?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): I'd like to thank the member for Minto for that question because he was a member of the decade of debt—[interjection]—Madam Speaker, the member for Tyndall Park, and I'd like to point out to him that he was a member of a government that saw Bipole III go over overrun by over \$350 million in cost overruns.

Our question to the member for Tyndall Park is: While he knew all that information, what exactly did he do with it?

*(14:10)

Madam Speaker: I just want to caution all members maybe to take a big breath. I have heard what I would refer to as a derogatory personal comment being put forward. I don't think there's any place in this Legislature for any types of comments that would denigrate another person in any way. So I would urge everybody, this is important debate. There's a number of important issues before us, and I think the public expects good decorum in this House so that we can have the quality of debate that I think the public deserves.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a supplementary question.

Manitoba Hydro Green Energy Promotion

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, 76 per cent of Saskatchewan's energy comes from gas and coal. They need our clean, green hydro power.

Madam Speaker, Saskatchewan has contracted to buy 18 per cent of Keeyask's power. A \$50-per-ton carbon price means Saskatchewan needs

our clean energy and will help pay the construction costs of Keeyask.

Will he, the minister, will he stop attacking Hydro and start promoting our energy advantage?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): I'd like to thank the member for Tyndall Park for that question. He comes from a decade of debt, Madam Speaker, and, yes, we are out there promoting Manitoba Hydro and a clean energy.

But what we are straddled with is during this debt—decade of debt, the member opposite knew that Keeyask was running over cost by \$700 million. And our question is to members opposite: What did the member opposite do with that information when he knew about it over the last decade?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Marcelino: I thought we are on question period. The minister wants to change places.

Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to announce that I have finally found a job for the Minister of Crown Services. A \$50-per-ton carbon price means Saskatchewan—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Marcelino: I ask the minister: Will he stop engaging in his partisan stunts, leave this Chamber, get on the road and start—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Schuler: I'd like to thank the member for Tyndall Park, and we appreciate his questions in this House.

I would like to tell members opposite that I did get out of this city and I travelled for three and a half thousand kilometres up North, and I learnt a lot of things, and one of the things I learnt up North is that under his watch during the decade of debt, they ran up debt to \$25 billion on Manitoba Hydro, bringing down the finances of Manitoba Hydro, bringing Manitoba Hydro to the point of bankruptcy.

We would like to know what they did for the last decade other than driving up debt.

East-Side Road Construction Timeline

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I was relieved to hear that it is possible for our Province to fund

infrastructure for First Nations. I heard \$50 million invested for the east-side road twice, once from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and once from the minister. All other issues aside, the simple fact of the matter is that it is within the Province's mandate to financially help those First Nations build the roads.

Minister, mismanagement aside, I ask again: How many kilometres of the east-side road will be built within the next 12 months?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I thank the member for the question because I know it is very near and dear to her as she—representing the east side of Manitoba.

And we are still developing our plan and we're still trying to dig out from the mess that the NDP left us with East Side Road Authority. It's going to take some time. We've had wonderful consultation meetings with the members of the First Nations on the east side, and we'll continue to do this. But realizing that we're dealing with the decade of debt, decay and decline over the last 17 years, it's going to take a while to figure this out.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kewatinook, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Klassen: Having a meeting with the 13 chiefs and/or members of councils is all well and good. In fact, all our northern and indigenous leaders are used to meeting and discussing items with ministers that have come and gone for years, for about 149 years in fact. But here we are in 2016 without these roads.

You heard that these leaders were bullied and mistreated. In fact, you are demonstrating a form of bullying yourself. You are passive-aggressively doing the same thing by not committing to anything.

Minister of Infrastructure: Has anyone received a signed agreement for you—from you regarding the east-side road?

Mr. Pedersen: I thank the member for the question because it really does show the difference between the previous government and this current government.

When we sat down with those councils from the east side we had a respectful, honest conversation. We also agreed to continue to meet, and you can only do that if you have an honest and respectful relationship. Unlike the previous government who went in and made promises, used Manitoba taxpayers to try and buy votes, we are going to

continue to build on our relationship as we develop our plan for the east-side road.

Madam Speaker: The honourable for Kewatinook, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Klassen: Your government has talked about community benefit agreements and the fact that we need community involvement. These communities are ready for real action. But perhaps, ministers, you are overwhelmed. It would appear that many of you were ready to hit the ground running. You have been the critics for many years, and yet now, when you have the opportunity for positive action you come up short; your job is to act as constituent advocates.

I ask the Minister of Infrastructure: Where are your community benefit agreements?

Madam Speaker: I would encourage members when asking questions that you do it in the third party and not make the questions personal by using the words you and your. Thank—and I thank all honourable ministers for that.

Mr. Pedersen: I thank the member for the question.

The difference between this government and the previous government—and when you talk about community benefit agreements—and I'll reiterate again: CBAs did not work. There was no community in what the previous government does. There was no benefits going back to those previous government—or to the previous—the government had no benefits to the previous members.

I would urge all the members for the opposition to read the Auditor General's report, and it talked about that. And there was certainly no agreement from the First Nations' perspective when the government came in and demanded you sign here or else.

We will build a respectful relationship with the First Nations, and we'll—we've done that already; we will continue to do that. That's how this government will continue.

Financial Administration Act Debate on Bill

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Manitobans from every corner of the province, from every background and every walk of life, elected our strong diverse PC team.

Can the Minister of Finance tell the House how Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, will enable additional members of our strong

and diverse PC team to contribute to fixing the finances?

* (14:20)

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): This new government of Manitoba has a robust and extensive legislative agenda, and we are so pleased this afternoon that the House will have the opportunity to undertake to debate Bill 6,

The Financial Administration Amendment Act, a bill that is imperative, strengthens the deliberations at the—an important table for this important—for our Cabinet. It acknowledges the important work that government has already undertaken to reduce the number of Cabinet ministers from 18 to 12. But it also addresses at the same time the strengths of our overall team, the diversity of this team, and the—this bill will result in actually allowing—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —all of these members, these new members, on that committee to fully participate in the activities of Treasury Board. We are a diverse team bringing a great agenda. We can't wait to get started.

Fossil Fuel Report Tendering Inquiry

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Earlier in this question period, my hard-working colleague from Tyndall Park asked a very important question. He wanted to know the contract that was issued for the report calling for a fossil fuel future for Manitoba, was it tendered, and how much did it cost? On neither instance did he get an answer from the minister.

I'm going to give the minister a second chance. Will he make publicly available the cost of that fossilized study, and was it put to tender?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): I'd like to thank the member for his question.

And he will know, because he was a member of the government of the decade of debt, that Bipole III, which was supposed to be coming in at a far less cost, is now going to come in at a \$350-million cost overrun.

Madam Speaker, that is very serious not just for Manitoba Hydro but for the finances of Manitoba.

The question is to each and every one of the members opposite: When they found out this information, what exactly did they do with it?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Altemeyer: Madam Speaker, that's a completely unacceptable answer. He completely avoided the question again. Maybe when he practises his rote answers in the mirror he thinks it sounds good. That is not going to cut it. We need accountability in this Chamber. We need accountability to all Manitobans.

If the minister—and I know there are two ministers in that Cabinet who are ministers without portfolio; he might be one of them—but will the Premier, then, stand up and answer the question which his minister is either incapable of answering or unwilling to answer, and why is that?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The report cost—and there'll be a payback on the report because, of course, it does an analysis of the mismanagement of the previous government in terms of Hydro—the report will have a payback as opposed to the irrevocable billion-dollar-times-two loss of the misguided politicization of Manitoba Hydro by the previous government on Keeyask and on bipole. Zero point four per cent of the costs incurred unnecessarily by the overt politicization of the previous administration—he can do the math; he may need help—0.4 per cent of that \$2 billion is what that report charge was.

Madam Speaker, this is an internationally recognized firm that understands, as we do, the need to get it right. We'll get it right. They got it wrong.

Madam Speaker: I have issued several warnings this afternoon about respect by having to call order a number of times. I really don't like doing that. I hope that everybody would give their colleagues a chance to ask the questions and give the answers in a respectful manner.

So I would encourage you to try to do that.

And the floor is now to the Minister of Crown Services—or, pardon me, the member for Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: Madam Speaker, my questions are, I believe, one hundred per cent respectful and one hundred per cent merited.

This new government has been claiming up one side and down the other that they believe in accountability. There is no evidence of that this

afternoon on this question. They have not answered the question of cost. They have not answered the question of did it go to tender. This from a Crown minister who spent hours grilling our ministers when we were in government on whether contracts went to tender.

Will the double standard continue, or will someone over there stand up and tell the public what actually happened, and why did they listen to such an appallingly outdated report calling for a fossil fuel future in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: The member displays his questioning, and I did misspeak. It's 0.04 was the cost of the report as a percentage of the billion dollars wasted by the previous administration on politicized and mismanaged projects which they undertook without any recommendations from the experts at Manitoba Hydro over the objections of the Public Utilities Board or without the scrutiny of the Public Utilities Board itself.

The—I understand, though, that the member—the member reminds me of some of my former students and others who didn't like their test results when they failed a test. The evaluation that was given is a condemnation of the previous government. I understand that the member has difficulty with that evaluation, but it is an honest appraisal by an internationally respected firm of the mismanagement of the previous government. He's complaining about a negative evaluation of a job he did. I understand that. But he needs to accept the fact the work has to get done to save Manitoba Hydro, and we'll do that work here.

Brandon School Division New School Inquiry

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madam Speaker, Brandon needs a new school. Riverheights School in Brandon's already oversubscribed. King George School will soon be oversubscribed as well. Even if the new school is built, the whole Brandon school system will be at capacity. They are currently 400 students over. A new school in Brandon is one of the most urgently needed new schools in the province.

The minister knows the numbers: Why hasn't he acted to build a new school in Brandon?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the member's interest in the Brandon School Division. I have an interest in all of the school divisions in the province, and we are

certainly interested in making sure that there is a place for everyone to study in the future.

I can tell him that we are working very closely with the Brandon School Division in evaluation and in planning for the future of that school division and to make sure that there's adequate space.

But I can also tell him that, courtesy of the previous government, there are school divisions in this province with as many as 46 portables in the school division occupied and another one here in Winnipeg with over 40 portables. Brandon has a total of four.

Thank you.

Mr. Kinew: I was in the constituency of the member from Brandon East, spoke to people there who told me about how badly needed this new school was. One highlighted all the additional transportation that's required, another, when spoke to, said, we feel we've been forgotten.

We need actions, not words: Why won't the minister show them that they're not forgotten and build this new school in Brandon?

Mr. Wishart: Certainly, they have not been forgotten. We have met with them. We continue to work with them on a regular basis. They know what we're doing. We're certainly being—working very constructively with them. At some point in the not-too-distant future, there will be need for a school. We certainly understand that. And we continue to work with them to make sure, in the meantime, that they have what they need in terms of resources for transportation.

But I can tell you that there are a number of school divisions in this province that have suffered from lack of infrastructure for some time.

* (14:30)

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bell's Purchase of MTS

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba telephone system is currently a fourth cellular carrier used by Manitobans along with the big national three carriers: Telus, Rogers and Bell.

In Toronto, with only the big three national companies controlling the market, the average five-gigabyte unlimited monthly cellular package is \$117 as compared to Winnipeg where MTS charges \$66 for the same package.

Losing MTS will mean less competition and will result in higher costs for all cellphone packages in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to do all that is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and preserve a more competitive cellphone market so that cellular bills for Manitobans do not increase unnecessarily.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

**Parking Fees at Hospitals—
Elimination or Reduction**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Health care should be accessible for all Manitobans, and the New Democratic Party caucus believes in a health-care system that helps those based on their medical need and not the size of their wallet.

Patients and families who visit hospitals often do not do so by choice.

Patients and families who travel great distances to receive care or visit loved ones often incur expenses related to transportation and food costs, and parking fees at Manitoba hospitals can run up to \$17 per day and cause a significant financial burden on families already under stress.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to work with hospital foundations to eliminate or reduce parking fees at all Manitoba hospitals.

And this petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, we'd like to call for debate, Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

**Bill 9—The Election Financing Amendment Act
(Repeal of Annual Allowance)**

Madam Speaker: To resume the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Ms. Stefanson), second reading of Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member of the—honourable Official Opposition Leader—the official interim—the official leader of the—the interim official Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Continuing from my comments yesterday, I would like to add that \$1.75 per vote received by political parties is a small price to pay to allow participation in the electoral process by those qualified Manitobans with lived experience, with strong grassroots and community work background and deep desire to represent the best interests of those who have less in life, the marginalized and the most vulnerable segments of society, even though they have no connection with big corporate magnates.

Likewise, \$1.75 is a small price to pay to ensure a level playing field, and it's a small price to pay to ensure equity and equality.

And speaking of equity and equality, I thank a respected leader of First Nations Aboriginal people, Dr. Leslie Spillett. A few years ago she sent me a poster on equality and equity. For equality there are—there were three individuals: a small person as small as I am in height; a person which is higher than me in height, and a person with—who's very tall, and all

three persons would like to watch a community sport game. And all of—and because they probably had no money to pay for the ticket to see within the—to be in the stadium, they were outside by a gate—or by a fence and they had a chair, and all three of them were standing on it. So, of course, the tallest would see the—what's going on inside the fence, the not so tall, despite all the efforts, would not be able to see it, and the one who's as small as I am in height don't even see a thing because he was so small. That was equality.

However, in the poster on equity, what happens is the one who was very tall didn't have a stool to stand on because he can see the games already. The fence—he was tall enough to be—his height to be above the fence. The one who was not so tall was given a kind of a bench that is tall enough to enable him to see what's happening above the fence line. And the one who was smallest was given a much higher bench so he could see what's beyond the fence. And that was equity.

And I believe, personally, Bill 9 is a bill that will remove the semblance of equity in the democratic process.

Madam Speaker, a \$1.75-per-vote subsidy is a small price to pay to attract dedicated community workers whose perspectives are invaluable. It could mean needed policies. It could result in needed policies and social programs that can be planned and implemented such as healthy mothers, healthy babies or improvements to the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, affordable housing, housing for people with disabilities, affordable child care, affordable vocational training and post-secondary education, pension plan for child-care workers, accessible vocational training or post-secondary education and many more programs that elected members with lived experience have made these social programs realized.

It is sad commentary, but it is getting clearer and clearer with each day in government that the Conservative Party, through its elected members in this House, just do not want Manitobans with little or no connections to big business owners and corporations to be part of decision-making processes for the welfare of all Manitobans. And one of the clear proofs of it is Bill 9, which we're debating right now. And there are other bills coming from that side of the House that will add to the burden and hardship of many Manitobans.

I believe that \$1.75 per vote received is a small price to pay to encourage party members who possess qualifications but lack the connections with big businesses and corporations to put their names on the ballot and stand a chance to serve their communities to the best way they can.

* (14:40)

This democratic subsidy is a small price to pay to allow diversity and inclusion around the political tables of deliberations and decisions. The perspectives of First Nations, Aboriginals, people of colour, new Canadians, young people, female, members of disability groups, members of the LGBTTTQ, who are representative of Manitoba's demographics, their voices around the table are valuable and can be made possible because of the existing democratic subsidy, and Bill 9 will eliminate that reality.

Madam Speaker, I believe the Manitoba Legislative Assembly is strong, relevant and, we hope, effective because of the elected members of the government side and those of us who are in opposition, especially us in opposition who are determined to bring out important issues that many Manitobans deem critically needed to be addressed.

Just imagine, Madam Speaker, without our colleagues or our First Nations and Aboriginals, or colleagues from the visible minority and multicultural communities, how can we say that our Legislature is representative of Manitoba's population without these members in our House?

Madam Speaker, we can be a relevant and responsive Legislature if qualified and committed Manitobans, yet lacking in strong connections to moneyed individuals or corporations, are given the chance to seek elected office, and Bill 9 have made it possible, based on personal experience and that of several of my colleagues.

Madam Speaker, by tabling this bill before the House, the government in power would like to silence minority voices, those from political parties who are not as financially strong by virtue of the types of membership they attract.

Let's be realistic. Which owners of big corporations will want to be a member of a small political party or small political parties? And yet, Madam Speaker, those from the small political

parties need to be elected and their voices heard because they represent everyday Manitobans—workers, students, seniors, new citizens, new immigrants, people with disability, those who are struggling to make both ends meet, not just from a party which is expected to champion and protect the best interests of big businesses and corporations only.

Madam Speaker, what happens when you have diversity and inclusion in Manitoba Legislature? The last we checked Manitoba became a leader in championing the rights of workers, including migrant and agricultural workers. Last we heard, we found out Manitoba's population grew by immigration. Last we heard, policies and legislations enshrining human rights for all were enacted. Many social programs were implemented, such as what I've mentioned earlier, and those were made possible because of the democratic subsidy that Bill 9 provided.

Madam Speaker, I checked online to be informed of the genesis of this democratic subsidy. I found out that, although Canada has now an extensive regime regulating political party and election finance, this was not always the case. Before 1974, the financial activities of political parties were largely unregulated. From Confederation until about 1897, party funds were used to overcome weak partisanship. At that time certain partisan members of Parliament need not always follow party lines. As a result, party leaders were directly involved in fundraising and in distributing election funds to ensure the election loyalty of their followers. The Liberals and Conservatives also tended to rely on corporate donations which led to periodic scandals, and we've heard several of them, such and—one of which was the Pacific Scandal.

I learned that the Pacific Scandal was the first major political scandal in Canada after Confederation. It involved the taking of election funds by then-Prime Minister John A. Macdonald in exchange for the contract to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Pacific Scandal was a political scandal in Canada involving allegations of bribes being accepted by 150 members of the Conservative government in the attempts of private interests to influence the bidding for a national rail contract.

As part of British Columbia's 1871 agreement to join Canadian Confederation, the government had agreed to build a transcontinental railway linking the Pacific province to the eastern provinces. The proposed rail project when completed was the most

intensive and ambitious of its kind ever undertaken. However, as a new nation with limited capital resources, financing for the project was sought after both at home and abroad, naturally attracting interest from Great Britain and the United States.

I learned that the scandal ultimately led to the resignation of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, and a transfer of power from his Conservative government to a Liberal government led by Alexander Mackenzie.

Madam Speaker, I also checked online to find out what Canadians are saying about the democratic subsidy that Bill 9 wants to eliminate, and I found out one Canadian said: 2015 is the first year when the per vote subsidy has been dismantled—that's federally. The Conservatives eliminated this stipend after securing a majority in 2011. This system acted as the countermeasure to parties that appeal to wealthier voters who have the means to contribute to political parties. During one of the longest elections in their country's history, the number of issues that have come up are innumerable. This is one issue I thought would get some attention, but I haven't heard a peep about it in the event of a Liberal government's reinstating the per vote subsidy, something they should do. Apparently, this was written before the last federal government.

And, interestingly, this per vote subsidy elimination came in 2011, after the election of a majority Conservative government in Ottawa. And looks like history's repeating itself here. After the election of a first majority Conservative government after 16 years in opposition, they are doing the same as their—what the federal Conservatives did in 2011.

Another Canadian wrote: I strongly support the per vote subsidy. Look at it this way. If I vote for a party, they effectively got one dollar per year of my taxes. Without the subsidy, but with expanded political contribution limits, someone else can donate to a party I don't support and get a tax credit for it. Effectively, I pay in small part for their tax credit in lost tax revenue that could have gone to services I could have taken advantage of. It was a slimy move to benefit parties that benefit from strong fundraising.

This was a very interesting comment. I fully subscribe to that previous comment.

Another comment: When the subsidy was first introduced by the Liberals, it was done to level the playing field. And, at that time, the Liberals were a

fundraising machine. It was done to benefit all—benefit of all electors—it was done to the benefit of all electors, not just the ruling party.

That was a nice comment.

Another comment says: The move was justified with classic Harper doublespeak. He said people didn't want their money going to parties they didn't support, while the effect of getting rid of the subsidy but keeping the tax credit is the exact opposite. It still makes me angry that just thinking about it I don't know how he could say that with a straight face. So far, I've heard this statement, too, from colleagues from the other side of the House.

*(14:50)

Another comment: Why not just strip the tax credit? If you want a dollar a year to go to a party, then just donate it yourself. Anyone can afford a dollar a year. Well, that's interesting. Another comment: Yes, that's true, but that's not what Harper did. He was trying to reform campaign finance, and he capped the subsidy but left the tax credit. He could have cut both, but he didn't. Then he tried to say this was an effort toward fairness to taxpayers when it absolutely is not. Another comment: Without the subsidy but with expanded political contribution limits, someone else can donate to a party I don't support and get a tax credit for it. Actually, corporations do, said another. They give workers the money to give to the party in their own name, and the workers pocket the tax return as incentive. Oh, wow. That's a revelation.

Another one from Quebec: We limited personal donations to \$100 to eliminate that and increase public funding for parties with what we used to give back as tax returns. In the end, we elect politicians that don't owe their campaign money to some corporations. Another says: There's a strong argument to be made that ending the per-vote subsidy contributed to the demise of the Bloc Québécois. And that person added: The Bloc Québécois never had a very strong fundraising component and so, when the party lost most of the seats and about half a million votes, it lost a lot of cash. I do not support the BQ at all, but I would much prefer they become irrelevant because of ideology rather than backhanded measures.

Another says: It goes towards election costs, campaigning and such. It was an attempt at an equalizer because lots of parties have supporters that might not be able to give a political donation, and it

is such a small amount per year per voting person, no reason to get rid of it except for spite. And another wrote, again: No reason to get rid of it except for spite.

Here's a little info about it, about political financing in Canada that I also found quite interesting. Until 2015, for each registered federal political party that received at least 2 per cent of all valid votes in the last general election or at least 5 per cent of the valid votes in the electoral districts in which it had a candidate, the per-vote subsidy, also referred to as the government allowance, gave the party an inflation index subsidy each year at \$2.04 per vote received in the last election. Also, it says, of the three ways in which federal parties are allocated public funding, the per-vote subsidy is largely seen as the most democratic: hundred per cent of the voters of eligible parties have a say, with their input treated on equal basis.

Madam Speaker, there's an interesting write-up under money in campaign—in politics campaign that I also picked up, and it says: It's still legal for wealthy special interests to give unlimited amounts of money, property or services, in secret, to candidates in federal nomination races and federal party leadership races, and other loopholes still exist in the federal political donation systems. Whether it's big banks trying to preserve their government protection and subsidies, brand-name pharmaceutical companies sweeping billions of dollars from patent laws, defense and aerospace companies receiving lucrative contracts from the Department of National Defense, or petro chemical companies opposing better environmental laws. The major political donors are invariably those with the greatest stakes in government decisions.

When those interests are bankrolling the political process in secret, it is that much harder for other voices to be heard. Also found out that many of citizen groups who lobby for progressive reforms in Canada understand all too well the influence that powerful corporate lobbies can use to halt these reforms.

The problems with Canada's political finance system at the federal level and in the provinces and territories are well-known. A long series of reports from Canada's chief electoral officers and even the Royal Commission have thoroughly examined the loopholes and abuses of the current system, and many of the solutions would be easy to implement.

Madam Speaker, it is interesting to note that there's a group named Democracy Watch who undertook some research and consultation, and this particular body or organization has been formed to campaign for changes to Canada's electoral finance laws to reduce the influence of healthy, wealthy—rather wealthy interests in Canadian politics. This is—this group is comprised of 50 citizen groups including 17 national groups and 33 groups from six provinces and the Northwest Territories, and they have signed on the recommendations that I thought would be relevant and informative to share to this—to the members of the House.

The 10 recommendations to clean up Canada's political finance system: (1) donation limits and requirements are needed for volunteer labour donated to partisan candidates during nomination race, election and party leadership campaigns to close this existing secret donations to the polls.

There are nine more recommendations that I would maybe have—will have the opportunity at another instance, but for now I would like to end my statement on Bill 9 to give way to other members, my colleagues, to have their statements recorded as well. Thank you, Madam.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I'm happy to put comments on the record regarding Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act, ending the vote tax.

This proposed legislation should come as no surprise to anyone as our new government has been against this vote tax since its inception and have campaigned vigorously against it. We have never taken so much as a cent from the vote tax.

During my last campaign, I talked to many, many Manitobans throughout my riding and I asked them to share their priorities with me and many of them shared their priorities that they wanted us to fix the economy. Many of them shared their priorities that after a decade of debt, decline and decay under the NDP they really wanted us to get into power so that we could fix the finances and rebuild the economy of this province.

There was concern about education. There was concern about health care. There was concern about the child-care wait-list that had ballooned under the previous administration. Those are a lot of the things that came up to me when I went door to door in Riel, and not once did anybody ever say to me I'd like my hard-earned dollars. I'd like the government to tax

me so that I could fund the political operations of a party. Not once did that ever come up. In fact, I heard a lot of comments against that. I heard a lot of people saying, why—since that we're one of the highest taxed provinces in the country, why are we—our tax dollars going to subsidize political operations—why are we paying for the NDP and the Liberals to spew their propaganda throughout the province when there are so many other priorities in this province that we really ought to be dealing with.

* (15:00)

And my answer was I'm not sure why the NDP and why the Liberals, you know, insist and why they're vigorously defending their right to take that taxpayer dollars when there's so many other priorities in this province—why the NDP think that we should take tax dollars away from roads, away from health care, away from child care and put it towards subsidizing their political operations.

I said to my voters I can't explain that. Perhaps when the NDP member, if she happens to come around, maybe you could ask her that question and, Madam Speaker, I know that—I know she didn't get around, or maybe her answers weren't satisfactory, because when I was making it on round two, or perhaps round three or four, those same voters said to me, you know what, I'm going to support you because I don't believe that my tax dollars should be going towards this debt and decay and decline of the NDP.

And, in fact, some of those voters even wrote me a cheque, and I said thank you very much for the—you know, for being part of my donor base and for supporting me in my campaign, and that's the way that political parties really ought to raise their money. They should go door to door and build their teams and gather the support from their voters and fundraise to support their political operations.

Not once did I ever say to the taxpayer I really think you ought to fund my campaign. I went to my supporters. You know, I went to some of my friends, my colleagues here, and I asked for a little bit of, you know, encouragement. And I asked the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) and the members for Morden and Winkler and our leader, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), and the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), what's a good way to fundraise and how do we do it?

And our leader had a really strong strategy on—in terms of team building and relationship building

amongst our party and, in fact, suggestions. They encouraged us on having joint fundraisers. In fact, I had a fantastic joint fundraiser with the MLA for Seine River and the MLA for Fort Richmond. We worked together. I went out—the—our esteemed candidate for Fort Garry-Riverview who came just a smidge shy of winning that seat, and I know she's going to be successful in the next election, but her and I had a great fundraising campaign.

And I went out and supported her efforts to fundraise, because that's what we, on this side of the House, believe that we ought to do, is roll up our sleeves and get out there and get to work and show the voters what we've got in terms of energy and stamina to go out and build our campaigns and build our—take our message to people door to door and ask for their support and to ask them to be part of the team. And, when we asked, I was just amazed at how many people came forward and said I want to be part of that team. I want to join your party. I want to join—support your party with a contribution and supported us in enumerable ways.

And, in the last election also, Madam Speaker, I'd like to say that I was happy to run in the 2011 election and build on those building blocks, and I think that people are really invigorated when they see candidates who have got—are working towards building a team and building their supporter base and building their donor base.

But I have to say that, in 2011, I wasn't as skilled at fundraising as I was in the 2016 election. And so I went to my colleagues, I went to my teammates and I said: Anybody got any suggestions on how I can bolster my attempts? And some of them wrote cheques for—to support my campaign, because that's what we do when we're working together as a team. We support one another's campaign, and I know that some of my colleagues around here, they said, you know what, we've got a lot of support. We can help our colleagues who don't have as much support, and they came. They came to my fundraisers. They provided money for my campaign, and that's really what being a part of a team is about. And I have to say that that teamwork, that initiative is infectious because people really responded throughout Manitoba. And we were so excited to have all that support that we garnered, because people were passionate about the team that they saw that we were building.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Let's be clear. The NDP vote tax has always been just about merely advantaging the NDP, and eliminating the NDP vote tax benefits all of Manitoba. That means we have more money for health care. We have more money for fixing our roads. We have more money for enhancing child care. In fact, the vote tax—by eliminating the vote tax, it will save \$2.4 million that will no longer go to the operations of the NDP and it forces the political parties to be accountable. And that's what voters want. They want their political parties to be responding to the issues, to be accountable to the supporters that they have and not just merely taking them for granted, and not saying, well, maybe I don't need to get out and ask these people for their support because I'll just take it from them without their—without them having a say. I'll just impose a tax on them and take that money from them involuntarily.

When political parties are strengthened by a strong volunteer and donor base, such as Riel PC association and many other riding associations throughout Manitoba, all the voters of Manitoba benefit strongly. Voters want to engage in a dynamic political process, and they are invigorated when they see solid efforts of—put forward by their candidates and put forward by their political parties. Manitobans expect their government to put the public interest ahead of narrow political interest and to the good of the public instead of political priorities.

The NDP vote tax was a tax forced on Manitobans each year for exercising their democratic right to vote. It was an involuntary donation accepted by both the NDP and the Liberals. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 2012 to 2015, the NDP received more than \$780,000 from Manitobans through this involuntary tax payout, and the Liberals took nearly a quarter of a million dollars in the vote-tax payouts. Close to three quarters or 72 per cent of the NDP vote tax paid out since 2012 went directly to the NDP to fund their political operations. And I think that they should be excited—in fact, they should be invigorated about this brand new opportunity where they can go and say to the voters: I know we were lazy in the past; I know we just took the money from you without asking for it, but, you know what, we are now going to be an invigorated caucus. We're actually going to go out and work for support. We're going to go door to door. We're going to maybe have a fundraising initiative and hold a breakfast or, you know, engage with their voters and ask for that support. And I encourage all political parties to do that, that work,

because our electorate is a lot more—democracy is a lot more enhanced when all political parties are invigorated in the process and interested in supporting—working with the voter.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope that all members of this House will support this bill. I was very pleased about this bill, and I know we have a very ambitious legislative agenda coming up in this session. And I really am looking forward to the vote on this bill, and I hope all members of this House will look inside themselves and say, yes, I want to be part of a political party that believes in engaging with voters and working for that support, and support this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): It's my pleasure to put a few more words on the record regarding Bill 9, ending the vote tax today.

Under the NDP, we saw a decade of debt, decay and decline. The NDP was interested in taking more and more tax dollars away from Manitoba families, taking more and more tax dollars off the kitchen table of Manitobans, putting it on the Cabinet table. But, if that wasn't bad enough, putting it on the Cabinet table and spending it on their own untendered contracts to their political friends and things like that, no, that wasn't enough. They wanted to do it directly into their political party. That's when they introduced the vote tax. It's a way that Manitobans are forced to fund political parties that they may or may not agree with, political parties that they may or may not choose to support financially by themselves.

Now, the NDP, unfortunately, have continued in this way for a number of years. Manitobans expect their government to put the public interest ahead of their own narrow political interests, to put the interests of the whole province ahead of the interests of the party. But, unfortunately, the NDP could not do that and they did not do that.

The NDP vote tax is just one in a long list of ways that the NDP have eroded the basic rights of Manitobans, the way that NDP have disregarded the democratic rights and freedoms of Manitobans. They've taken away the basic right of workers to a secret ballot. We will restore that right. Secret ballot is a touchstone of what democracy looks like in action. It's a touchstone of what fair and free elections should be. And that's supported by everybody from the United Nations down to our

political party here, the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba.

* (15:10)

The NDP also took away the right of Manitobans to vote on major tax increases. They expand the PST, they increase the PST, they dig deeper into the pockets of Manitobans, take more and more money out, and for what? For their own political ends.

They're continuing to be a party that's divided, a party that is failing to put the interests of Manitobans ahead of their own interests and failing to serve. They even, when they established this vote, used the credibility of a well-known and well-respected Manitoban, Dr. Paul Thomas, to attempt to legitimize this vote tax. So here they are, using what should be an independent commissioner, what should be a non-partisan opinion, and instead sticking him into such a narrow box that he can only comment on what that vote tax might look like, not whether or not it should be.

Unfortunately, that's not a isolated incident with the NDP. They still haven't learned, and they still, even as of yesterday, think that it's perfectly acceptable to use the non-partisan authority, or to suggest that we would use the non-partisan authority of Elections Manitoba, for example, to comment and to rule on what is a partisan issue, an issue that, from the get-go, from when its very first—when it was very first introduced, was clearly an issue that there was disagreement between the political parties in Manitoba, between the NDPs and the Liberals and between our Progressive Conservative Party.

And, to suggest, as the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) did yesterday, that Elections Manitoba should somehow meddle in that, and that they should offer an opinion or provide advice to the minister, is just another sign that they have not learned about how to govern. They haven't learned about how to function as a political party in this House, to function well, because, unlike them, we don't engage in political interference in our Crown corporations, we don't engage in political interference in all of government, because what we're interested in doing is putting the interests of Manitobans, the rights of Manitobans, the freedoms of Manitobans, first and foremost, ahead of the interests of our own political party.

So, unlike them, we won't engage in political interference. Unlike them, we will put the interests of

Manitobans first. Unlike them, we will not be taking more—money from the pockets of Manitobans and moving it through the Cabinet table into political parties. We believe that political parties need to work hard. They need to ask for support from voters. And they need to receive that support, whether that's a small donation of \$1.75 or \$5 or a large donation of \$400 or more.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think when we, again, consider the way that the NDP approached this vote tax, it's important to note that in Dr. Thomas's report he said that the commissioner, in this case himself, is not free to settle the policy disagreement between the governing party and the official opposition party over whether or not annual allowances should be paid. And he was right to say so. He's right to say so because it's unfair and inappropriate to expect what should be an independent commissioner to give a political opinion, a political opinion on—that has been well publicized as being something that the NDP and the Progressive Conservative parties have disagreed on.

We've always believed, as Progressive Conservatives, that the way to fund your political operations is by asking and receiving donations in a voluntary basis. So to suggest that somehow digging into the pockets of Manitobans involuntarily, somehow taking that money that hard-working Manitobans worked for and then ended up paying taxes, putting it on the Cabinet table, that that money which should be used for the good of all Manitobans ends up into a political party is just wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that Manitobans wanted something different from their government. They expected something different from their government. They expected a government that will conduct itself with integrity. They did not have that under the NDP for 17 years, unfortunately. But they have that today under the Progressive Conservative Party. Manitobans expect the government to put their interests first, and they did not have that under the NDP for 17 years, but they have that today under the Progressive Conservatives.

The NDP, unfortunately, continued their entire—the last decade with debt, decay and decline. The NDP have more—took more and more money out of the pockets of Manitobans over those years.

We, as the Progressive Conservatives, are focused instead on reducing the tax burden of Manitobans. We're focused on ensuring that they're going to receive better services, we're going to fix

our finances, we're going to provide better services and we're going to rebuild our economy, because when you have a strong economy, then you're also going to have members of that economy, people who are participating, citizens of our province who want to participate in the election process as well in the democratic processes of our province.

When they do that, they can do that in a variety of ways. They can do that by putting themselves forward as a candidate as everybody here in this Chamber has done and so many others. They can do that by voting. They can do that by donating to a political party, if they choose to do so. And I want to emphasize that they should choose to do so. They choose to run, they choose to vote and they choose whether or not to fund a political party. And to conflate those two together is a mistake; it's what the NDP did to line their own pockets with taxpayer dollars, and we are going to put an end to it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that we're on the right course now, that we are headed in a direction that will help make Manitobans trust their government; that will make Manitobans more engaged; that will make Manitobans believe that their government is putting their interests and their priorities first.

Unlike the NDP, we won't be taking more and more money out of the pockets of Manitobans. We will do what we can to keep that money on the kitchen table of our citizens and allow them to decide how they would like to spend it and whether they'd like to donate it to a political party or not.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for this opportunity. I look forward to voting on this important bill and finally bringing an end to what has been a decade of—[interjection] Everybody want me to do it, to say it together? No? Debt, 'declay' and—sorry—debt, decay and decline under the NDP.

Thank you. You're most kind.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

I declare the motion carried.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Yes, I would like to call Bill 6, please, for second reading, please.

Madam Speaker: The Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, has been recommended by the government for second reading.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 6—The Financial Administration Amendment Act

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gestion des finances publiques, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

* (15:20)

Mr. Friesen: It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and put a few comments on the record in respect of this bill, Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act.

I had a chance to briefly introduce the content of this bill earlier this afternoon. The member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle) asked a very good question during question period. And, although some might

say that this is a bill that is not overly substantive compared to some that we consider in this place, I still do welcome the opportunity to set the stage and to describe, in a little more detail, the landscape that accompanies this bill, because there is a context that necessitates this. There is a context by which this new government of Manitoba has made this a priority.

Madam Speaker, the situation is this. Our government has come into power and has inherited a set of challenges that are significant and that are challenges not just for this administration but for all Manitobans. And, of course, in this place, you have heard us describe the fiscal challenges that are weighing upon this province, fiscal challenges in way of an \$846-million deficit for the '15-16 fiscal year, a deficit that deteriorated by more than a 100 per cent, doubled a deficit by the previous NDP government and, of course, a \$23-billion net debt and an enormous accumulation of debt within Hydro. That's one of the challenges we've inherited.

Of course, we've inherited other challenges as well: a significant challenge in the delivery of services in Manitoba, wait times that are among the highest in the nation, educational outcomes that are not where we'd like them to be, and I say that as a teacher who began a career in the classroom, in around the mid-1990s, when Manitoba led in a number of those metrics, in those measurements. And we've seen a decline since then.

It has also been a deterioration on the economic development of—part of Manitoba, and it's troubling when we see even the interim opposition leader today somehow get up and talk about the threat of rate increases in hydro and somehow try to torque the conversation and suggest that somehow, after 17 years of mismanagement of the gem that was Manitoba Hydro and all of the implication of that mismanagement for debt increase within the utility, which was only disclosed two weeks ago in a press release by the Hydro utility and by that new board chair, Mr. Sandy Riley, that now the government would somehow suggest this reflects on the new government.

Well, it's an absurd statement. It's a silly suggestion. And I understand the political reasons why she makes the suggestion, but they are not substantive. Anyone recognizes that the enormous pressure on that utility was exerted there through the actions of that former government mismanaging and interfering in the operation of the utility over the last

number of years. This is the context we inherit, so, as a new government, one of the first gestures and, of course, far more than a gesture that we sent to Manitobans—perhaps I should use the word signal instead—the signal that we sent was one about leading by example, tone at the top, and how, if we were going to engage with Manitobans offering these new terms of reference, correct terms of reference, about the nature and extent of the challenge before us as a province, we had better be prepared to lead by example.

And that is why the new Premier, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister), brought a change immediately reducing the number of Cabinet ministers from 18 to 12. And that one change alone, of course, we understand that with that change comes all that apparatus change behind the scenes; in essence, a ratcheting down of the overall size of the construct of government. We understand what this means in terms of the Treasury Board Secretariat moving these appropriations that were formerly housed under the responsibility of ministers into co-locating them inside the responsibilities assigned to other ministers, and that is a significant undertaking to go from 18 to 12.

I give that information in order to indicate that by doing so we had certain pragmatic challenges that were immediately facing government, one of which was, immediately, we had fewer members of Executive Council who could then serve on the committees of Cabinet, including the Treasury Board. We went from 18 to 12 and now we had less members to choose from.

In essence, what we did is we said we would use fewer executive councillors to do more of the work, whereby the NDP, in stark contrast, kept adding more and more executive councillors, defraying the work further and further, of course, at a real and measurable cost to Manitobans. There were whole departments set up where the ministers on that side kind of had to scratch their head and try to understand what really was the power and the scope of their authority because it was hived off from a more natural location of function.

I remember asking the former minister of Jobs and the Economy when he was still on youth and child opportunities, if he would, in his role, come to the city of Winkler to see the Central Station that we were building, an incredible social enterprise within the city of Winkler. And that member with all the resources of his office and the very modest set of

responsibilities—request after request after request, would not come to the city, would not come to see what we were building in respect of food bank, clothing bank, immigration centre hub, language instruction, parenting courses, community building exercises, everything from community meals to very pragmatic how-to-parent-in-a-Canadian-context course. I invited and invited. That member, with all the resources of his offer—office kept promising, but never delivering, never came to my community, never came there.

Madam Speaker, we have located these responsibilities, I think, confidently where they belong. We have less executive officers, less Executive Council members able to do the work, and so that's created for us a desire to bring in to the Treasury Board additional members from within government. So that's essentially a positive story. That's a good story for Manitobans.

You heard earlier this afternoon in question period how we described that this is most diverse—and the most diverse team, the most diverse team in terms of gender, in terms of occupational background, in terms of educational training, in terms of geographical representation. I look around and I see reservists and I see education experts. I see small business owners. I see entrepreneurs. I see farmers and producers. I see former MPs now serving in the Legislature. Madam Speaker, we are such a diverse team.

What this bill then does, it allows for more hands to make the work perhaps lighter but certainly better when it comes to Treasury Board. We were able to, as a result of this bill, add in to our Treasury Board committee, the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) and the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer).

Now, if we do not bring this bill, those members outside of Executive Council can be at a Treasury Board meeting. They can participate with some constraint on their ability. They cannot vote so they cannot be a full member of those proceedings. We need them according to the skills that they bring to be full members of that committee.

So essentially what this bill, Bill 6, does is it amends The Financial Administration Act in order to allow a non-executive councillor to have a voting privilege in Treasury Board.

* (15:30)

And, Madam Speaker, in so doing, this bill recognizes the diversity. It recognizes the extensive skill sets. It recognizes the strengths of the bench on the government side, and it says these are individuals whose background in business, whose background in community, whose background serving on volunteer boards and other enterprises throughout their communities can serve not just the Treasury Board but the interests of all Manitobans in that central decision-making structure through the Treasury Board.

So, Madam Speaker, I know personally the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer)—actually, the member for Brandon West and I were just discussing earlier this week that an important anniversary has come and gone in our lives and in the lives of the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) and the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) and the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), and that is that it was exactly five years ago on October the 4th that we were first elected as members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. So we noted that to some colleagues. It was a bit of an anniversary, and I would disclose to the House it's been an interesting little tradition that we have kept up, that on October 4th, always one of us sends a message and reminds all of us who came aboard at that time, that we were elected at the same time. And I share that. We are all that class of 2011. Other members—as I look across, there are other members there who came across the line. That is a special kind of thing that we can take a little bit of time to celebrate. We all come to this place at different times. Our experience in this place is varied, but it's still good to mark these things.

I say that in order to say I know the member for Brandon West, so proud to call him a friend, so proud to see the excellent work that he has done in the five years we've spent in this place together on behalf of his constituents and the whole community. I am so proud to have this member, through this bill, with the support of all members, I'm hoping, be able to take his full place on Treasury Board. In the same way, it's been my honour to get to know a little bit better the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer). I knew the member when she was still a trustee in the Louis Riel School Division. I knew her when she was in the community working as the executive director of the St. Vital BIZ. And she served her community for many years there, very proud of her community as well. And so we welcome her involvement. She brings a rich history of involvement with boards, a

rich history with love for this province. And so we will be well served by these members.

I want to underscore, as well—and I know, not for the purposes of this bill, we were also pleased to be able to add the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) to this committee earlier in the year. All of these working to strengthen and additionally help us, resource us in the work that we undertake for the—for all Manitobans.

But I want to end my remarks and give time for others to speak on this. I want to end by saying I commend this bill to the members of the opposition, the official opposition and other opposition members in this Chamber, and say there are some things in this Chamber we will debate and quarrel on. I see no reason to quarrel on this particular piece of legislation. I see this as a strengthening exercise that will serve the province now and can serve the province in the future. There are protections in place, of course. If you read the bill, you will understand how the authority to add non-Cabinet members is curtailed, is constrained. But even so, I believe that if given a fair hearing, other members of this Assembly will find that this is a bill they can support.

Madam Speaker, I'm looking forward to the debate we have a chance to have this afternoon. I look forward to the question-and-answer period that will follow my presentation. And thank you for allowing me to commend to you this excellent piece of legislation which will serve all Manitobans, not simply the new government of Manitoba.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: First question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Will the minister agree that this is a face-saving bill to make up for the initial appointments to Treasury Board in May, several months ago, that consisted of five white males?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am—I'm concerned after the cautions that you have given to members in this

House to see, once again, this member going down this same path when it comes to these politics of division, trying to take political advantage and using terms that I would caution him not to use in this Chamber.

But I will leave that recommendation to you, Madam Speaker. I will not dignify that question with a response. I will chastise him and ask him to focus on the legislation that is before this House this afternoon.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): One of the important things about this legislation which has to be considered is that you have MLAs who are not necessarily subject to Cabinet confidentiality, who will be presumably looking at many, many Cabinet documents.

I would ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen): What is the procedures in terms of MLAs who are not members of Cabinet who are on this committee? Have there been any special procedural changes?

Mr. Friesen: I thank the member for River Heights for the question. It's a very good question and I'm pleased to answer it and have the opportunity to do so.

Actually, the members of the Treasury Board who are non-ministers are subject now to the same conditions. I know that the new members have already signed to indicate that they are subject to the same conditions when it comes to Cabinet confidentiality as any serving member.

Mr. Allum: Madam Speaker, this is question and answer period so I would ask that the Finance Minister actually answer the questions.

When the Premier (Mr. Pallister) made appointments to Treasury Board in the first week of May, he appointed five male members that did not reflect the diversity of his caucus, did not reflect the diversity of this House, and did not reflect the diversity of Manitoba. So will he agree that the reason for this bill is before the House today is because it's a face-saving bill to try to make up for the Premier's lack of diversity on Treasury Board with his initial appointments in May?

Mr. Friesen: I'm still perplexed by the line of questioning pursued by the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). I wonder if the quarrel he has with me is my ethnicity, or is it my gender, or is it both. I remind the member I do not

choose my ethnicity. I do not choose my gender. I will apologize for neither, and, Madam Speaker, I'm sorry I may have overstepped before. It is certainly your place in this Chamber to caution, but I will not dignify those comments.

I, in my preamble, in my comments, already said that this is a caucus that is diverse in its background, the most diverse team, arguably, to ever occupy these benches in terms of regional representation, in terms of gender, in terms of background, in terms of those commitments to community. Madam Speaker, we will take no lectures from that member.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, there is more about being on Treasury Board than just confidentiality aspects. Cabinet members have specific provisions related to conflicts of interest because they would be privy to inside information with regard to a whole lot of details, and certainly being on Treasury Board they would be—members would be privy to a lot of confidential information.

What has the government done with regard to conflict-of-interest rules and with regard to members who are not Cabinet ministers, and will the minister table that?

Mr. Friesen: The member, again, raises a very good question. I want to assure him that the same rules apply to non-minister members of the Treasury Board through this new legislation when it comes to the declaration of conflicts as they arise through the discussions that we entertain and undertake in those deliberations.

* (15:40)

So he can be assured that those same conditions are in place, as any instances come up where either a member—where either a minister or a member who is not a minister would have a conflict, they are compelled to declare it, to recuse themselves in the discussion and to rejoin the committee after the time when that particular item has been addressed.

Mr. Allum: We'll try to get an answer from the Finance Minister. Will he just concede, right now, at this point in time, that this bill is under debate in this House right now to save face for a Premier who appointed five males to Treasury Board and didn't reflect the diversity of this caucus, of his government or of the province of Manitoba? Just concede it.

Mr. Friesen: Our government believes in a 'meritous' approach to decision making. And I want to assure that member that when I was

speaking earlier of the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer), I have the highest confidence, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has the highest confidence, the rest of Cabinet has the highest confidence in her ability to take her rightful place. That member needs no special circumstances. I assure that member that her biography, her background, her training, her interest in Manitoba, her strengths are ones that got her that position. And that is the way that we should be undertaking to make decisions.

But the member's concerns ring hollow. He should keep in mind that this government just—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the conflict-of-interest provisions extend beyond just declaration of conflict of interest. For example, I believe there are provisions that somebody has been in Cabinet, if they are, for example, defeated in an election that they can't immediately start lobbying the government, that there is a period in which they must avoid lobbying just because of the potential for conflicts. What is the situation with regard to MLAs who are not Cabinet ministers who will be on Treasury Board? Will they be able to lobby right away or will they have to have a period when they can't lobby?

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: I understand the concern that the member's raising, because it hearkens back to certain federal requirements that are in place. We will endeavour to undertake, if the same conditions here are not already reflexively in place—happy to have that conversation with the member—but also at the committee stage. We will clarify further for him when this bill goes to committee, to make sure that there isn't inadvertently any opportunity created through the bill that was—that wasn't there before. We want to make sure, of course, that that isn't the case. I have a high degree of confidence that, as it stands right now, that those protections are already in place and have been signed, too, but I want to ensure that I will look after this.

Mr. Allum: I'm sure the member from St. Vital possesses all of the qualities that the minister just identified. So why is she an afterthought, five months later, to be appointed to Treasury Board? If she had those very great qualities to begin with, then why wasn't she just asked to attend Treasury Board right from the beginning?

Mr. Friesen: Well, I wouldn't recommend this line of questioning to the member. It rings hollow. I mean this is a government under which Ms. Polly Craik has been now put in place as the new chair of Liquor & Lotteries and other fine Manitobans. We have a female Lieutenant Governor in the province of Manitoba. The member's taking no quarrel, of course, with the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, because he knows, on that particular Cabinet, I believe that, in terms of gender parity, I believe females outweigh the male representation. I could stand to be corrected, but, of course, he's taking no opportunities there.

So the member's—his arguments are hollow; they're unfounded. He can continue down that path if he would like to go there.

Mr. Gerrard: I appreciate the minister's responses and his willingness to provide more information at committee stage. I hope the minister, at committee stage, will be able to present, you know, the full documentation with regard to the guidelines and the restrictions. As I said, conflict of interest is not just about declaring a conflict; it's making sure that there are measures that would come into play if an individual who's an MLA on Treasury Board actually took advantage of that inside knowledge.

Mr. Friesen: Yes, and I acknowledge the member's concerns on this when it comes to conflict of interest. I've already assured him when it comes to, you know, the necessity to recuse oneself from discussion that is in place already. We can have a more full conversation afterwards or even at the committee stage. I want to ensure him—assure him that efforts have been made to protect the enterprise of government and decision making through this process. But I like these changes to the House because it does allow for the conversation to happen at this point rather than wait so late in time as committee stage.

Mr. Allum: It may well be, as the minister says, that our observations here ring hollow, but then could he please explain to the House, if the Justice Minister was too busy and too overworked in May to be part of Treasury Board, then why was she, as an afterthought, added in August?

Mr. Friesen: Once again, I don't accept the assertion by the member, so I won't even use the term. I could also indicate that Edna Nabess, who I know well, is now a new director on the Liquor & Lotteries board of directors, another fine Manitoban that I've had the pleasure of knowing for some time now, and a proud

former resident of the North, but still with many business enterprises up there, with also ties to the city of Winkler, which are very interesting for some people to discover. People who are chosen on the basis of merit, training, interest, acumen—we'll continue down that path.

Mr. Gerrard: Of course, there are quite a number of committees of Cabinet—Healthy Child Committee, et cetera, et cetera. And I wonder if it's the government's plan to extend this ability for MLAs to sit on all sorts of other committees as well, or will it just be Treasury?

Mr. Friesen: In my comments in debate I made clear that the context for this decision were really driven by our decision as a government to reduce from 18 to 12 the number of Cabinet ministers, in effect, entrusting fewer individuals to do a—more work on the—on behalf of all Manitobans. That created the particular challenge for Treasury Board, which meets on a weekly basis, and a very regular basis when the House is in session and a very regular basis outside of session. That is the—that's the decision. This has been the focus of our government, to address the challenge on Treasury Board, through this bill.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, let me follow that up. You know, because you now have members who are not members in Cabinet of the total number—my understanding is that the requirement will be that the majority of members will have to be members of Cabinet. But can it be that the—so many members of Cabinet are absent that you might have a situation where there are equal numbers of Cabinet ministers and non-Cabinet MLAs at a meeting of Treasury Board?

Mr. Friesen: I apologize to the member. We were attempting to provide a better answer to a previous question that I had answered. I did miss part of his question just now, so I'll just sit and ask with the remaining time if he would repeat it for me.

Mr. Gerrard: Under the legislation, a majority of the members have to be Cabinet members, right? But of course not everybody is going to be at every meeting. Can it be or will it be acceptable to the government on some instances to have as many MLAs or non-Cabinet ministers as who are Cabinet ministers at a meeting?

Mr. Friesen: I can assure the member that quorum count does not work that way, and so we would not have a situation whereby you could have an equal

number of non-executive councillors and somehow still call quorum and have a meeting. I would say, though, in—just as a clarification with my last answer, that when it comes to the composition of other committees of Cabinet, I would welcome a further discussion with the member to talk about further steps and whether there would be additional steps taken to create opportunities for other non-ministers on other Cabinet committees.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has ended.

* (15:50)

Debate

Madam Speaker: And the floor is now open for further debate.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): We don't intend to take much time on this bill. We'd like to see it move forward to committee to see what others—other experts might have to say about its parliamentary implications and what not, but there are two things that we know for sure about this bill. One, it's a face-saving bill to make up for the fact that the initial appointments to Treasury Board in May lacked the very kind of diversity that reflects this province. It was much to the embarrassment and shame of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that he made those particular appointments at that time. And so to try to make up for it, to try to pretend that it didn't happen, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) comes along with a bill like this which, in fact, really is not of pressing legislative importance at all. It's merely a piece of face-saving legislation in order to make up for the absence of diversity on Treasury Board in May.

The second point we want to make about this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, is, just as I said earlier, Dickens could not have invented a thinner gruel of a legislative agenda than what the government has put up with. We have had the most thinnest consommé of legislation known to humankind delivered this week with an unprecedented amount of 'fillerabust'—'fillerbustering' through own legislation, and it's, frankly, frustrating for those members on this side of the House who are talking about minimum wage, who are talking about sexual violence on campus, who are talking about the rights of working people in this province, to have to sit and listen to this kind of legislative amendments, face-saving legislation that really, really does not

address one single problem going on here in province of Manitoba today.

So let's be clear. We're going to see this legislation get on to committee. But make no mistake about it. This is about saving face and it's about wasting the time of this Chamber, and we're not going to waste any more time on it right now, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak on Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act.

I would like to take this opportunity to put on record that I fully support Bill 6. Madam Speaker, this gives me—this is a great example of new government's collaborative, inclusive approach to governing, and I personally believe Bill 6 is something we should all be proud of. While speaking to Bill 6, I would also like to explain why I feel it is important to allow MLAs who are not Cabinet ministers to participate as full members of the Treasury Board.

Madam Speaker, good governments make the difficult decisions necessary to ensure the protection of sustainable, quality services for their citizens. During the decade of debt, decay and decline, the NDP never made a difficult decision. On April 19th, our new Progressive Conservative government was handed a very loud, very clear mandate from the great people of this province. Manitobans 'express'—expect us to have a better plan for a better Manitoba.

Part of our Progressive Conservative better plan is considering and implementing new approaches to governing that draw on the strengths of our large team. This new Progressive Conservative government recognizes the need to have a variety of perspectives representing our Cabinet committees. By adding these new members, we know that their expertise will provide this committee valuable advice and perspective.

All committees are a crucial part of our democracy. One of the most important 'committees'—committees, from my perspective, of course, is the Treasury Board. Madam Speaker, the Treasury Board has an absolutely central role in government. The Treasury Board is responsible for overseeing government spending. The Treasury Board is in charge of establishing policies governing the management of public funds, initial assessment and approval of departments' annual expenditures and Estimates, decisions on departmental

submissions over the course of the fiscal year—that is to say, requests by the departments to increase their spending or to modify existing spending plans. Additionally, Treasury Board also has a role in determining how the government raises funds for its operations.

Madam Speaker, the Treasury Board reviews departmental revenue and fee proposals. Treasury Board also, historically, has an important role in the development of any new taxes.

So, Madam Speaker, all of this is to say that the Treasury Board is an extremely important mechanism for safeguarding Manitobans' hard-earned money.

Without effective oversight by the Treasury Board, it could be all too easy for spending to get out of control. Quite frankly, Madam Speaker, after 17 years of NDP dysfunctional governing style Manitobans are tired of watching the government's spending run out of control.

I don't want to speak on their behalf, but I hope the members opposite got the message and learned a valuable lesson in public trust in this past April 19.

Madam Speaker, Bill 6 is important because, I think, in order to ensure that we can better manage Manitoba's finances, can make better decisions that affect the outcome of our province and impact the lives of Manitobans, it is important to have a variety of perspectives on the Treasury Board.

Members of the Treasury Board who are not part of the Cabinet will be able to provide additional insight to the evaluation of public spending and revenue.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It is important to have a variety of views represented on Treasury Board and to have the most qualified people available from all walks of life. Indeed, a talent pool that the Treasury Board has not been able to draw from until now is that of members who do not sit on Cabinet.

We ought to recognize this is reform that is breaking a lot of ground. Bill 6 will allow MLAs who are not Cabinet ministers to participate in the Treasury Board, not as observers or as advisers as some other jurisdictions have done, but as full, active members.

The majority of members of Cabinet will still be Cabinet ministers, as will the chairperson and the

vice-chairperson. Nonetheless, this is an important change. We feel that including non-ministers in the Treasury Board will help the House exercise its functions more effectively. The new members of the Treasury Board enhance the ability of government's legislative branch to ensure value for money and, Madam Speaker, enhances the responsible management of Manitoba's tax dollars.

One of the important roles of the legislative branch is to ensure government spending happens responsibly. Madam Speaker, the NDP should be happy that we are adding these new MLAs with such great experience. Having private members represent the Treasury Board will empower our government to exercise responsible management even more effectively. That is something that we should all get behind.

Our caucus is made up of capable—extremely capable members, and we are always looking for new ways to contribute. The depth and vast skills of our team has to offer is often lost in our humble approach. We have members on this side of the House with business experience; members that are entrepreneurs; people from the volunteer sector; we have farmers; members that are engineers; we have teachers, veterans and veterinarians; financial advisers; not to mention members with experience at other levels of government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to say our Progressive Conservative government is made up of a team that comes from all walks of life. There is a lot of talent on our backbenches, and it makes sense to find additional ways for them to contribute.

* (16:00)

Madam Speaker, I would challenge anyone from members opposite to explain to me why such a talented group should not be incorporated and encouraged to participate in the Treasury Board. They are certainly capable of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not understand how the NDP can not get on board with the changes we are posing to make. Perhaps the members opposite do not think that Manitobans' money is important enough to be worth strengthening the board that oversees its use. More likely, though, this is a diverse, backwards thinking—divisive, backwards thinking, self-serving politics from the members opposite that sunk our province's finances and caused two credit downgrades. Considering the record of the

previous government, given their decade of debt, that may well be the case.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our new Progressive Conservative government is going to be more respectful with Manitobans' money than members opposite were. Manitobans are smart shoppers and they expect the government to be smart shoppers too. Our new government is not going to let spending get out of control the way that the previous government did.

The work of restoring sanity to the province's finances is going to be a lot easier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a strong Treasury Board that respects Manitoba's well-being. So let me highlight some of the people who have been appointed to the Treasury Board in recent months.

As you know, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) was added to the Treasury Board this August. I am very happy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see that she's taken a seat there.

The Minister of Justice has navigated many of the most complicated files facing our government in our first hundred days since taking office. She successfully finalized discussions with the federal government and Air Canada to protect and strengthen our province's diverse aerospace sector. Those negotiations resulted in establishment of an aerospace centre and the excellence at the Winnipeg airport, which in turn will be a boost to our province's valuable aerospace industry.

The Justice Minister has also been tasked with leading the continuing consultations with indigenous leadership and the federal government on the national inquiry for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The minister brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Treasury Board process.

Once this bill passes, additions of a couple new members to the Treasury Board will take place: the member from Brandon West and the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to put on the record that as executive director of the Old St. Vital Business Improvement Zone, the member for St. Vital has built solid relationships with many city departments, local businesses and organizations, not to mention the community itself.

The member for St. Vital brings extensive board experience and dealings with business owners as

well. She has been very—a very effective advocate for her community, and will also, I feel, be an effective advocate for the people of Manitoba in her role on Treasury Board.

We also know it's important to have women on the Treasury Board, as has rightly been pointed out, to ensure that there is diversity of perspectives representative. That is in the best interests of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker—sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to put on record that the member from St. Vital—as—along with the member from St. Vital, is my friend, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer). He is taking a seat on the Treasury Board as well.

The member from Brandon West is an experienced businessman and entrepreneur. He and his family founded a company called Shur-Gro Farm Services and built it into a successful business in western Manitoba.

The member for Brandon West has a long history of volunteerism with organizations such as YMCA, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, and it goes on. He is the past vice-chair of the Brandon University Board of Governors and has coached male and female amateur sports teams in the community for over 30 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member for Brandon West is someone who understands the importance of good budgeting and good financial planning to make not only a business but this province succeed, prosper to great new heights. With the family raised in Manitoba, strong ties to the community and proven record of business excellence, it would be irresponsible to exclude the member for Brandon West from the Treasury Board.

The bottom line, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is quite simple. These MLAs know the value of a dollar. I think we can all have confidence in them to bring good stewards to the province's finances. Nobody can deny, I'm sure, that both of these members will be valuable additions to the Treasury Board, and I look forward to them taking their seats. These two members will be in the first non-Cabinet members to serve on Manitoba's Treasury Board. I can't think of two more deserving colleagues for that honour. I am confident that they will set great precedent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm excited for these members and truly looking forward to seeing these members contribute to their life experiences and

perspective on Treasury Board, some of our backbench MLAs playing an important and constructive role in what was the most powerful board of government.

After a decade of NDP decay, Manitoba is in need of a fresh approach to government. This is but one example of how we plan on fixing, repairing and rebuilding Manitoba. It is important for the sake of Manitobans' pocketbooks to have the best people available on the Treasury Board.

We all know the previous government's legacy and this massive amount of debt they accumulated over the last decade. It becomes more obvious with every Auditor General report we need to take no lessons from the members opposite on the matter of best practices for governing for the interests of all Manitobans.

Our Progressive Conservative government is committed to making sure that we improve our province's finances. In fact, part of our better plan for a better Manitoba is to make Manitoba the most improved province by the end of our first term. This ambitious goal will be achieved by using our great team in government and in caucus. The fact of the matter is the people of Manitoba elected our government, the largest majority in a 100 years, it would be irresponsible not to use our large and talented 40-member caucus to its fullest capacity. Our progressive Conservative government will repair the finances of this province by working together.

Our team will manage Manitobans' money in a responsible careful way working together. A more diverse Treasury Board is a step towards accomplishing that and I think that everyone in this House should be able to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

*(16:10)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a few words on this legislation, which would essentially allow Treasury Board to be opened up to non-Cabinet MLAs. I think that the—it is not unreasonable to do this, but I think it has to be done with considerable care to make sure that we are careful about confidentiality issues, about conflict-of-interest issues and that there are not some, you know, minefields ahead which are not looked at and studied and made sure that they will be taken care of ahead of time before the government steps into it. I'm just providing some thoughts on this.

The first question, of course, is Cabinet confidentiality. And this is, you know, important. It should be straightforward but is certainly something that needs to be, right from the very start, a matter which is—there's appropriate forms which are signed so that any individual who is not part of Cabinet but who's an MLA sitting on a Cabinet committee, Treasury Board, has the appropriate forms and declarations with regard to confidentiality signed.

The second would be that this issue of conflict of interest, and you know, conflict of interest is not just about declaring it. I mean, the whole idea of conflict of interest is that an individual who is in a privileged position, whether it be Cabinet or an MLA in Cabinet committee, not use that insider knowledge to their own advantage or to the advantage of their friends or relatives. And so one would hope that there are—there is a very clear discussion with any individuals coming in to a Cabinet committee who are not Cabinet members, that they understand that it's not just a matter of signing a confidentiality and saying, you know, what things they may own or not own or what shares they may have, that these things are certainly there.

I would suggest that if there are concerns about conflict of interest, that this conflict-of-interest situation be reviewed, and not just for non-Cabinet MLAs in Treasury Board, but for all Cabinet ministers. I remember when we were discussing, as an example, the Crocus fund, right, it turned out that reporting of shares in Crocus fund was not required because it was considered, I believe, a registered retirement savings plan or something like that. And then decisions were made with regard to Crocus and the—you know—investment portfolio of Cabinet ministers was not even known.

So I would suggest that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), right from the start, should look at that conflict-of-interest legislation. I have heard from others that ours needs some update and that the Minister of Finance makes sure that it covers, you know, Cabinet ministers, but also MLAs who are not Cabinet ministers who may be on Cabinet committee, because, you know, this is a fundamental part of our democratic system, and we don't want people to lose respect for people in Cabinet because there are mistakes made.

The—there is important—and increasingly jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere are ensuring that if people have insider knowledge, that they are not able to use that to their advantage while they are

a member, but for some period after they cease to be a member. So that somebody can't, you know, get some insider information, at the end of the week resign from that Cabinet committee and the next week use that insider information to their advantage, that the provisions have to cover not only while they're members of that committee but for some period afterwards, or you could get into situations which are, you know, quite troublesome.

And I would suggest to the minister, as well, that if one was dealing with not just Treasury Board but other Cabinet committees, they may not be dealing with as broad a range of Cabinet issues. They may not be dealing with the financial aspects in quite the same way. But other Cabinet committees are certainly dealing with Cabinet documents. And there is, certainly, the potential for the same sort of issues to arise if the same sort of provisions are not in place for other Cabinet committees as well.

So I take the minister at his word that he's going to provide us with more documentation at the committee stage or, you know, before we get to committee stage. And it could be tabled in the House or what have you. But I think it is important that that information is available so that all MLAs can be assured that the proper precautions are being taken and that we will have the assurance in supporting this legislation, if we decide to support it, that these measures are, in fact, in place.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will pass on and let others speak on this legislation.

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): I rise in the House today to speak on Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act. But, before I do, since this is my first time in the House for an opportunity to speak since the return, may I begin by welcoming everyone back. And I trust everyone is well rested and ready to work together to improve the lives of all Manitobans.

As a government, we are committed to making Manitoba Canada's most improved province. Today, I will be making comments on Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, which I support. The purpose of the bill is to add a more inclusive depth to the Treasury Board. By allowing non-ministers to hold positions and provide input based on their knowledge and backgrounds, this will allow the Treasury Board to have a more comprehensive view. The amendment will also allow our government to bring a greater level of equality to the board. As a progressively minded government,

we recognize the need to have a wide variety of perspective on Cabinet committees. We recognize the importance of having members who are not part of Cabinet who will be able to provide additional insight into the evaluation of the Treasury.

We do not understand how the NDP cannot get on board with the additions we have made, especially after some of the statements made by their own members, those being on May 19th, 2016, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Ms. Marcelino) stated: "Madam Speaker, if we want to support progress for women, we have to ensure that women are represented in key positions of power." On May 20th of 2016, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) stated: "I remind everyone of the immense influence Treasury Board exercises in approving or refusing programs and services that directly impact on the lives of women and their children, now headed up by five men."

I am very proud to say that our caucus is made up of a diverse group of capable members from a wide variety of disciplines. With this depth comes a wider perspective and breadth of knowledge, and we are looking for them to contribute in a variety of ways. By calling on our members' diverse talents, we will enhance the ability of the government's legislative branch to ensure value for money and provide the necessary responsible management of Manitoba's tax dollars that Manitobans want and deserve.

This is in complete contrast to the NDP's financial management. When managing our province's finances, the NDP appeared to believe that as long as they had a cheque left, there was money in the account. They acted without any consideration for long-term consequences nor who was going to pay for the debt that they created.

* (16:20)

New members to the board bring a wealth of talent. The Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) has navigated many of the most complicated files facing our government in our first 100 days. Having successfully finalized discussions with the federal government and Air Canada to protect us and strengthen our province's diverse aerospace sector and leading the continuing consultations with indigenous leadership and the federal government on the national inquiry for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, the minister brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Treasury Board process.

The MLA for Brandon West will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the board. He possesses immeasurable skills in the areas of finance, marketing, market research, banking, business start-up consulting. He has expertise working on boards and volunteering in his community. He can only be described as bringing in extremely broad-based financial knowledge to the Treasury Board.

The MLA for St. Vital brings extensive board experience and dealings with business owners. As executive director of the Old St. Vital Business Improvement Zone, she has built solid relationships with many city departments and local businesses. As a school trustee, she chaired and negotiated committees and successfully negotiated for teaching and other staff contracts. As executive assistant to a city councillor, her knowledge of issues that are important to the residents and her dedication to improve the community are two of her greatest strengths.

This team brings board experience, knowledge of issues facing businesses, government and communities, and negotiation skills to the Treasury Board. These are the types of individuals we need in good government. We need a Treasury Board made up of individuals that are able to critically assess and make the difficult decisions necessary to ensure the protection of sustainable quality services for their citizens.

During a decade of debt, 'declay'—decay and decline, the NDP never made a difficult decision. The NDP did make politically motivated quick fixes that resulted in unsustainable spending, growth and massive debt. The NDP's solution to all problems was to throw more money at the problem. The NDP practised what I call fire engine management with our province's finances.

Whenever there was a flare-up, they tried to solve the problem by throwing more money at the problem, hoping to smother the flames. All this did was allow the problem to smoulder and enlarge while taking much-needed money off the table of hard-working Manitobans in order to finance their spending addictions.

Beginning April 20th, 2016, our government began the hard work required to repair the damage, correct the course and move towards balance in a sustainable way. Today we are focused on fixing the finances, repairing our services and rebuilding our economy. I am proud to say that our newly elected

team has eight elected women, and over 30 per cent of our Cabinet is made up of women. We also have the third female Speaker, two of which were elected from previous PC governments.

I'm very honoured to be able to rise in the House today in support of Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, to allow non-ministers to be members of the Treasury Board. These amendments to Bill 6 will allow Manitoba to move towards becoming Canada's most improved province.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any more speakers on this bill, Bill 6?

Is the House ready for a question? Oh, I'm sorry, right there.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Thank you, Mr. Deputy—[*interjection*] Keep on talking; keep going, okay.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to support my colleagues and my team as we seek to create a better Manitoba for everyone with Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act.

I'm extremely proud of the direction our government is taking when it comes to including each member of our team in important decisions that will affect Manitobans. We promised voters at the doors that we would clean up the mess that was left by the previous NDP government by fixing the finances, repairing our services and rebuilding the economy. The only way to attaining success in these areas is to use our collective skills with a single focus on the goal and that is to better Manitoba for Manitobans.

Already, in the short time we have been in government, we have made tough decisions in order to reduce the strain on Manitoba's finances. We have reduced Cabinet by a third, yet there is no less work to attend to. As a team, we support one another for the benefit of everyone in this province, and our only focus is on results.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new provincial government is made up of amazing people with skill sets that relate to every topic important to Manitobans. We heard loud and clear on April 19th that Manitobans wanted fiscal responsibility to return to the province with sustainable solutions to fix the deep hole of debt, decay and decline we have been experiencing over the last decade. Both the men

and the women of our government bring unique perspectives and valuable insights when it comes to managing taxpayers' money. It is a huge burden that keeps most ministers awake at night thinking about how to preserve the great programs that Manitobans depend upon, yet on a shoestring budget and all while managing a depressing debt load.

It takes a strong character and a responsible nature to face these particular challenges, and this province is blessed to have such caring individuals already serving on the Treasury Board. The three individuals named to join this board are quite the trio. In addition to the amazing job our Justice Minister is doing, she is willing to add to her plate in order to be a part of the financial stabilization Manitoba so desperately needs. The mental fortitude she has already displayed when strengthening and protecting the aerospace sector, through discussions with the federal government, only adds to the strength of the Treasury Board and benefits Manitoba.

The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) has shown initiative and creativity as a businessman and entrepreneur. The need for creative solutions when it comes to finances is great, as we aim to repair the damage that has occurred over the last decade under the previous government's direction. His fresh perspective and team approach to problem solving is exactly what I want to see included in the decision-making processes of the Treasury Board.

I am not sure I can accurately portray the inspiring and motivational talents the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) possesses. Her ability to remain level headed through the most extreme situations and the commitment to considering all sides of issues before negotiating a solution has me in awe of her wisdom that she displays. I truly cannot think of a more capable and effective member to add to the Treasury Board.

Manitoba is in great hands with the people appointed to be directly responsible for their money. The decisions will not be politically motivated quick fixes as experienced by the previous government. This new team will be able to create an atmosphere of trust through achieving positive results, debt reduction and making decisions based on need, not extravagant vote-buying promises.

The proposed amendments to this act will only benefit Manitobans and allow more inclusion for decisions that affect us all. It baffles me that the opposition would not support the additions to the

board, as it is—as this is a benefit to this province, but I suppose I shouldn't be surprised considering the mess they allowed Manitobans to live with.

* (16:30)

You would think they have an opportunity to make a new start and work collaboratively with the direction towards a better Manitoba. That would be common sense, though, and we know that might be lacking.

It wasn't that long ago that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Ms. Marcelino) was criticizing our government by saying, and I quote: Madam Speaker, if we want to support progress for women we have to ensure women are represented in key positions of power.

Well, two of the new additions are women, and I am encouraged to know that they were not chosen merely because of their gender, but based on the merit of their contributions to this government and to Manitobans. Women are more than capable of asserting their role in leadership positions and any organization, whether government or business, is wise to reward demonstrated abilities with more responsibility.

Governments are equally wise to reward the men who have skill sets to benefit Manitobans and its citizens. Solid leadership is not based on gender nor should it ever be. Manitobans need competent representatives and they have chosen quite the group to lead this province back to success.

I want to encourage the opposition to celebrate with us as we make these additions to the Treasury Board. In the end, even they will benefit from the input these qualified members bring to the table.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been encouraged to watch you in that role as you fulfill the Deputy Speaker role. I am also encouraged as we see Madam Speaker in that role. I am inspired as I see her manage a group that sometimes does not behave very well, but I won't name names because my own might be on that list. My admiration for her patience is not because of her gender, it is because she is a respected leader in the House who has a firm understanding of the responsibility of her role.

Thank you for all she does and for everyone in this Chamber. Thank you.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): It is my pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act. I

would like to put on the record why it is so important that MLAs who are not Cabinet members should be able to participate in the Treasury Board.

Part of this new government's better plan for Manitoba is to implement new collaborative approaches to government that take full advantage of our large diverse team. Part of this is having a diversity of representation and points of view on Cabinet committees, and one of the most important committees is, of course, the Treasury Board.

The Treasury Board plays a vital role in the functioning of the provincial government as well as the Legislature. It is responsible for preparing estimates, government-wide management, practices and systems, government fiscal management and control, including the management and control of expenditures and revenues. It evaluates government programs, approves the organization of government departments and the staffing complement and spending levels for the delivery of government programs.

The Treasury Board ensures the accountability of government departments to the Legislature for the delivery of government programs as well as any other matters that the Cabinet should choose to task it with. This reform, when passed, will allow MLAs who do not sit in Cabinet to participate as full members of the Treasury Board.

As other members have alluded to, this the first time the membership of the Treasury Board has been expanded beyond a small group of Cabinet ministers. It is an important departure from the previous practice. However, we feel that it is a positive change and one that will bring real benefits to Manitobans.

Deputy Speaker, this is a great example of our government's collaborative, inclusive approach to government. Our government recognizes the need to have a variety of perspectives represented on Cabinet committees. Generally speaking, having a diversity of perspectives leads to a more comprehensive discussion and, as a result, more holistic decisions and outcomes. In this way, having members who are not part of Cabinet will provide additional insight into the evaluation of government programming and spending.

Our caucus is made up of some very capable members, and we are looking for them to contribute in a variety of ways. It is in this way, Deputy Speaker, that I do not understand how the NDP cannot get on board with the additions we have

made. There seems to be no reason why talented people who are not ministers should not be able to sit on the Treasury Board.

The amendments outlined in Bill 6 will enhance the ability of government's legislative branch to ensure value for money and responsible management of Manitobans' tax dollars. And that, too, is something that I'm sure all Manitobans can get on board with.

The additional insight drawn from a variety of work and volunteer experiences that the added members will bring forward will enhance the Treasury Board and raise the level of mindfulness brought to bear on all matters which come before it.

Manitobans are fortunate enough to have a wealth of experienced MLAs who were elected in April 2016 to best represent their interests. They elected, Deputy Speaker, a total of 40 Progressive Conservative MLAs, which is a modern record. It is, in fact, the largest majority the people of Manitoba have granted in 100 years.

The strength of our mandate and the large number of MLAs we have here makes it even more important for us to find ways for all members of our caucus to meaningfully participate in the business of government. Working in isolation and in restrictive conditions will not help us to build the open and transparent government which the people of this province voted for in April 2016; opening up the Treasury Board will.

Let's talk a little bit more about the talent in our caucus, the talent which will be contributing to Treasury Board. As you know, this August, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) joined the Treasury Board. The minister has navigated many of the most complicated files facing our government in our first 100 days. She successfully finalized discussion with the federal government and Air Canada to protect and strengthen our province's diverse aerospace sector and is leading the continuing consultations with indigenous leadership and the federal government on the national inquiry for missing and murdered women and girls. The minister has already brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Treasury Board process.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Once this bill is passed, two more of my colleagues will be appointed to the Treasury Board. The MLA for Brandon West has been a member of the Manitoba Legislature since 2011. He is an

experienced businessman and entrepreneur who will bring to the Treasury Board years of experience from working in the financial management field.

* (16:40)

The member has expansive knowledge in the financial, management and investment fields and will bring invaluable insight into the many projects and business requests that will be put through the Treasury Board.

He has been actively involved in his community and has volunteered as a coach on many of his children's sports teams. He has volunteered his time to many community boards, some of which include the campaign chair for the Brandon YMCA, president of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, president of the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers and vice-chair of the Brandon University Board of Governors. The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) is an outstanding citizen, father and husband who is well respected for his dedication to 'baddering'—or, sorry, bettering the community he and his family have lived in for more than 30 years.

The member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) brings extensive board experience and dealings with business owners. She is a lifelong Manitoban who brings to her position on the Treasury Board a wealth of knowledge from her volunteering experiences within the community and from her professional life. The member's tireless dedication to community and family is evident through her long history of volunteerism in her community. The member for St. Vital has been actively involved with the United Way, Windsor Community Centre, youth justice committee, Marlene Street Resource Centre, and St. Vital Community Action Network.

As a school trustee, the member for St. Vital worked to improve the lives of many youth within the education system. As an executive assistant to a city councillor, she was able to gain first-hand knowledge of the importance of being able to network with residents in a community. The member for St. Vital was the executive director of the Old St. Vital Business Improvement Zone, which fostered strong relationships with many community agencies, businesses and residents.

Madam Speaker, the addition of these two MLAs to the Treasury Board will support this government's commitment to ensure Manitobans get good value for their tax dollars. We have set for ourselves the goal of making Manitoba the most

improved province in Canada by the end of our term. In order to do so, we will make sure that all hands are on deck, that all of our talent, whether in Cabinet or not, can be used to the fullest. That's something all of us here should be able to support.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Crown Services, were you wishing to debate?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): I just want to say that it is a great pleasure to stand in this Legislature and be able to speak to a great bill like Bill 6, and, Madam Speaker, great to see you in the Chair. And I spent many years serving this Legislature with you in caucus. You seem a little distant these days, but that is the role that you have, and we certainly respect and appreciate how you run this Chamber. And I'm sure from time to time you might even admonish the member for St. Paul. I'm sure that may occur from time to time. But we, you know, appreciate that you do your job with great integrity.

And, Madam Speaker, I do wish to put a few comments on the record in regard to Bill 6. I'd like to say that my career is basically a thank you to the women in my life. I am the youngest of six children, and I had four older sisters. And, if you want to know good politics, if you want to know how to learn good politics, you have four older sisters. And I realized very early on in my life—and my brother and I, we were the youngest two—we learned very quickly how to play politics in the family. I would probably be remiss if I didn't declare to this House that maybe from occasion or time to time, an older sister actually took the brunt of a misdeed that I made, and they were pinned with it, and I was—I always point out to my older siblings that, you know, as the favourite child in the family that, you know, it was only right that they would take the brunt of these things, and that's where I learned my politics very quickly. You don't do those things when you have four sisters that are older than you because when Mom and Dad then aren't home, you pay a bitter price for those kinds of things.

And, you know, if I was going to ever say where I learned good politics, it started right at home, and we all come by it in a different way. And I'd like to thank my sisters: my sister Lillian, my sister Elizabeth, my sister Adelle, my sister Margaret, who are very, very good at being role models. I love each and every one of them. In fact, I will have an opportunity to have three of them over for

Thanksgiving—for our Thanksgiving barbecue, and to this day I appreciate what they did and the influence they had in my life, and my brother as well, but today we're talking about Bill 6 and I want to stay focused on that.

My entry into more active politics was I got involved in 1981 in a campaign in Elmwood for Eveline Holtmann and a truly dynamic woman, very hard-working. In fact, that campaign—and this is going to be a surprise for the House—the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) still wasn't actually elected at that time. It is surprising. He—though he's been in this House for a long time, he wasn't there in 1981. I think he came soon after that. But then he also—also then decided he was going to—*[interjection]*—then he was going to try the big House, and he went to—the member for Elmwood went to the big House and he ran in the next election as the guy who talks the most.

He—you know, if—the member for Elmwood—I can't remember—he actually counted all the words that he spoke. It was like 150,000 words in like three days or something. I don't know if anybody else could get a word in edgewise, and I'm struggling even today, Madam Speaker. I'm struggling even today with the member for Elmwood.

But anyway this was—there was a different member at that time and campaigned for Eveline Holtmann and it was a very interesting campaign. I learned a lot. I was very young at that time, and learned some very important lessons. We didn't win, and I've often felt that, you know, you—and members opposite will come to this conclusion—you learn a lot when you don't succeed. And that's—you take those lessons and you go back at it and you start to figure out what it takes to have a winning campaign.

So Eveline Holtmann was the first campaign I got involved with, and at that time there was a group of women that, even to this day, I speak about with great reverence and awe. And one of the first women was—and Bill 6 is very important for this conversation—and the first woman was a woman by the name of Norma Price and back in the '60s and '70s actually St. James was Liberal, and these women decided that Norma Price was going to be the candidate. And so they ran a campaign and they all got together—and I'll list the other names afterwards—in fact, Gerrie Hammond was one of them. It was Olive McPhail and Barb Switzer in the St. James area. And Gerrie—Norma Price was our candidate, and they ran on a slogan because there was a show at

that time, a TV show, they ran her on the Price is Right and they went door to door and they got beat.

And I can remember Olive McPhail sitting me down. It was Olive McPhail and Gerrie Hammond who said, never, never, never be cute in politics, and that lesson has stuck with me to this day, and I—we don't have time today unfortunately and I know the House would like to hear it—but there are so many campaigns who try cute by half to win a campaign and it's a mistake.

* (16:50)

Anyway, Norma Price they ended running in the next election, and they ran Norma Price, a woman for our time, and she won that election and ended up being a Cabinet minister in the Sterling Lyon government. Her name, she then got remarried, her name was Norma Heeney And Norma Price, her campaign manager was Gerrie Hammond, the late Gerrie Hammond, an unbelievable woman, so dynamic, so—just greater than life. In fact, when Norma Price—Norma Heeney then at that time, decided to step down, Gerrie Hammond ran in her place, and this would be Kirkfield Park at the time, and Gerrie Hammond became the MLA and ended up serving in the Gary Filmon Cabinet. And Gerrie Hammond—just dynamic.

And Olive McPhail actually ended up being the chief of staff or a special assistant to Sterling Lyon when he was a premier and then in opposition. And these women took the opportunity to teach a whole group of us young people, young university students, young males and females, and taught us how to run campaigns and how to do them properly and how you get out the vote. And they—just the most dynamic group of people. You know, unfortunately, I don't believe Norma Heeney—Norma Price/Heeney—I don't believe she's alive anymore. And Gerrie Hammond, unfortunately, succumbed to cancer. I don't believe Olive McPhail is alive anymore—no, she's no longer with us. But just amazing women.

And I then moved on and started to campaign in the North Kildonan. I—we owned, family, we owned a home in Elmwood and then gravitated up to Rossmere. And a woman by the name of Marvelle McPherson, now she's also gotten on a little bit, but just outstanding dynamic individual. What they could teach us about urban campaigning was unbelievable. And again, she was one of these individuals who would take you aside, and she'd say, you know—there was a campaign for Vic Toews in, it was the 1995 campaign, and we—Saturday morning,

it was 37 below—and we went in and there was a group of us and we stood there a little dejected and we said, oh, come on, we can't go out campaigning. And she looked at us and she said, do you want to win? We said yes. Then go out and canvass. And I was brave enough at that time to stand up to her, and I said, but, Marvelle, the pens will freeze. Oh, she says, I'm way ahead of you. I came in early this morning and I sharpened all the pencils. Now go take your papers and go canvass.

Anyway, about an hour and a half later, we'd had it and we were out, you know, marking, and people were like, oh my goodness, it's like minus 40 out, what are you doing at the door? And, you know, we worked hard. So we came back an hour and a half later, all of us, and we kind of stood there. We figured we would get a talking to by Marvelle. And she looked at us and she said, you know what, you know where we are now? We all looked at her, no, where are we? We're an hour and a half ahead of where we were when we started this morning. Job well done. Go for breakfast.

These were women that were so committed, so powerful; they were so strong. And I would say Marvelle is one of those women who are greater than life. And all of my campaigns, I quote her all the time, because I tell people, you know, like, Marvelle McPherson would say, and then I tell them some of the lessons. I can't tell them all because I see the NDP are all sitting there writing down all these sage pieces of advice.

We have amazing women in the Progressive Conservative Party. And I don't know if I'm allowed to reflect on the Chair; there is our Speaker who is just a dynamic woman. And I served with her. I came into caucus—in fact, I'm pleased to say that she is—she still is—served a little longer than I have, and I'm so pleased, Madam Speaker, that you're taking on this role and do it in such a substantive and incredible way. And I'm not allowed to reflect too much, so I will move on.

There are all kinds of dynamic and outstanding women in our caucus. I'd like to say we've got individuals like Polly Craik, who is the chair of Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. And I would say to this House, if you have young daughters who are saying, you know, I don't know what I should do, or, you know, they're doubting themselves, you know, you put forward a Polly Craik and say, here is such an outstanding, dynamic woman. Use Polly Craik as someone to look up to, to model your life after. She

is such a successful and dynamic Manitoban. And on Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation we have Edna Nabess. The list goes on and on.

Madam Speaker, the day is starting to wind down. I understand this legislation is going to go to vote, and I would recommend to all members that they support Bill 6 and allow it to move on. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 6, The Financial Administration Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Is there agreement in the House to call it 5 o'clock?

Madam Speaker: Is there agreement in the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

So the hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m., Tuesday morning.

And happy Thanksgiving to everybody. I hope you all have a wonderful weekend with your families and friends.

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<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>