

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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	Ind.
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	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	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
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, Hon.	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**

**Monday, October 23, 2017**

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

Please be seated.

**MATTER OF PRIVILEGE**

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** Today I rise on a matter of privilege. This is the—my first opportunity since the last session, so I will table the documents right now for expediency's sake.

Madam Speaker, at the end of the October 19th sitting in this Chamber, an investigation was conducted; however, I'm—I do not believe all the information was provided.

This is a freedom of speech issue and it's the most important privilege that exists in our democracy and especially in this Chamber. The events of October 4th deserve a proper investigation and I've—I'm going to be including documentation to help with that.

The facts that we can all agree on, that notes were prevented from entering the Chamber, and this has not been fully considered.

I hope that, at best, the events of October 4th were simply the result of employees, House leaders, MLAs being new, misunderstandings and miscommunication. At worst, the activities of October 4th were a passive-aggressive but effective method to prevent an MLA from receiving material in order to raise important issues.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I would indicate to the member this is already an issue that I have ruled on and made a statement about in the House, and I would encourage the member to deal directly with me on that. He is currently challenging the ruling that has already been given in the House and that is an inappropriate thing

to do, especially as there are still a number of investigations ongoing in this area.

So I've already ruled on it and the member is not—does not have an ability to contradict that at this point. *[interjection]*

Order.

I would just indicate to the member that there is no further place to go on this. It has already been ruled on so there is no matter of privilege as this is already something that has been dealt with.

So, is the member wishing to say something further?

**Mr. Fletcher:** Okay. I would like to table these documents and in the documents you will see that there is a motion, which I don't need to repeat, I guess, but it's in the documents.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, then. We will accept the tabling from the member, and that is as far as this issue can go.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

**TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Restated Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for Manitoba Infrastructure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Further tablings?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to table the 2016-17 annual report on the accessibility of Manitobans act.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table today the following reports for the Department of Sustainable Development: the Technical Assessment of the Status, Health and Sustainable Harvest Levels of Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Resources; the fisheries envoy report; and meeting with Lake Winnipeg Fishers on revising Lake Winnipeg fisheries management today.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Justice, and I will indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our Rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

### Cool 2Be Kind Campaign

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss an important public safety issue facing our province.

Each year, thousands of young people in Manitoba and across Canada are victims of bullying, cyberbullying and cyberstalking by their peers and classmates. One in three adolescent students in Canada have reported being bullied recently, and the evidence shows that these trends then extend into the teenage years and early adulthood.

According to data from Statistics Canada 2014 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety, about one in five young people between 15 and 20 experienced cyberstalking, cyberbullying, or both; 41 per cent of them reported an emotional, psychological or mental health condition. In fact, the data shows that any participation in bullying increases the risk of suicidal ideas among our youth.

We have all seen the headlines about the tragic consequences of this epidemic of bullying in our schools and communities. Madam Speaker, we need to stop this epidemic, but we can only end bullying if we understand the power of education and awareness, especially when it comes to young children.

Last week, I was honoured to join over 300 students at Winnipeg's 'loid' Roberts school for the official launch of the Winnipeg Police Association's Cool 2Be Kind campaign. The Cool 2Be Kind campaign teaches students from kindergarten to grade 8 about the value of being kind to others and making positive choices in the classroom and in their lives.

Cool 2Be Kind recognizes that no two schools are exactly the same, allowing each school to submit their own unique kindness projects for eligible funding of \$500. This fosters creativity in the classroom while ensuring that kindness projects will be truly effective in reducing bullying in schools. It lays a strong foundation for kinder classrooms and

healthier students at the middle school and high school levels. Since it was established five years ago, Cool 2Be Kind was funded—has funded 113 unique school kindness projects totaling \$56,500.

Madam Speaker, I am so proud to serve as co-chair, along with former Point Douglas MLA Kevin Chief, of this terrific campaign.

\* (13:40)

As Minister of Justice and Attorney General and the mother of two children, I consider it my duty to ensure that our schools and classrooms are safe for everyone.

I would like to acknowledge the Winnipeg Police Association president, Moe Sabourin, and members Ward Gordon and Brent Wilkinson, who have joined us in the gallery today, along with all members of the WPA who make this campaign possible every year.

Not only do our police officers put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe in our communities, but through the Cool 2Be Kind they are also helping keep our kids safe in their classrooms too.

I invite members of the House to join with me in thanking them for all they do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Initiatives that focus on antibullying and positive behaviours are a great way to ensure Manitoba's youth learn to be kind, inclusive, respectful individuals.

The Winnipeg Police Association's Cool 2Be Kind campaign focuses on teaching youth, grades K to 8, to be kind to their peers. Instead of focusing on the negative effects of bullying, off-duty officers concentrate on the positive aspects of kindness. They promote to students what positive actions they can do to create a better atmosphere at school, home and throughout their community.

The sixth annual Cool 2Be Kind campaign launched last Thursday at Lord Roberts School with more than 300 students who got to be a part of the celebrations. Unveiling their Lions Pride T-shirts at the event, multi-grade Lion Pride groups plan on meeting regularly to promote positive and kind behaviours at school.

The Cool 2Be Kind campaign has helped local schools initiate and fund kindness projects designed by students and educators to meet the specific

needs of the school. Examples of these projects range from visiting seniors' homes, to creating an outdoor kindness classroom, to promotional awareness videos and posters. Since 2013, the campaign has funded 113 school kindness projects working with hundreds of our students.

We would like to recognize the Winnipeg Police Association and all of the off-duty officers for their continued efforts and commitment in promoting this initiative for Manitoba's youth and presenting students on why it is cool to be kind.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the minister's statement.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to respond to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the late Princess Diana once said, and I quote: Carry out a random act of kindness with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you. This is a statement that rings true today and is always worth being reminded of.

Madam Speaker, today we celebrate the Winnipeg Police Association's Cool 2Be Kind campaign entering its sixth year. This campaign teaches students in grades K to 8 the values and importance of being kind to one another and how making good choices can have a positive impact throughout one's life. The program has off-duty officers go into schools to speak with students and educators about the importance of spreading kindness and how to prevent bullying.

Madam Speaker, I believe that kindness speaks volumes to a person's character, and these off-duty officers have exhibited these characteristic and should be very, very proud.

This year, the campaign is asking students and staff from Winnipeg elementary schools to register their kindness projects online at cool2bekind.ca for a chance to receive funding for their kindness projects. I know that I plan to reach out to the elementary schools in Burrows for this.

In addition to this great program, I strongly believe that we, as elected officials, need to set a shining example of how to be kind to one another within the walls of the Legislature, and I would like to start that off by saying how grateful I am for everyone here.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

### **Look North Report and Action Plan**

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Madam Speaker, last week during northern small business week, I travelled to Thompson to receive the Look North Report and Action Plan. I was pleased to be joined by Look North task force co-chairs Onekanew Christian Sinclair of OCN, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and President-CEO Chuck Davidson, and my colleagues, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke), Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton), member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle) and the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin).

As one of our government's first priorities, we committed to helping unlock the tremendous economic potential of the North, and we recognize that the people of the North best understand their own needs.

We struck a task force to lead the discussion and, after a thorough engagement process highlighted by three economic summits in OCN, Thompson and Churchill, the Look North report is based on what the task force heard from northerners about what matters most to the North.

While a lot of good groundwork has been done in preparing the report, the real work begins now. This report represents the beginning of our long-term focus on the North. Look North has identified six specific areas to focus on—the shared goals we need to pursue. We look forward to working with stakeholders, partners and government colleagues to tackle the priorities identified in this living document.

Tourism is an important industry of the North and has tremendous potential, as demonstrated with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between ATAC, the Aboriginal Tourism Association of Canada, and Tourism Manitoba. This commitment will further enhance the tourism industry of the

North which, in turn, continues to build a better Manitoba.

The mining protocol committee, led by Chief Ron Evans, is developing a mining protocol together with First Nations communities for future development of the mining industry, which has been a backbone of the northern economy and will continue to be a major focus.

Changing course is not easy. It is going to require hard work and dedication. Luckily, in the North there are strong indigenous and community leaders to lead this change.

I am delighted to note that the co-chairs have committed to continuing their leadership role with a steering committee that will lead the next phase of engagement and implementation. I would like to express our sincere appreciation for all the work and commitment that has gone into the development of this report and action plan, the task force for its insight and all northerners for participating in this process.

There is much work to do and together we look forward to building a strong, sustainable future for northern Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I want to first thank the community members from all across the North who participated in the Look North process for showing commitment to trying to solve the challenges that the North faces and for sharing their ideas on how to overcome the challenges their communities face.

The government's plan to look north says it all: it's all looking and no action. Instead of working to build communities, the minister has been idle bystander to hard times for northern families.

He looked north while the railway has been abandoned, leaving families in Churchill—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —without affordable access to the rest of the province. He looked north while a construction season disappeared and Churchill hunkered down for an expensive winter.

He looked north as thousands of workers in The Pas, Flin Flon, Thompson, Churchill and all across the North worry about their jobs disappearing. He

looked north as their families struggled to afford rising food costs.

He looked north as the Health Minister cancelled plans for clinics, cut the NHRA budget by at least \$6 million. He looked north as communities lost doctors and businesses.

It's time for the government to stop just looking north and start acting for the North. Northern families need immediate action to boost their economies and to create good jobs. They need significant infrastructure—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —funding to build roads, schools, clinics so that their communities can get the services they deserve. And they need a premier who respects them enough to visit the North at least as often as he visits Costa Rica.

Families in the North deserve a premier who will prioritize them. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I urge the minister to get to work in the North and start showing a real commitment to our families in the North.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

\* (13:50)

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to respond to the statement? *[Agreed]*

**Ms. Klassen:** It is great to see this government is finally recognizing the importance of a strong northern economy. Now we all need to know, when exactly are you implementing the recommendations? I'm still waiting for the government to table the proof that they went to the First Nations listed in my riding, I have to add, on page 11.

Working with our northern communities to build long-lasting, sustainable and profitable economic relationships has been something all our northern and indigenous communities have wanted for a long time.

The report clearly states the differences in what success and sustainability means, and those are important when considering action plans. We hope that this government will recognize the importance

of incorporating indigenous values into action plans without the need for confrontation or 'combatitiveness'.

I think we can all agree that we must come together to do what is best for the North and not sit idly by while the problems continue. I encourage this government to enact the action plan put forth by the task force members while establishing and maintaining relationships with all the communities affected.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister for Sustainable Development, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule, 26(2).

Would the minister please proceed with her statement.

### Persons Day

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** The historic decision to include women in the legal definition of persons was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain, on October 18th, 1929. This gave women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life.

Each year, we celebrate, on October 18th, Persons Day to remind us of how far we've come and how far we still need to go.

The five women who pursued the case have become known as the Famous Five. These women were Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung and Henrietta Muir Edwards. They were journalists, magistrates and politicians who were influenced by a number of reform movements that took root in the early 20th century. Their arduous legal quest, which began in 1927, resulted in a milestone victory and was a turning point for equality rights here in Canada.

Throughout our country's history, women in Canada have worked tirelessly to break down barriers and claim their place as equals. Our past is filled with stories of extraordinary women who stood up for their rights and advanced gender equality for all.

Persons Day reminds us of all—that all women's voices matter. When women step forward and make themselves heard, the change they create benefits us all.

Activism for gender equality did not begin, nor did it end, with the Famous Five. By the time the Famous Five began pursuing the Persons Case in Alberta in 1927, they had benefited from the legacy of a long line of diverse and influential women who had overcome barriers and advanced equality in their own time, women like Mary Ann Shadd Cary, a civil rights activist who became the first black woman in North America to publish a newspaper, or Idola Saint-Jean or Thérèse Casgrain, who campaigned fiercely for women's right to vote in Quebec. Then there's Mary Two-Axe Early, who fought on behalf of indigenous women who lost their official status when they married non-indigenous spouses.

In the early years that followed, countless other women and men pushed even further for gender equality in all aspects of Canadian society. This spirit of activism and social justice lives on today.

So, we honour the work of those who came before us, those who fought for the right for women to be seen as persons and all the doors it opened for other women.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** October is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate women and girls across Canada while marking the achievements and accomplishments of women and girls.

We take pride in commemorating the historic Persons Case of October 1929 in which some women were legislated as persons with the right to vote.

With the determination of Nellie McClung and the rest of the Famous Five, the Persons Case allowed some women to be lawfully rendered eligible to participate in political life. It is important to recognize the Persons Case did not include indigenous women being allowed to vote.

It is often inferred the Persons Case was the impetus for indigenous women's activism and the genesis for our own feminist movement. Allow me to disabuse this notion by sharing: indigenous women were always considered equal to indigenous men and have always participated in the political sphere of indigenous nationhood.

In fact, Madam Speaker, I suggest that telling an indigenous woman she's not a person would not go over very well.

Indigenous women continue to demand equality and equitable representation, and Canadian women in general continue to push for greater equality in education, the workplace, at home or in government. We continue to fight to have full control over our reproductive health, including birthing in our home communities, free access to birth control and abortion services. We continue to fight to be able to choose how we dress or what religion we practice or don't practice. We continue to seek equality in loving those who we love. We continue to demand safety on our streets and in our homes. Quite simply, Madam Speaker, we continue to fight to just be.

And so, as we celebrate Women's History Month and the Persons Case, we lift up and offer our appreciation to women and girls across Canada.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the ministerial statement.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to respond to the statement? *[Agreed]*

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I am honoured to rise and speak to Persons Day.

It has been 90 years since some Canadian women were given the ability to participate fully in politics and affairs of state. It is important that we are clear that indigenous women were not given this privilege until 33 years later.

Without these tremendous women and trailblazers for equality, many of us would not be standing here today. We need to promote groups like Equal Voice who branch out and encourage women in all professions.

In our caucus, my colleague from Kewatinook believes that all forms of lateral violence against women should end, including women against women.

I myself believe that we need to go out of our way to encourage women in all professions to not feel forced to conform themselves to fit in.

My colleague from River Heights believes that it is time that women achieve the equality that they should have had long ago.

And lastly, our new leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party believes that women's rights are human rights.

Madam Speaker, we have a ways to go, but I know that the women in these chambers will work tirelessly to break down the barriers and claim our place as equals.

Thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Alex Goertzen

**Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona):** Back in 2012, after the untimely loss of his father, Alex Goertzen decided to use his inheritance to pursue an idea, a dream, a dream that involved fun and his passion for food. So was the beginning of his Little Bones food truck, which has been a staple of Manitoba festivals and street eats for several years before he opened his restaurant in the heart of Transcona in 2014.

Food & Beverage Manitoba and the Manitoba government has sponsored the Great Manitoba Food Fight to find local entrepreneurs who are looking to take their idea to the next level, and this year Alex was honoured to win the gold medal for a new product he's been developing.

He likes to joke that his food truck was the inspiration for The Tragically Hip song of the same name, but in truth Alex is a big fan and was even fortunate to supply Gord Downie and the boys with some of his wings the last time the band was in town and, to no surprise, they loved the idea and they loved the wings.

As a proud Manitoba business, Alex actively works with the Manitoba producers such as Granny's Poultry and Farmery Beer, and is currently looking for a made-in-Manitoba wine to serve as well. The menu features 75 flavours, from traditional honey garlic to the obscure Astronaut Poutine or, if you are brave enough, A.N.D.E.: A Near Death Experience.

Alex's energy, enthusiasm and humour have helped grow his business since 2012, and with his business partners and the financial award from the Food Fight, he is looking further toward global domination by getting his Little Bones, more meat, split, par cooked fantastically phenomenally breaded chicken wings to a restaurant and grocery store across Manitoba and the country.

But until then, Little Bones is another great reason to make the trip to Transcona. Give me a



shout. Tuesday night is wing night and my office is right next door.

\*(14:00)

Please join me in wishing Alex and his partners Jeff Klause and David MacKay good luck on your domination of the Canadian chicken wing market.

#### **U of M Neurosurgery Team**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** Madam Speaker, 27 Canadians are diagnosed with a brain tumour every day. A brain tumour can have a devastating impact on families as they watch their loved ones' physical, emotional and mental abilities suffer.

From personal experience, I can say that it is no easy feat. Today, it's been 15 years since my successful meningioma surgery. I am very grateful that I'm still around, thanks to the incredible talent and skills and support of the team of neurosurgeons at the University of Manitoba, based out of the Health Sciences Centre.

In honour of Brain Tumour Awareness Week, I have invited Dr. Neil Berrington, current head of neurosurgery at the University of Manitoba, and Dr. Michael West, the former head of neurosurgery, now an associate dean at U of M. Together, their vision, drive and expertise have resulted in the status of HSC's neurosurgery clinic as one of the most successful in Canada.

The University of Manitoba's team of neurosurgeons provides neurosurgical care to all of Manitoba, Nunavut, northwestern Ontario and parts of eastern Saskatchewan.

In 2003 Manitoba became the first in Canada to offer Gamma Knife surgery. It provides a minimally invasive method of treatment which delivers a high dose of radiation to tumours in a very precise manner, making it possible to treat tumours that are surgically inaccessible.

Recruiting some of the best doctors from around the world, the neurosurgery section of the U of M has saved thousands of people like myself.

I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking Dr. West, Dr. Berrington and the University of Manitoba's neurosurgery section for their pioneering and life-saving work, and for making Manitoba a centre of excellence for neurosurgery in Canada.

#### **Bonivital Red Sox Baseball Team Champions**

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I rise in the Legislature today to recognize excellence in sports within my community. On August 22nd of this year, the Bonivital Red Sox, Mosquito 11U AA baseball team, attained top honours with their victorious accomplishment in becoming both city and provincial champions. This level of achievement can only be earned with many hours of discipline, dedication, practice and hard work, not only for the players, but for the coaching staff and parents, who give of their time voluntarily in order to benefit the children who make up this special team. For more than 20 years, their coach, Jared Hall, has been coaching baseball, and this year he was recognized by Baseball Canada as coach of the week, an accomplishment for which his team, community and all of us here in the province are very proud.

It is important to learn that—early on—the level of work and discipline involved is paramount to achievements, and not only is viable for the sport itself, but in shaping the mindset of youth in a positive manner for education, career and all their future endeavours. It's times like this that I feel most rewarded as an MLA; it is such a privilege to see Manitoba's future in action and to give them such due recognition. I wish the members of this team all the best in their bright futures.

Youth are integral to the future growth and vibrancy of all regions in Manitoba, including our diverse, inclusive and growing capital of Winnipeg. This year, in addition to celebrating Canada's 150th birthday, we hosted the 2017 Canada Summer Games, a highly successful undertaking, seeing Manitoba's athletes compete, and in many cases win, against other highly skilled youth from across our country. Our athletic talent is matched only by our generosity, for Manitobans are known to be amongst the most generous people in the country, boasting a long history of volunteerism and philanthropy.

I am encouraged to stand here today in the Chamber this afternoon knowing that the boys of the Bonivital Red Sox, Mosquito 11U AA baseball team have a bright future ahead for both themselves and the rest of Manitobans.

I ask that everyone here in the Chamber join me in celebrating their accomplishments.

Madam Speaker, I ask leave to have the names of the team added to Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to have the names of the team added to Hansard? *[Agreed]*

*Carson Clelland-Hall, Christine Comte, Jared Hall, Lisa Lafond, Tyler Lafond, Tristan Lafond, David Lussier, Jack Lussier, Sandra Lussier, Dominic Marling, Dwayne Marling, Ken Marling, Nicholas Miller, Chris Miller, Joan Montgomery, Eldon Montgomery, Hayden Moore, Rita Moore, Eugene Normand, Mabel Normand, Matthew Sawchyn, Pamela Sersun, Leif Sigurdson, Todd Sigurdson, Darryl Skiba, Rylan Skiba, Braeden Smith, Graeme Smith, Luke Wagner, Gary Wagner, Sylvia Wagner, Jonas Woo, and Larry Woo.*

**Dr. Bob Menzies**

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** It is my pleasure to rise today and honour Dr. Bob Menzies, who was honoured as Morden Area Foundation's first Citizen of Distinction.

Dr. Bob, as he is commonly known, accepted the award at the Morden Area Foundation's 25th anniversary celebration and was recognized for his many accomplishments as a doctor and community member.

Born and raised in Morden, Dr. Bob attributes his desire to be involved in the community to how he was raised in his family and his years growing up in Morden. He received his certificate in family medicine in 1978 after receiving his MD from University of Manitoba. Returning to Morden, he began to practise family medicine, following in the footsteps of both father Jim and grandfather A.F., becoming the third generation of Menzies physicians in Morden.

Over the years he provided surgery, obstetrics, anesthesia, dialysis, chemotherapy, emergency and intensive-care services. He has been an active member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He had a crucial role in the effort to build Boundary Trails Health Centre. He helped establish the Clinical Teaching Unit there. He was named one of the 10 Family Physicians of the Year for Canada in 2002, in part for his well-known bedside manner and commitment to his patients.

He has dedicated his life to his patients and served the people of Morden and the surrounding communities for years. It was a standing-room-only crowd filled with family and friends, colleagues and community members who came out to add congratulations, give tributes and express their gratitude.

Dr. Bob, your professionalism, commitment, curiosity and appetite for new challenges has made you an excellent choice for this award.

On behalf of a grateful community, I say thank you.

**Leila Avenue and Seven Oaks Hospital**

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** The Maples constituency is one of the diverse communities and its needs are diverse, too. I raised the issue with the previous minister responsible for municipal affairs to twin Leila Avenue. I understand it's a city road, but the Province provides its share of the funds. The new minister should ask the city to put this road on the priority list.

It is frustrating that both the city and provincial governments don't treat north Winnipeg equally for infrastructure developments, to the south. The residents of the area were hoping for a long time for Leila Avenue to be twinned. It did not happen.

With the increase of population, traffic on Leila Avenue has substantially increased. While cars are parked on one side, only one lane is left to go through and unusual traffic jams occur.

Even one extra lane helps. This road is the main approach road towards the Seven Oaks hospital. The constituents already feel ignored by the announcements of closing Seven Oaks hospital's ER. Here are the signatures of residents to keep the ER open.

Many new Canadians and seniors live in this area with limited incomes. Many of them do not own private vehicles to commute to HSC or St. Boniface Hospital. The distance of these hospitals puts additional physical and emotional burdens on them.

Seniors and children go to the local parks, but they cannot stay long in these parks due to the lack of washrooms. Some seniors and children who moved from Toronto to Winnipeg asked me why there are no portable toilets as like as Toronto parks.

I ask the respective responsible ministers to pay attention to The Maples and surrounding areas, to twin Leila Avenue, as well as to keep Seven Oaks ER open and provide portable toilets in the parks.

Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, we have a guest in the gallery that I would like to draw your attention to. To the loge to my right we have with us Gerry Ducharme, the former MLA for Riel.

And on behalf of all members here, we welcome you back to the Legislature.

\* (14:10)

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Changes to Health-Care Services Impact on Patient Care

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Premier's health cuts are starting to hurt Manitobans.

This weekend I spoke with people who were upset about the closure of the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre. I heard from those health-care workers, those people who help our family members at the bedside. These workers say they are anxious about the uncertainty around their jobs. I left that conversation to hear from somebody else whose spouse says she's waiting longer for a needed surgery because of this Premier's cuts.

More and more Manitobans are starting to feel the impact of the Premier's actions. Manitobans are telling me that things are getting harder in Manitoba.

Will the Premier take the time to listen to Manitoba families? Will he protect our health-care services instead of cutting them?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, the price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change, Madam Speaker, and change is not easy.

The previous administration had all the information. They just didn't have the courage to act on it.

But before I respond further to the member's dull repetition of the falsehoods put on the record by his predecessor, let me congratulate the new Liberal leader for his success. I know he is here today, Madam Speaker, and I think we should congratulate him on his success in capturing the leadership of the Liberal Party of Manitoba. And that, I expect, may be the last time I congratulate him, but he knows that.

I wanted to also, if I could, Madam Speaker, offer, respectfully, my congratulations to our honourable colleagues, the member for River

Heights (Mr. Gerrard), the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux), for their participation in giving the members of their party a choice, for their hard work in doing so, for their ongoing participation in this process and also in the process of rebuilding their political organization—the organization of their choice. I congratulate them on their efforts.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** I think that the people who are expressing concern about the health-care system would probably not be thrilled to hear the Premier talk about their concerns as being dull.

Manitobans want to be able to stay healthy at home and when they need to get care that it should be provided close to home. Instead, they see a government that is forcing over \$100 million in cuts to health care. They see a government that is closing community clinics in St. James and St. Vital and in Fort Rouge. They see a government that cuts millions from CancerCare's budget while cancelling a new headquarters for the organization.

This isn't what Manitobans voted for, Madam Speaker. These are the actions of a government that doesn't seem to care.

Will the Premier listen to Manitoba families and commit to more community health-care options and not less?

**Mr. Pallister:** I thank the member for raising the topic, and it allows me to clarify for him that when I said dull I was referring to him, not to Manitobans. I was referring to his dull repetition of falsehoods, Madam Speaker, the dull repetition of falsehoods put on the record yet again to strike fear into the hearts of those who will be some of the Manitobans that will benefit most from the changes this government has the courage to undertake.

So, Madam Speaker, when we are 10th out of 10, as we were under the previous administration, in delivering health-care services to Manitobans, Manitoba health-care providers don't like that. Manitoba health-care providers, nurses, front-line workers, want to be part of a system that works to heal and they will help heal the system. And we are hearing from them they want these changes. Manitobans will benefit from them. They are proud of the courage their government is showing. They share that courage. They aren't as afraid as the member opposite.

**Madam Speaker:** Just a reminder to members here that the word falsehood is not one word that is acceptable in our language in the Chamber.

The honourable member for—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Kinew:** If the Premier took the time to speak to health-care providers, he would hear them say that in his rush to implement his program of austerity the Premier is forgetting he might actually make the health-care system worse.

The toll these cuts are taking on Manitoba families is significant. I spoke with someone who had been cared for at the Mature Women's Centre at Victoria General Hospital recently, and she explained how the centre had helped her through menopause. But then she said, you have to fight for this place because they also helped to catch a more serious illness early on. She believes that early upstream detection has helped her immensely. Now, Manitobans will miss out on that opportunity for early detection. Not only could that mean that people get sicker but also could increase hospitalizations in the longer term.

So will the Premier stop doing what he said he wouldn't during the last election? Will the Premier stop these health-care cuts?

**Mr. Pallister:** There we go again, Madam Speaker, with the dull repetition of erroneous information.

What we have this year is a budget which is almost half a billion dollars larger than the NDP ever invested in health care. Doesn't sound like a cut to me.

We've also engaged, last year and this, in the most ambitious prebudget consultative exercise in the history of the province, something the previous administration failed to do, Madam Speaker. They failed to listen—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —they failed to listen. They did not even ask. They just built up the health-care system at the top, not at the front line, and we are addressing that, and front-line workers want to see us do that.

But, Madam Speaker, more than that—more than that—they're not listening to the experts. Here is David Peachey's comment: a failure to change—this is a direct quote if the members would care to listen—

**An Honourable Member:** We've read the report.

**Mr. Pallister:** Haven't listened, didn't read it with comprehension, Madam Speaker. [*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** A failure to change will diminish the overall impact of the clinical and preventative services—will diminish—a failure to change will diminish.

Madam Speaker, we were 10th when we took over; we're moving up. They were getting further and further behind ninth.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

### Northern Manitoba Communities Economic Development Opportunities

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** You know, life seems to be getting harder here in Manitoba. It's getting harder and harder for many to make ends meet. You know, hydro bills are going up, and the Premier is floating the idea of a health-care tax.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** What's more, job losses are looming. Government documents reveal that there could be 1,500 jobs lost in the North in the next two to three years. That's 1,500 jobs lost, and I would table these documents so the Premier is familiar with them.

Fifteen hundred jobs. That could be \$100 million in paycheques that Manitoba families lose out on, that could mean \$300 million in spinoff spending lost for the entire region. These are the government's own estimates. We've heard talk from this government but not a lot of action or, more importantly, resources, to help stem potential job losses.

Which specific new resources will the Premier put towards keeping people working in northern Manitoba?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, we believe on this side of the House that the Golden Boy looks north for a reason. We're excited about the North. We're excited about its future, and we've known about the challenges, as did the members opposite when they were part of the previous government, for a long time.

We knew the slated closure and downsizing various operations in the North, but the difference

between us, Madam Speaker, is they didn't have the courage to address it with foresight or with inclusiveness or with listening. They didn't have the courage to do it; we do. We do, we have, we're going to continue to. We'll work with the people of the North to build a stronger future for them because we believe in the North. We don't just talk about it, we actually show it, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** We are still looking to see which specific resources will be put into place to help northern families. Now, we are prepared to work with the government on this issue, but we would like to see specific, concrete commitments to the people of northern Manitoba and to their jobs. The plans we've seen haven't identified one new job that would be created. They don't identify the targets for economic growth that are needed across the region. Again, we need action before those 1,500 jobs disappear.

The people of northern Manitoba are facing the prospect of severe job losses on the horizon. It's not our view; those are the facts that the government left out of their report.

Will the Premier take action and commit resources to help northern communities create the jobs they want in their region?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, Madam Speaker, they never had a plan for the North. That's what the community members told us as we travelled the North, as we were building our plan, working with northerners. They said there was never any demonstration of any economic plan for the North, and that reinforces the reality of what we saw from this government in its dying days. What was their trip to the North about? Well, their trip to The Pas, for example, wasn't to create jobs there, it was to promise that they'd get jobs if they voted the right way in the next election.

\* (14:20)

Manitoba's northerners don't deserve to be treated that way. They don't deserve to be treated that way, Madam Speaker, and they voted accordingly in the last election in Kewatinook, and they'll vote in—accordingly in the next election in a different way, too, because they're tired of being taken for granted by governments.

This government doesn't take them for granted. The previous government sure as heck did, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** To create the jobs of tomorrow, people in northern Manitoba need broadband access. This infrastructure investment is critical. The next generation of entrepreneurs will bring their products to market online, whether they're in The Pas or in Pukatawagan, if they have broadband. The next generation of tradespeople can be trained online, whether in Brochet or 'gimlin'—Gillam, if they have broadband. And the next wave of leaders are teaching themselves about the world on YouTube, so we have to help them get better broadband access.

Investments in broadband technology are key to the development of the North, including on First Nations. We know the federal government is prepared to partner. There are dollars on the table that could make an impact right now. What we need is for this Premier to step up.

Will the Premier make broadband infrastructure investment a real priority and partner to help create northern jobs?

**Mr. Pallister:** As I recall, Madam Speaker, it was the previous administration that had such a problem with communication internally they staged a historic rebellion against each other. They cared so little about communication around this province that they allowed our emergency communications network to deteriorate to the point where operators, within our government, trying to connect ambulance workers, police workers, front-line health-care professionals, had to buy spare parts on eBay.

Madam Speaker, we're talking about a \$500-million neglect that was handed to this government, like poison water, by the previous administration that neglected the communications needs of our province, neglected the needs of our front-line health-care workers, neglected the needs—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —of security for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, if they can't take the most responsible—if they can't take the top priority, the greatest responsibility of government, seriously, which is to protect the security of people who are in

jeopardy, how can they be trusted with any other issue?

### **Northern Manitoba Communities Employment Loss Concerns**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** The Look North report doesn't mention that the next two to three years predict potential job losses in the range of up to 1,500 in northern Manitoba. The communities could be hit the hardest are The Pas, Churchill, Flin Flon, Thompson. Without immediate action, the future economic prospects of northern Manitoba are threatened.

What concrete action will the minister take today to create jobs in the North?

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Well, Madam Speaker, I would encourage the member to read the report rather than standing there in his place and criticizing Onekanew Christian Sinclair, Chuck Davidson. He's even criticizing Dianne Russell from the Flin Flon district chamber of commerce.

If they would only believe in the North like the people of the North do, we would make real progress. If—we will—this government will make progress where that government failed.

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

### **Resource Extraction Plan**

**Mr. Lindsey:** Northern job losses this government is predicting represent a loss of roughly \$100 million in annual income, \$300 million per year hit to the economy. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Resource companies are planning cuts in Flin Flon and Thompson. The rail line to Churchill still isn't fixed.

After nearly a year and a half, the government has not tabled a plan for resource extraction. Will the minister table it today?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Unlike the NDP, we do believe in the people of the North in determining their own destiny. That's why Chief Ron Evans and his committee are working on a mining protocol, working with First Nations, on how to develop potential mineral deposits across the North. There's lots of opportunity there. The previous government failed. They thought

they could make everything happen here and forgot to listen to the people of the North.

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

### **Duty-to-Consult Strategy**

**Mr. Lindsey:** Answers like that really don't instill a lot of confidence for people in the North.

The North needs a broad economy job strategy. Focus only on one sector won't be enough to replace the job losses this government is predicting. What could help would be for a government to actually provide a path for resource companies. The government promised to table a duty-to-consult strategy. There are many—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —in existence.

Can the government say when—when, what date—will they actually table their duty-to-consult document and strategy?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, see, this is the difference. The NDP, when they were in government, believed that they could solve all the problems of everybody, including those to the north.

This government believes that we can work, and we enable the people of the North, we work with the people of the North. We were elected to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy, and that includes the North. And this government will work with the people of the North to do just that.

### **Reproductive Health Care Patients Charged for Abortion Services**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** We learned an unclear number of women were forced to pay \$350 for their medical abortion. Women paid out of pocket despite the Minister for Status of Women promising to make it fully available and fully funded.

The minister minimized this as a breakdown in communication and this simply is unacceptable. If the minister makes a promise to Manitoba women and girls, she needs to keep her promise.

Will the minister explain how she allowed women to pay hundreds of dollars for essential health care, and how she plans to ensure that it never happens again?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I'm pleased to share with the House today that we have enhanced health-care services for women in the province of Manitoba, including reproductive health options. And the facilities that offer surgical abortions are now offering medical abortions.

And we're very proud to stand up for all women in this province and ensure that they have access to the services that they require.

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

#### **Access to Mifegymiso**

**Ms. Fontaine:** But actually, the minister's commitment to fund the abortion pill isn't really a commitment at all. It's refused to provide services in rural and northern Manitoba, meaning women and girls with the least access to abortion actually are not supported at all. And the minister's actually missed the whole point of Mifegymiso.

The minister told clinics there will be no additional money to pay for this service. It's forcing places like the Women's Health Clinic to pull staff and existing resources in order to fill these gaps.

Will the minister admit she has not done enough to give women and girls access to abortion, and reconstitute the very limited plan she has in respect of accessing Mifegymiso?

**Ms. Squires:** I'm pleased that the member opposite raised the issue of rural and remote access for women to get health-care services. That reminds me that, under members opposite, when it came to offering services for women who lived outside of Winnipeg, they gave them two choices: take a bus or take a plane into Winnipeg.

Our government is working with women to provide access for services up in the North, and where they failed to get the job done, we're going to succeed.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister's mistake is a clear indication of this Pallister government's commitment—or, really, even, know-how in delivering essential reproductive health care to Manitoba women and girls—is seriously lacking.

The Minister of Health refuses to actually say the word abortion, let alone ensure full coverage.

He's already cut lactation consultants for new mothers, closed the Mature Women's Centre, cut funding for pads and mesh underwear. This government's approach to women's health care is to make deep cuts and then sweep it under the rug or to blame Ottawa.

\* (14:30)

Will the minister apologize to Manitoba women and girls and immediately take our reproductive health seriously?

**Ms. Squires:** Madam Speaker, I first of all would like to commend our Minister of Health for enhancing the health-care budget by over \$500 million. That's \$500 million for health-care services for women in this province.

We take the health-care delivery model for women seriously whether women are living in Winnipeg, whether they're living in Brandon, whether they're living up in northern Manitoba, and we're going to offer them solutions that don't include taking a bus or taking a plane into Winnipeg.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### **Education System School Closure Inquiry**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, Manitobans are anxious because of the seemingly endless list of cuts and closures that have already been implemented so far by this government. Parents, in particular, are worried about the impact that these cuts will have on their children's education, and yet the Premier (Mr. Pallister) doesn't seem to care.

In fact, we now know that the cuts and the closures announced so far are only just the beginning, because the KPMG report has actually called for the closing of schools across this province.

Will the minister tell those worried parents, directly, how many schools he intends to close?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I can say that as a parent myself of a young child who is in school, that the greatest thing that we're concerned about is results. That was never in the question from the member opposite because the opposite—the government opposite never did worry about results.

When we were last when it came to math scores in all of Canada, they didn't worry. They said things would get better; they didn't. When we were last

when it came to reading, they said, don't worry, things will get better. They never did, Madam Speaker. The government opposite, the former government, still doesn't care about the issue of results.

On this side, our Education Minister every day is working to improve the results of our students, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** The schools are the lifeblood of communities, and we know that students do better when they have smaller class sizes and more teachers, and thus the results that they get, of course, are better in those cases. And yet, the secretive reports that this government has released—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —lay bare this government's plans for cuts, closures and privatization across the province.

The minister admitted in question period that he intends to shut our schools across the province. He admitted, in fact, that he's already developed a secret plan to close them, but now he won't actually tell those worried parents which schools are on the chopping block.

So, again, I ask—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —will the minister tell the public which schools he intends to close?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, first of all, Madam Speaker, I don't know how somebody announces a secret plan. It's like trying to hide something on the Internet.

What our minister has been doing is he's been announcing new schools. He's been announcing investment into new schools.

But the Minister of Education hasn't just been announcing capital; he's been announcing how they're going to look to get better results for our students: better results in science, better results in math, better results in reading. That's ultimately what parents care about.

What we need to do for our students, for the future of those students and for the future of our province, that member didn't get it. His government

never got it, and they still don't understand it, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** I might need to remind the Minister of Health what the Minister of Education said last week. In fact, it was in this House, in this question period, where the Minister of Education said that he alone had the guts to close schools in this province.

Now the Minister of Health is hedging, admitting that there will be cuts, but he won't tell Manitobans exactly which communities will be impacted.

The real test of this government's character has been whether they will be straight with the public about what their plans for cuts and closures will be, and yet again the minister won't come clean.

Well, the minister, last week, talked about guts. Does this minister have the intestinal fortitude to tell those communities which schools will be cut?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, the former government never had the stomach to focus on results, to get better results for students. The member opposite, my friend Concordia, could turn to his left and talk to one of the 14 different Education ministers that the former government had on that rotating door. Each one came in and they said, we're going to do better when it comes to math. Each one came in and said, we're going to do better, when it came to science. Each one came in and said, we're going to do better, when it came to reading. Well, they were all consistent. They were all consistently wrong, because it only got worse under them.

### **First Nations Communities Wildfire Evacuation Response**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** First Minister, when my people were evacuated to safety here in Winnipeg, we needed action. Posing for pictures doesn't qualify as helping us. I was really shocked and disappointed by that action because I've heard this government chastise, on several occasions, the former NDP government for doing that very thing.

The Manitoba government cried that the state of emergency we needed was a federal call, but then why didn't this government march with us First Nations as a show of support?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** I'd first like to express the



thanks of this government and the appreciation to all the brave Manitoba firefighters that were there to fight this fire and answer that call. But we'd also like to thank firefighters from Ontario and Minnesota that came to help Manitoba in their efforts and to save—fortunately, there were no homes lost, although there was inconvenience, but there was no homes lost, and we thank everyone for helping out.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** First Minister, after the photo op at the RBC centre, rather than extending a hand to us when we were in dire need, we couldn't find our Premier (Mr. Pallister).

Rather than contacting us professionally, a tweet was used to answer to the public, not to us, as many of my leaders do not use Twitter. I had to show my leaders the Premier's Twitter response.

Premier, assuming—assuming—the government will ever get to work on the framework, is that episode an indication of how the upcoming indigenous duty-to-consult framework will look like?

**Ms. Clarke:** I'd like to offer to the member opposite that I was, in fact, in touch with all four chiefs, as the evacuation was taking place, within the first hour. Those conversations carried on throughout the days going forward, and we were very clear on our roles and responsibilities throughout.

During that time, I was also very pleased to go with the Premier to visit many of the evacuees and ensure that their needs were being met, and we met with nothing but praise from most people there, although there was limited amount of people. It was not full; people were out and about, and the mood was relatively happy. Were they concerned? Were they wanting to get back home? Absolutely. For seniors who never leave home, absolutely they wanted to get back home, and I'm pleased to say that when the fire was contained, they were sent home and happily to go so rather quickly.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like to remind the member that when posing questions, the questions should be posed in a third-party fashion through the Chair and not directly to a member.

**Ms. Klassen:** I remember getting a call, and I remember all I got was heck for what I was doing there at the Convention Centre. But as soon my people got home, we buried those we lost. But being home, all the frustrations and anger of the evacuation

melted away. My people are very forgiving, but therein is our collective challenge.

\* (14:40)

This new government cannot continually neglect the indigenous people of Manitoba.

How many—I would like to know how many conversations or requests were made, on behalf of my evacuated people, did the PCs make to the federal government to help us in our time of need.

**Ms. Clarke:** Again, I am pleased to say that our government was very involved. And I'd like to clarify that although our government led the fire suppression efforts, it is the responsibility of the Red Cross, who worked directly with INAC, who delivered the emergency management services to our First Nations.

Our department specifically was very pleased to have at least 20 or more provincial staff who were proactively provided support—evacuees with the Red Cross. Although they not required to be there, they were there 24-7.

#### **Family Law Reform New Administrative Framework**

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** The evidence shows that long and acrimonious divorce proceedings result in worse outcomes for Manitobans. It is clear that the current adversarial family law system simply is not working for our families and our children.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the House how the advisory committee she has established will help put families first in our family law system?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I want to thank the member for Seine River for that very good question.

Last week our government was proud to announce that we are continuing to put families first by reforming family law to make the system more accessible, less adversarial and better for Manitobans.

Allan Fineblit, a very well-respected lawyer in our community, will chair a team of legal experts and community leaders who will report back with a detailed framework for a new administrative model for family law in our province.

We look forward to receiving the report and moving forward with an important initiative that is

long overdue and will put Manitoba families first once again in our province.

### **MRI Services in Dauphin Availability Inquiry**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** On behalf of the people in the city of Dauphin and all the Parklands, I ask the Minister of Health: Where is the new MRI machine for Dauphin currently located?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I think that the member opposite—thank you, Madam Speaker—I think the member opposite will know that the wait-times task force was tasked with looking at the Dauphin MRI, along with a number of other issues, when it comes to wait times. Wait times grew exponentially under the former government and when that member was in Cabinet, for a variety of different procedures, not limited to MRIs.

So we await the wait-times task force and their report, which will be publicly released by the end of the year and the member opposite will be able to peruse it at that time.

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

**Mr. Swan:** That answer might be good enough for the members opposite, Madam Speaker, but it's not good enough for the people in Dauphin or the Parklands.

A new MRI suite has been constructed at Dauphin general hospital. We understand that staff has been recruited. They've already been trained and they're waiting to help patients.

We know that thousands of patients in the Parklands are travelling to Brandon or to Winnipeg, sometimes tying up an ambulance for most of the day, to get those tests done, even though we know that there's a new MRI machine somewhere that could be up and running.

I ask the minister again: Where is that machine now? Where is it?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, I'm sure that the member opposite will look forward to looking at the analysis when the wait-times task force reports and when it's released by the end of the year. I certainly was interested in the analysis when it comes to MRIs in different parts of the province, and certainly we heard the Auditor General report on MRIs and what a disaster it was under the former government. But I

did ask for the analysis on the placement of the MRI in Dauphin, where the evidence lay for that, and I was told when I became minister there was none.

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

**Mr. Swan:** If the minister doesn't know where the \$4.5-million MRI machine is, maybe he should just say so, Madam Speaker.

If the minister does know, maybe he's hoping that people of Dauphin won't notice there's a \$3.6-million MRI suite, which is now ready to go, that sits empty.

If the minister is relying on a wait-times report will he just tell the people of Dauphin that despite their best efforts, despite the need in Dauphin and the Parklands, it is clear, because of his Premier's (Mr. Pallister) decisions, they are not going to be getting that MRI and they can keep driving over the mountain to Brandon or driving in for an all-day trip to Winnipeg to get tests that could easily be done in the city of Dauphin as soon as the MRI, wherever it is, gets placed in the suite for the people of the Parklands, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I appreciate the member's new-found interest in people who are waiting and who are driving a long time for medical procedures, Madam Speaker.

I wonder where he was for 16 or 17 years. Well, I know where he was for a couple of those years. He was fighting internally, and if he hadn't been fighting internally, he might have been spending that time looking at the wait times that were growing in Manitoba, driving all over the province to try to get service. In Winnipeg, there was wait times that were growing in emergency rooms. They're waiting for diagnostic testing. They were certainly growing in rural Manitoba as well.

I'm glad that he's come to the party trying to fix the problem, but he's a little bit late to get on board now, Madam Speaker.

### **Manitoba's Economy Financial Projections**

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** It sounds like the Minister of Health actually lost the MRI as opposed to anything else.

Last week, the Conference Board of Canada said that construction of the Keeyask dam and a good growing season will drive economic 'activity' this

year, but there are deep, dark storm clouds on the horizon. The Conference Board projects, Madam Speaker, that Manitoba's economy next year will grow by only 0.3 per cent.

Will the government now concede that its agenda of austerity is hurting Manitobans, and will it pull away from its blind rush into cuts and closures?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I thank the member for the question.

Well, let's understand first of all that the former government always thought the solution lay in more revenue. They never thought the solution lay in managing their expenditure as—a fundamental difference.

This economy will grow. Conference Board of Canada is one metric that we look at. There are many others as well: economists, banks, central banking reports; we look at that. We see that they're still good in continued growth for the province of Manitoba. However, obviously, part of this solution lies in better expenditure management, work they never did, work that we are undertaking.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Allum:** I'm sorry that the Minister of Finance won't take these projections seriously. Not only GDP is projected to go down and down a lot, employment growth will also suffer, as will business investment. It will also dramatically decline.

The Pallister government has been engaged in a program of austerity, of cuts and closures when, in fact, the Manitoba economy, within 12 months, is going to need an injection of investment.

Will the minister rethink his program of cuts and closures?

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, I don't agree with the member for doom and gloom over there. I want to be certain that Manitobans understand that the Manitoba economy will still grow by 2.1 per cent this year. Expectation next year is for 1.9 per cent—this, in the new environment of normal growth.

But that member glossed over very quickly the fact that this government added 16,000 jobs to the Manitoba economy just from this time last year—the lowest unemployment rate in all of Canada for three months running, and the lowest household per capita debt.

There are signs that we're on the right track. We'll keep going down that track. They should get on the track.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member Fort Garry-Riverview, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Madam Speaker, we won't be getting on the track to Churchill because that doesn't exist, and the Premier's done nothing about it. And we won't be getting on a track that takes Manitoba to actually last, when it comes to economic performance, within 12 months.

We want the Finance Minister to reflect on the actions that he's taken to date, to reflect on the damage that cuts and closures are doing, to reflect on the anxiety it's provoking within Manitoba families.

Will he do us all a service, reflect on his agenda of austerity and get on with the plan to build this province?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I hesitate to give the previous government any credit for a plan, Madam Speaker. I don't think they had a plan to fail, and because of that they failed to plan. Well, I guess, in failing to plan, they actually did plan to fail because they did fail in every category: 10th out of 10 in every respect.

\* (14:50)

Now, the member is talking about a forecast, seizing, hoping to get political advantage out of a negative forecast. But I'm concerned, of course, about the reality, not the perception the member tries to play to. Manufacturing sales are increasing at their fastest pace in six years. Employment growth is above 1 per cent for the second time since 2012. Merchandise exports, wholesale trade sales, building permits are at their fastest pace in the last five years.

Right now, Madam Speaker, this province is growing, and we're doing everything we can to partner with Manitobans to make sure that continues. The previous government couldn't do it, but where they failed, we and Manitobans working together will succeed.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

## PETITIONS

### Transit Funding

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8) repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states the municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue.

(2) Public transit is—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

This petition is signed by Lisa Haplock, Adam Haplock, M.—can't read the last name, I apologize—and many other great Manitobans.

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

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8) repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act

which states, quote, the municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or a rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue.

Secondly, public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

Third, eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

### Northern Patient Transfer Program

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitobans recognize that everyone deserves quality accessible health care.

The people of northern Manitoba face unique challenges when accessing health care, including inclement weather, remote communities and seasonal roads.

Provincial government has already unwisely cancelled northern health investments, including clinics in The Pas and Thompson.

Furthermore, the provincial government has taken a course that will discourage doctors from practising in the North, namely, their decision to cut a grant program designed to bring more doctors to rural Manitoba.

The provincial government has also substantially cut investments in roads and highways, which will make it more difficult for northerners to access health care.

The provincial government's austerity approach is now threatening to cut funding for essential programs such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program, which was designed to help get some of the most vulnerable people in the province.

The provincial government has recently announced it would cancel the airfare subsidy for patient escorts who fly to Winnipeg for medical treatment, which will be devastating for patients with mobility issues, dementia, or who are elderly and need assistance in getting to the city.

The challenges that northerners face will only be overcome if the provincial government respects, improves and adequately funds quality programs that were designed to help northerners, such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the absolute necessity of maintaining and improving the Northern Patient Transportation Program by continuing to respect Northern Patient Transfer agreements and funding these services in accordance with the needs of northern Manitobans.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many northern Manitobans.

### **Taxi Industry Regulation**

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure that there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring

so-called—bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city, and a significant risk in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

And this petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

\* (15:00)

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as—has been in—which has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

### **Transit Funding**

**Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8), repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act, which states: Municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates on a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue.

Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8)

of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act.

Signed by Alannah Dawn Genaille, Timothy Keeper and Nicole Reynolds and many, many others.

Thank you.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8), repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act, which states: The municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or rapid transit system a transit operating grant in the amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue.

Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

### **House Business**

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** On House business, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

**Mr. Cullen:** I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet, if necessary, on

Thursday, October 26, 2017 at 6 p.m. and on Friday, October 27th at 10 a.m. to consider the following: Bill 30, The Local Vehicles for Hire Act.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet, if necessary, on Thursday, October 26, 2017 at 6 p.m. and on Friday, October 27th at 10 a.m. to consider the following bill: Bill 30, The Local Vehicles for Hire Act.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Cullen:** I ask that you resolve the House into the Committee of Supply.

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY  
(Concurrent Sections)  
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume considerations of the Estimates for the Department of Executive Council.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I think I might have not paid as close attention to the Premier's press conference as I should have, but did he say that the carbon-price plan would be announced on Friday of this week?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Yes.

Now, I undertook some—to get some information for the member, and so I will share that now and keep my hitherto up-'til-this-point-only perfect record going on sharing information with the interim leader, the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino), and the new leader of the NDP.

So the question was on the org chart for my—or, for the Executive Council. And I've got the chart updated to October 12th for the member. And it has—and I'll read the names of the positions. Can I say the names of the people, too, into the record? *[interjection]* Yes, so I'll do that for the member. And then, following that, if he has any further questions, I can share those with him.

So it's myself and then there's the man to my left, who is the Clerk of the Executive Council, Mr. Fred Meier, who, I believe, the leader of the NDP has had the chance to meet. I know that some of his colleagues have worked closely with Fred in the past, including but not limited to the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), I believe, and others. The director of communications and stakeholder relations is Mr. Chisholm Pothier. His name will have to be changed on the record, as it is misspelled, I note. The director of legislative affairs and regulatory review is Mr. Elliot Sims. And the chief of staff is Phil Houde.

In—under each of those gentlemen are others who work as part of their teams in their particular areas. So, for example, under Mr. Meier's clerk office, he has an executive assistant to him whose name is Lynn Voth; an associate clerk, which is Jim Hrichishen, who is also the Deputy Minister of Finance; an administrative assistant, Gurpreet Sehra; a Cabinet administrative officer, Viviane Riding; and an OIC officer, Peggy Barta. Now, because of the spelling mistake for Mr. Pothier, I'm not going to guarantee that the spelling is correct on each of these other names. I've now lost confidence in the spelling ability of the people who prepared the chart, but I'm assuming the spelling would be—if it's incorrect, I'm sure Fred would tell me because these are people in his office. *[interjection]* Yes.

Chisholm Pothier is Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, has several press secretaries. I would note there's a fraction of the number that were in the NDP administration that we followed—in terms of total budget, approximately 30 per cent—I believe we have those numbers if the member wants more elaboration—less allocated to this department than was the case before. Nonetheless, these are a diligent and capable group of people. Press secretaries Caitlin MacGregor, Olivia Billson, Andrea Slobodian, David von Meyenfeldt, Amy McGuinness, and Kalen Qually. As well, there's a creative and digital communications specialist, Stacia Franz; tour co-ordinator and outreach co-ordinator, Morgan Shipley; outreach co-ordinator, Alysia Lawson; administrative assistant, Alison DePauw; press secretary: currently vacant; tour director: currently vacant—positions there that we have yet to fill.

Director of Legislative Affairs and Regulatory Review—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please.

A formal vote has been requested in another section of Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

*The committee recessed at 3:28 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:24 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Quiet, please. Come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Executive Council.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Kinew:** I know the Premier was looking forward to completing his answer, so I'd just ask him to complete the update on matters under advisement, please.

**Mr. Pallister:** First of all, before I complete the org chart that I began earlier, I may need to review the thing from the start just to avoid confusion and for additional clarity, I should put on the record the reduction in terms of spending at the top of our organization and explain again that this was an important thing, I think, to demonstrate that we were willing to do the difficult decisions necessary to change the tone at the top of our structure. It was a lot of—remark on the increases in the size of government throughout the previous administration's time in office. Certainly, remarks not limited to political commentators, but also including people like the Auditor General, who in her report talked about the importance as she was reporting on practices in government generally and specifically on purchasing, procurement, and tendering practices.

The previous Auditor General remarked, Carol Bellringer, in her report—it's a great name for an auditor, Carol Bellringer—that's a—I don't know if you could get a better name than that. She remarked on the need to demonstrate a proper tone at the top if you wish to get your expenditures under control. Also in terms of ethical conduct, if you were to—if you wish to improve the ethical conduct of those who work in the civil service, then you had to demonstrate that at the Cabinet level and the senior government level because failure to do that would be a failure to set the proper tone at the top.

In fact, I may even be able to read from that report into the record at a later point—the Auditor

General's report—in that respect. I forget the exact year—I think it was in 2014 that that work was done.

In terms of the actual reductions in size of the Cabinet from the previous NDP government to our government, a reduction of 46 per cent.

In terms of the number of so-called technical officers, a reduction of 89 per cent.

In terms of technical payroll—84 per cent reduction, and I would point out that this represents about \$3.7 million of reduced expenditure for the taxpayers of the province, money that can go to other priorities or at least go to reduce the deferred taxation practices of running deficits, because really, a deficit is nothing but a deferred tax. Running higher and higher deficits each year, as the previous administration did, pushes the obligation to pay and the obligation to service that debt onto us when we're older, onto future generations.

And so this was the practice of the previous government. We're moving, of course, to change the cost curve, and setting the example at the top is important.

In terms of mid to senior staff, we've gone from 64 positions under the previous NDP administration to 31 now. That's 106 per cent reduction.

In terms of junior staff—from 44 to 26. That's a 69 per cent reduction.

These are significant reductions at the senior levels of government. This, in an effort—always—to focus on flattening the organizational structure so that we provide better access to input from front-line workers, better delivery of front-line services, and improved cost effectiveness in terms of the way we run our organization.

So I want to emphasize that as I read into the record the positions and names of members, and I will get into further information the member had asked me for momentarily so that we can put this in proper context as I read these names. They do represent a fraction of the number of personnel that were employed at the senior levels of government by the previous administration, but I think as a compliment to them—which I must pay—I would say that we are exceeding in terms of the quality of the services we provide to one another and to the people of our province, the record of performance of the previous senior levels of the previous administration.



So again, the Clerk of the Executive Council is sitting to my left—that's Fred Meier. His executive assistant is Lynn Voth. The associate clerk is Jim Hrichishen, who is the Deputy Minister of Finance.

Now, I just want clarification. I don't believe that Mr. Hrichishen takes a double salary, does he? *[interjection]* No, he doesn't. No; good.

\* (16:30)

The assistant—and in terms of things like severance, we could get into that another day, but I believe that the former administration did have different practices in terms of severance than we're adopting as well for departing staff members who were paid, I think, by any standards, quite generously on their departure.

**Mr. Kinew:** I'm not sure if the Premier (Mr. Pallister) looks forward to coming to Estimates or not, but we seem to have taken quite a bit of time to return to the top of the org chart and hear those first few names again, so maybe can change it up to something that's maybe more in his interest.

Can I ask the Premier to explain what he considers—or what is his understanding for tax fairness?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I take my responsibilities very seriously in terms of changing the culture of cover-up that was perpetrated on the people of Manitoba by the previous administration. When the member asks me a question, I undertake to provide the answer and will put that on the record because I have endeavoured to do that in every case at this meeting and in the Estimates process. His predecessor, his interim leader, asked me questions and asked for information; I undertook to get the information and put it on the record. So I would hope that the member, in wanting to change it up, isn't admitting that the questions she's asked are irrelevant or unimportant. I don't think they are, and I don't want him to be too hard on himself in that respect because the questions of the tone at the top in an organization matter. They should matter to all of us. They certainly should matter to the leader of the—new leader of the opposition. So I will put on the record the answers to the questions which he himself had asked me, in keeping with my habit and, I believe, the habit of our members of the Legislature, certainly in the government's side, to be forthright in—and transparent in our dealings with our

colleagues in the Legislature and with the people of Manitoba.

So I would complete my answer in respect of the Clerk's office by saying the administrative assistant is Gurpreet Sehra; Cabinet administrative officer, Viviane Riding; and the OIC officer—*[interjection]*—that's the Order in Council officer, Peggy Barta. I'm pleased to note that the Clerk of the Executive Council knows the name of the OIC officer.

On the director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, I had read those names into the record prior. So, in the interests of time, I'll move on to the director of Legislative Affairs & Regulatory Accountability, Elliot Sims. His government House assistant is Wes McLean, his issues management officer is Joey Dearborn and his administrative assistant is Hannah Anderson.

The chief of staff, Philip Houde, has several people in his part of the organization. The director of Regional Cabinet Operations is Craig MacDonald. The executive assistant to the chief of staff is Jeanine Pitre. And with Craig MacDonald, under his area of responsibility, is the administrative assistant for Cabinet offices at The Pas, Darcy Thompson *[phonetic]*, and the assistant to the director for Regional Cabinet Operations is Marsha Street.

The director of the secretariat under the chief of staff's category of org structure is Bruce Verry, and in his area of responsibility are office manager Cindy Field, speech and correspondence writer Deveryn Ross, Premier's correspondence officer Kristine Derksen, administrative assistant Cathleen Goodman, administrative assistant Jillian Neirinck. And in my office, Colin Weeres is the special assistant, and my executive secretary is Arlene Arnal.

That's the org chart the member had asked about and includes each of the staff. There are some—quite a few—fewer positions than was the case for the previous administration, as I've already noted, considerably less cost associated with respect to the taxpayers, but a fine group of dedicated people.

I am sure the member also had asked me about staff salaries, and this is just the salaries, does not include the benefits or value of benefits, so it doesn't outline the actual cost incurred by taxpayers to support the pension benefits or group employee benefits in their benefits package—that's not included in this. I'll—member—I've just got a short time remaining, but I can get into that list and answer

the member's questions in that respect. And this I'll be able to do momentarily.

**Mr. Kinew:** Previously, the Premier tabled the information around the org chart rather than reading it out when the former interim leader for my party had asked about it. So I realize his time is valuable, and I mean that sincerely. So he can just table the information; we can review it and follow up with questions later.

I do want to ask about other topics and, you know, again, I do want to ask about the Premier's concept of tax fairness. How does he understand that term and can he explain what that is to him?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I guess we could brainstorm on tax fairness. I know what tax unfairness is because I've certainly seen that. I've seen that as recently as the federal Liberal government's proposals to jack up taxes on small business and farm families. I would call that an example of tax unfairness. I've seen the Leader of the Opposition's response, and I think that would make it even more unfair. His response was to suggest that introduction of a death tax as an answer to the revenue problems faced by the federal government. I couldn't agree less.

You know, a death tax is something that was historically used by federal governments and some provincial governments to generate revenue for their use. That would serve—I think it's good, in answering the member's question, rather than to talk in the theoretical to talk in the practical sense. So I would suggest a death tax is an example of tax unfairness.

A death tax would be applied on an estate when someone dies so that a person would, on passing—of course, not being able to defend their interests and their mourning and grieving family and family members would be put in the position of having to defend their interests against the intrusion of the government at the most inappropriate of times.

It would also be applied in a way that would take advantage of that grieving family in the sense that there would not be available to them various remedial possibilities as a consequence of the loss of their loved one. And an estate tax, also, would of course deter their ability to continue a business if the departed was in a business situation at a time when, of course, in terms of succession planning, businesses are at their most vulnerable. When they lose key persons, men or women who have worked in their companies, and that person was to pass on, their resources would be eroded, their estate

would be eroded and their ability—the ability of the surviving partners and family members would be eroded as well, placed in jeopardy.

This is not a way to fairly tax because it creates a greater likelihood of a sale of a business unnecessarily, caused by the loss of a person, when, in fact, that business might have survived. It might have been able to continue.

The federal government's proposals originally were of that nature, so they are similar in the—to what the NDP leader proposes in the sense that they, too, would jeopardize the continuity of a business at death. Their proposals on—for example, on farm corporations would make it a non-arm's-length transaction if a parent wanted to sell their shares in their company to their child.

So in the case of a farm corporation—which many of our farms have incorporated in Manitoba over the last number of years, increasing in the last 40 or so—what that would do is place a burden on the farmer, say, a woman who was wanting to sell her farm to her daughter. The federal government's original proposals were that that transaction would not be treated as an arm's-length transaction. This would mean that that woman would be disadvantaged in selling to her own daughter and she'd be better to sell to a landowner who comes across from Europe or something. She'd profit as an expense—at the expense of her own family. This is untenable. This was a silly proposal, a dangerous proposal.

And now, I understand that the federal government has sent out some communication saying their backing away from this. And I certainly hope that is the case, but I really would have appreciated the member joining with us and his party joining with us in opposition to these kinds of proposals. At the time, he did not and, unfortunately, many other people across the province in political leadership positions failed to step up.

\* (16:40)

I must compliment, though, the Premier of Nova Scotia who did speak up—one of many Liberal premiers in the country and one of the only ones who actually stood up and said to Ottawa, this is a mistake. What you're doing is wrong. It's going to hurt our small business community. It's going to hurt our farm families. He said that. I give the member that.

It's just one example of what I see as tax unfairness—punishing people for creating a business, making it harder for them to keep it going, especially at the time of the death of one of the family members. This is not tax fairness to us, and certainly I'm proud of the fact that our ministers stood up and said—and joined with others—many, many groups—dozens of groups, business and professional groups across the country who opposed these proposals. And we'll continue to stand up for tax fairness in respect of this, and any other issues the member might like to raise. I will be glad to comment on them.

**Mr. Kinew:** So we know the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) been critical of the federal tax changes, the proposed ones, including the ones that were walked back that he alluded to.

What is the Premier's view about the current tax structure at the federal level? Does the current arrangement meet his criteria for tax fairness?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, it's a pretty broad question, I think. Again, it would be better to illuminate our discussion by speaking about specifics. I'm going to go back to the member's proposal there be an estate tax introduced, and give him a little bit of background on this because this is a significant proposal he is making and a very dangerous one.

Now, estate taxes were eliminated federally in 1971. They were replaced by new taxes. It was a Liberal administration at that time, as I recall, and so they introduced a new capital gains tax structure because they needed the revenue like all spending governments do, and they replaced the old estate tax with the new capital gains tax and other taxes, as I recall.

The benefit to them on the capital gains tax is, of course, that people can buy and sell property many times in their lives, and each time you are opening the door to the possibility of a new tax levy on your property. That, the government of the day saw, was an opportunity to generate more revenue and has proven to be the case over the last 50 years in our country.

The estate tax, however, was done away with at the federal level. However in Manitoba, because the provincial government at that time—of Ed Schreyer, NDP administration—benefited from the estate tax, they decided they wanted to keep it. They wanted it badly. They needed the revenue. Sounds familiar.

Sounds like the previous administration and it sounds like the new leader is taking that same position on.

Now, here's a quote from the debate around this issue on June 8th of 1971—and this will have sort of that ring of déjà vu to it: Our philosophy as a party is a philosophy in favour of estate taxation. This is the position of our party. As far as I am concerned, I'd be in favour of a far more progressive income tax than exists today. I'd be in favour of virtually taxing away entire estates.

That was—those are the well and clearly communicated words of Wally Johannson, an NDP MLA for St. Matthews on June 8th.

He went on to extrapolate further and expand his view by saying, quote, and this is later in his speech: I think the Province of Manitoba has a positive policy—this is in defence of the estate tax now. Our government is not trying to attract people to Manitoba to die—well, that's good to know—in fact, it's a rather macabre sort of policy, the policy to attract people so they come to the province to die. I would rather our government form policies which would attract people to come to Manitoba to live.

Okay, great, Wally. Well thank you very much for those thoughtful comments. What Wally has said is that he wants to attract people to come to Manitoba to live and then tax the heck out of them when they die, and that's a discouragement for people to stay in a place.

Now, we lose a lot of people from Manitoba. We've led the country in outmigration—net outmigration for a number of years under the NDP. That's something we're fighting hard to change. But now—what the member is proposing with his new estate tax concept, is more of the same. What he's saying is that we should introduce a new estate tax and punish people at their death.

Well, we have many seniors who are moving out of this province. Many of them are moving to reconnect with family members who moved previously, and this would certainly expedite that process nicely.

If the member is wanting to have seniors in our province leave the province, this is a good strategy and a good policy. If he is wanting to keep people in Manitoba and attract new people here, industrious people, hard-working people who can live here, work here, and retire here, this would be a very poorly thought-out proposal.

So I encourage the member to change his position on this issue because this has been—this estate tax has been debated thoroughly for many years by many commentators such as the NDP MLA who I quoted, and I would say, after careful consideration, has been thrown in the garbage bag of history and taken away from political strategy, taxation policy, for good reason.

**Mr. Kinew:** So on occasion, individuals and corporations don't properly declare or disclose relevant information in order to avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Does the Premier (Mr. Pallister) think that that's a problematic practice?

**Mr. Pallister:** Absolutely. I spent several years working very diligently to try to fight the battle against tax haven use in our country as the Revenue Canada critic for part of that time and thereafter. The—some of the major users of these tax havens are large multinational operations, not exclusively banks, though banks themselves do—have developed extensive methods for using tax havens as a means of reducing their tax obligations to their country. It's an ongoing battle.

The Revenue Canada officials—the member would, I think, enjoy doing some reading on this issue, and if he would like to, he can research through the House of Commons Hansard, the committee debates on this issue, and he'll find that there has been some considerable research done and good debate at committee around the issues of tax havens. Certainly, it's well known that previous prime ministers—and not limited to Paul Martin, who did—has done some—Paul Martin's an honourable man, but he has used tax laws to his advantage and, certainly, some of those are laws which, I think, many, many of us would like to see changed.

I'll share with the member: at one particular committee, it was particularly interesting to me that—I was questioning the methodology around—as a dodge, a pretty complex mechanism that was used to shift assets to different locations and then shift them around and change their orientation, and I won't get into the Rubik's Cube that they designed, this particular business, but it was really complex. And at—was asking the Revenue Canada official how they dealt with it, and at the end of the meeting he said, quite frankly, sir, our staff are playing checkers and the people organizing these things are playing chess.

And what was happening was—and I believe, and I could get updated on this—but I believe, from some discussions not more than a year and a half ago, this

is still going on. When the revenue officials would take—who would take sometimes months and years to get to the bottom of how some of these large companies were dealing with these issues, once they figured it out, the company'd offer them a job. And that's part of the problem we have; it's a serious problem. The Revenue Canada officials are doing their best to learn about these mechanisms, and then because they're getting to the bottom of it, the allegation has been made that they were then offered positions with those companies to get them off the track. Then you lose the knowledge base and the work that you've done to get to the position where you might be able to change things.

As political people, we're—most of us aren't specialists in things like this, you know, money issues. We become sort of, you know, bachelor degree holders in 100 issues, but not Ph.D.s., in many. And we get to learn a lot—a little bit about a lot of different issues, but often don't get as much detail as we would need to make a difference in terms of specific issues. Tax haven issues, you count on your officials in the revenue department and Finance Department to do the research for you and to get to the bottom of these issues.

\* (16:50)

Now, I'm—you know, I'm not a fan of allowing those situations to happen. I know that it's been difficult for governments, successive governments, different political stripes, to deal with this issue. I know also that it is an illustration of, I think, a lack of corporate responsibility and accountability when companies use these things.

But I do not and will not accept the premise that the federal government has put into play that people who are abiding by—in small business are—who are abiding by the tax laws that were designed under Pierre Trudeau, are using loopholes. That assertion by Bill Morneau and the Prime Minister, calling people—essentially implying that people are tax evaders when they're in a small business abiding by the laws that had been in place for 40, 50 years—is abhorrent to me and should be abhorrent to any thinking person.

So there's a difference between the misuse and the incredible complexity of tax dodging and what small-business people have been accused of doing by the federal government. They should go after the big fish and quit picking on the small businesses and the farm families of our country.

**Mr. Kinew:** And it seems—well, I think, you know, one of the things that I said when we debated this, and when there was a member—or, a ministerial statement by the Premier on the topic—one of the things I said is that it's curious what the federal government's leaving out, because they are, you know, for instance, proposing to take away the ability of a small-business owner based in Canada to generate passive income on cash holdings that they might use to reinvest and grow their business later on down the road. And they tried to close that ability while not necessarily targeting the sort of tax-haven use that some bigger players might be using, as the Premier alluded to.

So I'm understanding of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister), you know, reference that this is a Rubik's Cube, and we're probably not well served to get into all the minutiae of how large players use tax havens like this. But am I right in, you know, assuming that what the Premier means is, like, situations where a corporation or an individual might place some holdings in a different jurisdiction to reduce what they would have to claim on Canadian taxes? And it seems that, you know, the Premier's against it, so I just want to make sure that I'm understanding the practice that he's opposed to. Is that fair? Just like, undervaluing, I guess, the assets and income that should be taxed through the use of these sort of—these mechanisms. Is that what the Premier's alluding to?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I'm not alluding, I'm referring to specific plans that are adopted by major corporations to position assets and to move capital into areas of lesser tax consequence, like moving—registering Steamship Lines in the Bahamas as a flag of convenience, or the—Barbados. Things like that, positioning assets to avoid taxation.

In the—the argument will be made by those who've done it, like Paul Martin, that this was the nature of the shipping industry and that if they don't do it, they can't compete and they'll get bought out by somebody else who will. And you hear these arguments made. They're—you know, my problem also, with respect to the member's comments, is the approach that the federal government has taken in respect of this, is to belittle and demean and try to divide people by actually using graphs and charts and things that are designed to lead you to believe that an employer and employee don't need to be—don't need each other to succeed in a business. They show a fundamental lack of understanding of how jobs are created.

The engine of growth in our economy has been—it's going to be more important in the future—small and medium enterprises, and you need enterprising people to make them work. Somebody has to put capital at risk. If people aren't willing to put capital at risk, if you take away the incentives of your tax system, if you design your tax system to reduce incentives, you'll get less incentives. Then you'll get less jobs.

And fundamentally, in small business, we understand that employers and employees need each other. Their relationship is one of mutualism, not antagonism. The federal government's communication on this has been deplorable. They put a stick in a hornets' nest. They tried to pit working families against the people who created jobs for those working families, and the people of Canada aren't buying it, nor are the backbenchers and some of the senior members of the Liberal federal caucus who know it's wrong, who know the approach that's been taken is wrong-headed, who know that it's destructive.

I'm—we need our small and medium businesses to create jobs. We need them, more than that, to provide us with good value for our dollars, to provide us with purchasing opportunities, selection on services. We need these people to employ our kids.

We need these people in Manitoba especially. We're very blessed to have small and medium enterprises that create jobs, yes, but they also give back to their community. These are our community volunteers. These are the people who coach our kids' soccer team. These are the ones who give their—what they make and their company, they share. And they do this—yes, they do it out of the goodness of their heart, and they do it because it's good business, too. Either way, it's Adam Smith at work, the invisible hand. Their behaviour is conducive to a better quality of life. It's conducive to more people coming into our province, more young people having a chance to make their future here.

I respect the small-business community. I was a unionized employee for a number of years. I was also a small businessperson. I've been on both sides of this and I will not get drawn into a situation where one side is picked over the other. That is petty and that is class warfare of the worst kind. That's what I call identity politics. It's shallow, it's harmful, it misses the point.

In Manitoba we're developing policies that benefit employees and employers, that—because they result in mutual benefit. That's what we're after with our tax approach. That's why we—one of our first endeavours was to reduce the basic—raise the threshold for taxation, to leave more money in the hands of lower—in particular lower income families. And we will continue to reduce the red tape for small and medium businesses because that reduction in regulatory red tape costs means there's more money for better benefits, for better salaries, for hiring more people.

We can't grow our economy just on expenditures within the civil service, as was the approach under the previous administration year after year that resulted in structural deficits, growing our debt—doubling our debt in six fiscal years. Debt service costs this year, over a billion dollars. Why? Largely because the previous administration focused on investing through borrowing, basically borrowing on the credit cards of kids who haven't even had a chance to earn a cheque yet. That's how they pretended they were building the economy.

We can't—we're not going to build a pretend economy, here. We're going to build a real economy and what that means is encouraging small and medium businesses to set up, to grow, to expand, and training the people who need to have the chance to work and provide their valuable skills to those businesses. This is the approach we're taking in Manitoba. It's the approach Ottawa departed from and we'll continue to oppose the approach that Ottawa has taken on this front. And where they take the wrong approach on other fronts, we will oppose those too. I'd like to see the NDP also join with us when Ottawa's wrong instead of catering to their every decision.

**Mr. Kinew:** So we're talking about tax havens, and I guess the people using various mechanisms to kind of reduce their tax burden and whether governments can find ways to target, I guess, the usage of those things which are not good for tax fairness.

I'm wondering if there's anything domestically—like, we're in a provincial House here. Are there any issues provincially that, you know, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), the Finance Minister are concerned about that might represent people not properly disclosing income or that may represent a similar sort of tax dodge, if you will, or just the reduction of what people fairly should be taxed on?

Or—like, I know the KPMG reports suggest some changes to property taxes. I know that there's been income tax changes. Are there provincial examples where people are maybe not contributing their fair share based on, say, a property tax assessment, an income tax assessment, potentially even corporate? I'd like to hear the Premier's thoughts on whether there might be some needed reforms in those areas to advance tax fairness.

**Mr. Pallister:** That's a great question. It's—and I'm just actually asking the clerk to pull up any examples under the 17 years of NDP government to see if there was ever an initiative taken like that. I don't think there was. But one thing we're doing is addressing the issue of the underground economy in the sense of the organized crime drug trade. The federal government has said that they—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

## FINANCE

\* (15:20)

**Madam Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Finance, which was last considered on October 12th, 2017. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I'd like to thank the minister and thank the minister's staff for this time that we spent in Estimates.

We're going to complete Estimates so that we can move on to other departments.

**Madam Chairperson:** Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

I will now call Resolution 7.2: RESOLVED that there will be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,877,000 for Finance, Fiscal and Financial Management, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 7.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$3,995,000 for Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 7.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,321,000 for Finance, Priorities and Planning Committee of Cabinet Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 7.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,512,000 for Finance, Intergovernmental Affairs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 7.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$149,513,000 for Finance, Central Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 7.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$69,728,000 for Finance, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 7.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$62,000,000 for Finance, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 7.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 7.1.

At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Allum:** I move that line item 7.1.(a) be amended so that the ministers' salaries be reduced to \$67,200.

**Motion presented.**

**Madam Chairperson:** The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Chairperson:** Shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Voice Vote**

**Madam Chairperson:** All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Madam Chairperson:** All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

**Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Allum:** A recorded vote.

**Madam Chairperson:** A formal vote has been requested—oh—by two members—a formal vote has been requested by two members. This section of the Committee of Supply will now recess to allow this matter to be reported and for the members to proceed to the Chamber for the vote.

*The committee recessed at 3:24 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:26 p.m.*

**Madam Chairperson:** Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Finance.

We have one last item of business to complete for this department.

Resolution 7.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,122,000 for Finance, Corporate and Crown Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Finance.

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

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and critic the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department? *[Agreed]*

*The committee recessed at 4:30 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:31 p.m.*

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Madam Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Sustainable Development.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Yes.

It is my pleasure to be here today to speak as the Minister of Sustainable Development about how our department's programs will deliver value within this year's budget.

I want to state how honoured I am to take this portfolio, as of August 17th, 2017, and how pleased I am to be the minister of this diverse department that serves Manitobans in numerous ways. I'm also pleased to continue my role as Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs and Status of Women.

I would also like to thank my colleague, the former minister of Sustainable Development, the member for River East (Mrs. Cox), and congratulate her on her hard work and commitment to this portfolio. And I'm honoured to pick up where she left off as Minister of Sustainable Development.

At this time I'd like to invite my senior staff to join me at the table, and I'd be more than happy to introduce them.

**Madam Chairperson:** We will be inviting the staff after we have our opening statements.

So go ahead, Minister Squires.

**Ms. Squires:** Sure thing.

I will talk about them and their hard work and their commitment to this department when they're at the table joining me. But I do want to acknowledge all their hard work and their efforts in helping our department achieve its goal of being—helping the province become the most improved province in the country.

I take my role as Minister of the Department of Sustainable Development most seriously, and as the mandate of this department truly reflects our government's commitment to sustainably balancing the needs of Manitobans while protecting the environment and growing our economy now and into the future.

I have been with the department since August of this year, and I've already begun taking the opportunity to meet with a variety of stakeholders, industry representatives, indigenous leaders and Manitobans. Listening is something our government and myself, as minister, have been doing with great success, and this is something that we will continue to do going forward. We will ensure input for Manitobans is built into our plans and actions.

Manitoba Sustainable Development is responsible for managing and protecting the environment, as well as ensuring the rich biodiversity of our natural resources. We are charged with protecting Manitoba's water, wildlife, fish and forests. And I'm incredibly honoured to work with our hard-working team on these very important responsibilities.

I'd like to outline some of the department's targeted goals which falls from the mandate set by our Premier (Mr. Pallister). My department is working with the Department of Agriculture to develop a unique, made-in-Manitoba approach to ALUS-type—an ALUS-type program. Manitoba will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to use a truly watershed-based province-wide approach to ecological goods and services programming.

Manitoba will develop a community-driven program that provides cost-efficient, targeted results on the landscape, including reduced impacts of flooding, improved water quality, protection for wetlands and reduced nutrient loading.

Our mandate also includes implementing watershed-based planning for drainages and water resource management with a goal of no net loss of water retention capacity.

We are committed to developing a holistic approach to watershed management that further enhances our successful existing approach to watershed management planning, supports reconciliation with indigenous communities, enables a no-net-loss-of-water-retention approach to water management to help reduce flooding and provide resilience in times of drought. We are also



committed to including stakeholder engagement and consultation plans.

My department is committed to curtailing unsafe hunting practices, such as night hunting, which have gone virtually unchecked for many years under the former administration. We have increased patrols and enhanced enforcement of illegal night hunting and will continue to do so again this year. We're also committed to consultation with indigenous peoples and communities on the important issue of night hunting, seeking the wisdom of elders and finding common ground to address this issue of human safety and sustainability of our wildlife.

Our budget invests more into the important areas of wildlife and fisheries management, whether it be wildlife surveys or commercial fisheries. These are important priorities for my department and our government. To that end, I'm very pleased that we have increased the annual funding in the amount of \$314,000 to this important priority—to the important priorities of wildlife and fisheries management.

Some of these funds will be used to provide for enhanced, effective and innovative big-game surveys which are needed to provide more accurate and transparent population data to wildlife managers. This knowledge will be used to guide decision making to better manage wildlife in the province.

In the past decade, Manitoba's big-game populations have been subject to increased hunting pressures. Other Canadian provinces are facing similar challenges regarding the sustainability of big-game populations. Our department will implement more effective big-game surveys to improve access to population data. This will support strategies to ensure the sustainability of big-game populations.

My department is also fulfilling—is committed to fulfilling our mandate to develop comprehensive harvest-shared management strategies in consultation with First Nations, Metis and licensed hunters to give local communities a greater voice and ensuring long-term sustainability of our wildlife populations. And to that end I've already had very productive meetings with indigenous leaders and look forward to ongoing collaboration with them.

On the fisheries side, I'm also pleased with efforts that we are taking to open commercial fishing markets to provide more opportunities for our fishers beyond the monopoly of Freshwater Fish Marketing

Corporation, as well a positive and credible plan to certify our high-quality Manitoba fish as sustainable.

We will provide the best possible income for commercial fishers today while sustaining fish populations for future generations. We will also enhance recreational fishing for Manitobans and the many tourists and positive economic benefits it brings to our province.

The department will reconcile the needs of industry and rural and northern communities while continuing to enhance the network of protected areas in Manitoba. The balance between development and protection of our rich, natural heritage will be based on informed decision making. Manitoba's resource industries sustain rural and northern communities. The department will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure that sustainable development is an important consideration in the parks and protected areas planning process.

The department has implemented a two-year moratorium on all lease and service fee increases for cottages in provincial parks as per our commitment and mandate. We are planning to engage cottagers and stakeholders in consultations to develop a more equitable fee structure for the future after the moratorium.

Our government is committed to developing a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan that achieves results. We are working to develop a strong plan and ensure that we can address the threats and opportunities posed by climate change in an open and collaborative manner. Manitoba's plan will include carbon pricing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, keep investment capital in Manitoba and stimulate innovation in clean energy. This will create new jobs and businesses in Manitoba and help deliver on our commitment to be the most improved province in job creation as well as most improved in partnerships and businesses and—in communities. We will get it right by listening to Manitobans as they provide feedback and ideas so that all avenues will be explored in the development of this important plan and the result that will benefit generations to come.

Our provincial campgrounds and parks are enjoyed by Manitobans as well as by many visitors to our province. Our government is committed to making provincial parks assessable for all. The department continues to make strategic investments in infrastructure. Capital spending is targeted to address a variety of priority projects

for the benefit of Manitobans. These projects include priority drinking-water and waste-water improvements throughout the province. We will continue to use our capital dollars to make improvements and additions to our beautiful parks while also ensuring safety and security of drinking-water and waste-water services.

\* (16:40)

We will also continue to expand and grow recycling by reaching into areas like malls, apartment blocks and higher density areas to make sure that there are convenient options for people to use to recycle products. Manitobans know the importance of ensuring that we reduce waste in our landfill, and our department will do all they can to help.

To that end, the department has shifted some responsibilities for waste reduction and recycling services from the former operating agency Green Manitoba to the department itself. The department has done this in order to find efficiencies and integrate programming within the department. This will allow us to streamline services for our external partners and work more efficiently as a team across the department. And it has been well received by many stakeholders.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the service of our conservation officers. These committed, responsible women and men are responsible for delivering natural resources and environmental law enforcement throughout the province. Our approximately 125 conservation officers are located in regional and district offices and working on the landscape across our province from Virden to Churchill.

And, in closing, as I know my time is running out, I would just once again like to reiterate my gratitude and my honour to our hardworking conservation officers who are committed to protecting our natural resources and keeping the public safe.

**Madam Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** No, that's fine.

**Madam Chairperson:** Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item to be considered for a department in the

Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 12.1.(a), contained in resolution 12.1.

At this time, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask that the minister introduce the staff in attendance.

**Ms. Squires:** Well, attending me today is Rob Olson. He is the new deputy minister to the department, and he brings to the department a wealth of experience in wildlife management and fisheries and protecting our natural resources. *[interjection]* Okay. Thank you.

As I was saying, I'm very pleased to have Rob Olson, the deputy minister, who is working alongside me and brings to the department a wealth of experience in wildlife and fisheries management and protecting of natural resources. And he's a huge asset for our department to be working with. Very pleased to have him here today.

I also would like to introduce Rob Nedotiafko, who is the director of Parks and Protected Spaces. Rob and his team have been working on creating world-class parks and improving visitor experience, as well as ongoing consultation with cottage owners to ensure that we have equity in the park service fee model.

We also have Blair McTavish, who is the director of Regional Support Services. And Blair and his team of firefighters and other folks in the department fought over 500 fires this past summer. And I would like to thank them all for their hard work and their efforts. And we're very pleased that no homes or lives were lost during this year's fire season.

I also have Tracey Braun here, who is the director of Environmental Approvals. And Tracey is in charge of developing a predictable regulatory framework for environmental processes. And because of her and her hard work—and the hard work of her team in collaboration—we're able to support the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler) as he was able to successfully have Roquette make a significant investment and develop jobs in this province. And that is, of course, due to our strong, predictable regulatory framework.

I also have Neil Cunningham, who is the director of Climate Change and Air Quality branch. And he has been leading a great team of folks who are in charge of the Manitoba Climate and Green Plan that will be helping our society transition to a low-carbon

future. And I would also like to thank him and his team for engaging with many, many stakeholders who have committed significantly to this process. And we look forward to engaging even more Manitobans as we develop this plan.

Joining me also is Ryan Klos. He's the director of Sustainable and Green Initiatives Branch. And he is—him and his team are committed to developing advanced waste reduction and recycling efforts in the province.

Nicole Armstrong also joins me. She is the acting assistant deputy minister of water stewardship and biodiversity, and she is leading the consultations on the water-based approach to surface water management.

I have Matt Wiebe with me at the table as well. He's the assistant deputy minister, Finance and Crown Lands Division. And he is ensuring that our department executes its mandate while ensuring taxpayer dollars are well spent.

And I am pleased to have Beth Ulrich join as the Executive Director of Manitoba Status of Women, and her hardworking team are committed to initiatives that will end gender-based violence. And I'd also like to thank the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council that works in conjunction with the Secretariat who provides government advice on policies to ending gender-based discrimination and achieving equality.

And last, but certainly not least, we have Teresa Collins, who is our executive director of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and her and her hard-working team are ensuring that the francophone community in our province is the initiatives to enhance that community as per our government's historic Bill 5 initiative, and she also works very closely with a—our adviser—our francophone advisory council. And I'd like to thank all the members of that council for their initiatives and dedication to enhancing the francophonie in the province. And I'd like to also acknowledge that the Société franco-manitobaine's Jacqueline Blay is—has retired and I look forward to working with Christian Monnin and the entire Francophone Affairs Advisory Council on initiatives to enhancing the francophonie in the province.

**Madam Chairperson:** Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Globally works for this side of the House.

**Madam Chairperson:** Is this agreed? *[Agreed]*

It is agreed then that the questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed once questioning has concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I want to welcome everyone to what I'm sure will be a rousing rendition of the Estimates process. Certainly a lot of very talented folks at the minister's disposal. I had the pleasure and honour of working closely with many of them in different capacities while we were in government and they are amongst the finest folks in the civil service that I encountered. Very hard-working, no small number of crucial issues that falls on their plates.

So, Mr. Deputy Minister, you are well supported and I look forward to a good discussion. How partisan it gets, I guess, depends on me and the minister. I acknowledge that it's part of the job. But let me start off in a non-partisan topic. In my experience, there are policy debates that will occur between the different sides of the House. That's good and normal. There will also be times when individual Manitobans will contact us whether it's as MLAs or—it helps if you just rip it—contact us directly just as MLAs or as ministers or as critics.

And in my time as environment critic, I have had occasion to send some info, what we will call casework, to your predecessor's office, and the issues that I'm aware of anyways were acted upon by the departments. So, I wanted to thank the minister and her staff for that, not guaranteeing that every story I get is going to be funnelled over there in that manner, but I think at the end of the day, whatever our differences of opinion will be and the different policies that we stand for, ultimately, we've got to be trying to make a difference for Manitobans.

So, if the minister is still interested in continuing that, I guess that would be my first question if she would care to answer it.

**Ms. Squires:** Absolutely, of course, I'm interested in working with all Manitobans for the betterment of our province, and if you have constituents or you know of any Manitoban who requires the services or information from our department, we're here to work for them.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** That's great, and I thank the minister for that answer.

Just to be clear, which email address—when I get casework that relates to her department, which email address or communication method would she prefer that I use to send that over to her department or her staff?

**Ms. Squires:** Please forward any of that correspondence or information to minsdev@leg.gov.mb.ca.

\*(16:50)

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Very good. Thank you for that.

And on a similar topic, can the minister mention any order-in-council staff, political staff that are working in her office or supporting her in the work that she does?

**Ms. Squires:** I'm very pleased that I have Adrian Vannahme as my special assistant and Carrie Werschler as my executive assistant.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Thanks for that, as well. I believe Adrian and I—I'm not sure which one he is, maybe that one? Yes? Hello there—have had some conversations and correspondence already. So good to put a face to the email address.

I—we obviously don't have a huge amount of time today, so perhaps if I could maybe just begin with some purely financial questions that we have coming out of the Estimates book and then maybe we can get into more detailed policy discussion in the days that follow, just to give, you know, as a courtesy, a heads up. I think tomorrow will probably be more on climate change and water issues. Hopefully, we'll have enough time to be able to touch on all the different things the department does, because you guys do a lot of important work. But if that helps free up some staff time from sections that aren't environment—or that aren't climate change and water tomorrow, at least, you can go back to waging war with your email inbox like I have to do on a regular basis. So I'll leave that for the minister and the staff to sort out.

But, yes, at a high level we've identified some situations where there's—appear to be some cuts that have happened, and so we're just looking for an explanation, confirmation that our reading of the numbers is right and an explanation of the rationale behind it.

So, by our read of it, anyways, Parks and Protected Spaces was cut by roughly \$200,000. Could the minister confirm that and explain why it was done?

**Ms. Squires:** I can confirm for the member that the expenditure change in parks and protected spaces is \$238,000. So 130—\$113,000 is the elimination of the snowmobile trail grooming operating costs. As we are looking to work with Snoman and their very, very successful program with the snow paths, having them do some—take on some of the work of grooming those snow trails for us is where we were able to find some efficiencies. And the remainder of the reductions, the \$125,000 decrease, was really pertaining to finding efficiencies within the department, and this is in relation to mostly seasonal staffing salaries where we have been able to get maximum efficiency for—while protecting the services that Manitobans come to depend on when they are visiting our parks in the province.

I would like to point out that this is—this \$238,000 expenditure change, mostly through finding efficiencies in the department, is a stark contrast to the former administration's \$2.9-million reduction in parks in 2013.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** The Environmental Approvals section of the budget seems to move a fair bit between last year's Estimates, the revisions and this year's budget Estimates. Could I get an explanation of why that's the case?

**Madam Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

## INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN RELATIONS

\*(15:20)

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

This section of the Committee of Supply is now resuming consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations. At this time, I invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

Could the minister please introduce their staff in attendance?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** On my left, I have my deputy minister, Angie Bruce; Scott DeJaegher—[interjection]—I knew that—and Dave Hicks—

*[interjection]*—first day on the job; and Freda. And I appreciate their presence here today.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Minister.

Could the opposition please introduce their staff?

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** This is Emily—Emily Coutts, the best—one of the best, amazing staff in this building and in the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you.

Okay, as previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is open for questions.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Can I just ask the minister, in respect of—from what we understand, there were some dollars that were allocated by the federal government in respect of the national inquiry's family liaison information units. So you know, what was the amount of those dollars? Where are those dollars—or, well, we can start with that, I guess.

**Ms. Clarke:** I thank the member for those questions, however the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls inquiry, that portion of it—the financing and that—comes through the Justice Department.

So I don't have that information.

So, next up?

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech for that. And that's what I assumed, but I thought I would just—so, I think that we are finished with our line of questioning.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. That was it for the questions?

We will be proceeding for the 'consideraise' of like, resolutions. And the first one is resolution that there be agreed—okay.

Resolution 19.2: RESOLVED that there would be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$30,231,000 in Indigenous and Northern Relations for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

And 19.3: RESOLVED that there be granted by Her Majesty the sum of exceeding \$96,000 for Indigenous and Northern Relations, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018—19.3. Okay.

**Resolution agreed to.**

The last item to be considered in the Estimates of department of—for item 19.1.(a) the minister's salary—contained in resolution 19.1.

Recognizing the honourable member for Fort Richmond.

**Report**

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson of the section of Committee of Supply meeting in room 255):** Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates of the Department of Finance, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) moved the following motion: that line item 7.1.(a) be amended so that the ministers' salaries be reduced to \$67,200.

Mr. Chairperson, this motion was carried on voice—oh, sorry—defeated on a voice vote.

Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Once the supply sections—okay, a record will be—a recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

*All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.*

**Recorded Vote**

**Mr. Chairperson:** In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates for the Department of Finance, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) moved the following motion: that the line item 7.1.(a) be amended so that the ministers' salaries be reduced to \$67,200.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested a formal vote in this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

*A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 15, Nays 34.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

\*\*\*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The sections of the Committee of Supply will now continue with the consideration for the departmental Estimates.

The last item of consideration for Estimates in this department is item 19.1.(a), the ministers' salaries contained in this resolution 19.1.

\* (15:40)

At this point, we request the ministerial–minister's staff—who have already left.

The floor is open for questions.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech.

I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that line item 19.1.(a) be amended so that the minister's salary be reduced by \$33,600.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Can I—the honourable member for St. Johns.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Yes, I apologize for that. Can I just clarify my motion, please?

That line item 19(a) be amended so that the minister's salary be reduced to \$33,600.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion that was read is that the line number 19.1.(a) be amended so that the minister's salary be reduced to \$33,600.

The motion is in order. The floor is open for debate.

Is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** All those in favour, please say yea—no, no. [*interjection*]

Shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Mr. Chairperson:** All those in favour, say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Chairperson:** All those opposed, say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I believe the Nays have it.

#### Recorded Vote

**Ms. Fontaine:** Can I request a recorded vote, please?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the member have the support of another member?

**Ms. Fontaine:** I do, yes.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member—okay.

A recorded vote has been requested, call in the members.

*All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.*

#### Report

**Mr. Chairperson:** In this section of Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber, considering the Estimates for the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations, honourable member of—for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) moved the following motion: that line item 19.1.(a) be amended that the minister's salary be reduced to \$33,600.

The motion was defeated. Subsequently, two members—[*interjection*]

The motion was defeated in a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested a formal vote on this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion of the honourable member for St. Johns.

\* (16:20)

*A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 14, Nays 35.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

\*\*\*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The sections of this Committee of Supply will continue with the consideration for departmental Estimates.

We are now resuming consideration resolution for 19.1.

Is there any debate? No debate?

The next—19.1: RESOLVED that be—there be granted Her Majesty the sum of—not exceeding \$781,000 for the Indigenous and Northern Relations, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

*Resolution agreed to.*

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations. The next set of Estimates to be considered in the—by this section of the Committee of Supply—for the Department of Justice.

Shall we briefly recess for the—to allow the ministers and the critics to—the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

How long do you want to recess for? Okay. One minute? Three minutes.

*The committee recessed at 4:22 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:25 p.m.*

## JUSTICE

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of Committee of Supply is now to consider the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

Does the honourable minister have the opening statement?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I do, thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, and I just want to start off, before I get into some opening remarks, I just wanted welcome my new critic to her new portfolio, and I wish her well throughout this. I look forward to working with her on—I know there's many areas that she's very passionate about, and so I look forward to working with her on many of those issues as well.

I also want to welcome her as the Opposition House Leader, as well, which is—I know comes with it its own set of challenges. I never had the opportunity to be the opposition House critic—or House leader at the time, but I did play the—or I did have the role of the Whip at one point for a period of time, and I know that you do everything to try and get everyone on board and so on. So I wish you well in that as well. I'm sure it'll be great.

But, before I begin, Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank our entire team in Manitoba Justice, including our new deputy minister, Dave Wright, who has done an incredible work in a very short period of time. I also want to single out our thanks, our associate deputy minister of Community Safety, Greg Graceffo; as well as Shauna Curtin, our ADM for Courts; Mike Mahon, our ADM for Crown Law; Maria Campos, our acting ADM for Administration and Finance; and Gail Anderson, our ADM for Consumer Protection. I also want to welcome to her new role, because, of course, we—to Dave Wright from Legislative Counsel—so I just want to also welcome

Christina Wasyliw as the acting ADM for Legislative Counsel, and I wish her well in her new role as well.

And I also want to thank all of those who work in the Department of Justice, their tireless work day in and day out to help us reach our goals as government. I know many of them are here today, and I want to thank them for taking the time to be here as we begin and embark on this Estimates process.

I also would like to thank the administrative support staff in my office, as well as my special assistant, Greg Burnett, and my executive assistant, Ethan Cabel, for all that they do.

I'd also like to welcome, as I already have, to the Chamber, the member for St. John as the new critic for the official opposition. And I truly look forward to working with her to improve our justice system for all Manitobans.

It's my honour and privilege as Minister of Justice and Attorney General to speak to the 2017-18 budget. This budget reflects our government's commitment to restoring fiscal discipline and responsibility to government while protecting front-line services for all Manitobans. This budget was compiled with the input of an unprecedented 18,000 interactions from citizens across the province who participated through town hall meetings as well as written and online submissions. Manitobans of all walks of life helped guide and shape this budget with suggestions on how to reduce red tape, improve service delivery, eliminate government duplication and grow our economy. With their input, Budget 2017 managed to walk the delicate path of responsible recovery without higher taxes, deep cutbacks and unsustainable spending.

The total budget for Manitoba Justice has increased by \$12.2 million over last year's adjusted vote. This reflects our resolve to build safe communities and ensure timely access to justice for all Manitobans.

Our budget makes provision for increases to salaries by \$6.2 million to fund previous years' increases in several collective agreements. It reflects budgeted amounts for decisions in the past that have cost today, as well as targeted investments to help shape the road for tomorrow.

In last year's budget, Protective Services was moved to the Community Safety Division of Justice. This move allowed for an integration of skills and

training for our Protective Services officers. The role and mandate of Protective Services has become more focused over the last year, ensuring that our officers are better equipped to keep Manitobans safe.

\* (16:30)

I was particularly proud recently to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to strengthen security here in the Legislative Precinct, giving our Protective Services officers the ability to search for weapons and physically remove dangerous individuals.

This year's budget also integrates restorative justice functions into the Community Safety Division, demonstrating our commitment to provide the resources and support necessary to divert more people to programs that will help reduce recidivism and prevent crime. Restorative justice focuses on offender accountability, victim participation and community safety throughout our province. The Innovation and Restorative Justice Branch oversees services and initiatives related to restorative justice under cost-shared funding agreements with the federal government. It also provides funding for restorative justice programs, working diligently to ensure that they are producing real results for Manitobans.

The Community Safety Division already has several programs which seek complementary outcomes. Combining these programs within one division will maximize the impact and co-ordinate the work being done in many different areas. The integration of Restorative Justice into the Community Safety Division will allow for more effective and targeted use of resources to achieve real results for Manitobans.

With respect to grant funding and service agreements with our partners in non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, we will be implementing outcome measures and expect regular reporting on deliverables. This will assist us in targeting additional funding to those services and partners that can clearly demonstrate that they are reducing crime and improving outcomes in our criminal justice system.

We know that a culture shift needs to happen in our criminal justice system. After a decade with the highest incarceration rates and some of the worst crime and recidivism rates in Canada, we know that the status quo isn't an option. That's why I worked with our chief judge and chief justices to propose a

pilot project to federal—to the federal government that would allow Manitoba to end preliminary inquiries for matters carrying a sentence less than 10 years and replace them with an out-of-court discovery process for more serious offences. Since we sent that proposal to the federal government late last year, our government has helped secure a strong consensus among our federal, provincial and territorial counterparts on the need for bold reform to preliminary inquiries.

I have also asked our team in Justice—in Manitoba Justice to look at other ways that we can make positive changes in our criminal justice system. We've been conducting an evidence-based review of the criminal justice system with a view to improving its overall effectiveness and efficiency. A key goal of the review is to ensure that dangerous offenders and serious offences proceed through the traditional court system in a timely manner, complying with the timelines set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in a *Crown v. Jordan*. Throughout this entire process, our goal remains to build safe communities and ensure timely justice for Manitobans. A key part of that is reducing crime rates and recidivism with restorative and preventative justice measures. The efficient allocation of staff and resources within Manitoba Justice and our focus on demonstrating real results when it comes to grants and continuing service agreements will provide necessary support in meeting these objectives.

Budget 2017 continues our commitment for ongoing modernization of the Consumer Protection Division. We are also providing resources to support implementation of The New Home Warranty Act, particularly with the creation of an easy-to-use public online registry to allow Manitobans to look up the address of any home registered in the system to find out information regarding the builder and warranty coverage. This will help protect new homebuyers from having to pay the cost of construction-related defects after moving into their new home.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the most popular baby names for 2016 according to our Vital Statistics Agency. The most common name for girls was Olivia for the second year in a row and the most common name for boys was Liam. Liam is a very popular name and has been on the top of the list since 2009.

To conclude, it has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Manitoba's Minister of Justice and Attorney General over the last year and a half.



I am proud to—I am proud of Budget 2017 and everything we have achieved as a government.

Our team in Manitoba Justice has a vital mission: to ensure that Manitobans live in safe and just communities and to strengthen public confidence in governments and the administration of justice. This budget will allow Manitoba to fulfill that mission better than ever before while also ensuring that we are providing value for money for all Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the official opposition critic have an—the honourable member for St. Johns have any opening comments?

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Miigwech to the minister for those kind words in respect of my new portfolio and, certainly, as the new House leader for the opposition.

I will share that when I was advised that I was going to be the new Justice critic, I was actually quite pleased because, in fact, prior to being the special adviser on indigenous women's issues, I actually was the director of justice for Southern Chiefs Organization for close to 10 years. And, you know, I have to say that I really learnt so much in that job, and the—my files included just a range of opportunities to advocate for First Nations people within the justice system. And I really actually miss doing that work, so I'm glad that I'm able to kind of get back into a little bit of justice.

I had the opportunity over the years to—Lord, I—you know, I've been able to work with the Winnipeg city—or police service, the RCMP and, you know, look on, you know, developing better relationships between the indigenous community and policing—which, of course, there's still a lot more work to be done there. But certainly had some really good opportunities and did—good discussions with both policing institutions. And actually have developed some really good friendships over the years in both of those—in the RCMP and the WPS.

And, in fact, Chief of Police Danny Smyth is my constituent. So it's nice to have him as one of my constituents and, in fact, he actually just helped me on Friday as we were dealing with a crisis. And he's always—he's really good to work with, and so I actually just want to use this opportunity to just, you know, acknowledge the good work that he's doing and acknowledge the spirit in which he approaches his work, which is to collaborate and to work

together. And he's been really, really good with that. So I really do honour him. And I've had the opportunity—I've known Scott Kolody for many, many, many years and, obviously, now he's the assistant commissioner, so it's really, you know, good to have that relationship as well.

Some of the things that I did as the director of justice, I really advocated in respect of the over-incarceration of indigenous people, which I'm sure that you will no doubt know the statistics and the percentages of our people in every institution, both federally and provincially. I've had the opportunity to visit all of our provincial jails and Stony Mountain—except for the new women's jail. In fact, I was part of the consultations—when we were looking at closing Portage, I was part of that consultation process in respect of, you know, what was—you know, what was going to be the new—we were hoping for a de-incarceration model, but we ended up with Headingley, obviously. But I haven't had the opportunity to go there.

So I've conducted, you know, sharing circles and presentations and sat with a lot of—or people that are in correctional facilities. And I also had—one of the responsibilities as the director of justice was to engage in restorative justice processes. So, in fact, we had started a project at—of restorative justice, like, community justice co-ordinators in 11 First Nation communities. So, as you know, that's both federal and provincial, and some of the dollars didn't come through and all of these things in the logistics, actually, of executing restorative justice in the communities is quite difficult. But it is done. I know that they do have those programs. And so I was really blessed to be able to be a part of those—some of those discussions and really work with some amazing, amazing communities.

\* (16:40)

And I have to say similar, in the same vein in which you recognize Justice staff, I've had—you know, I also want to take the opportunity to just acknowledge and honour all of the hard work that they do. And I've had just the enormous privilege of working with some really amazing people in Justice. I don't know if the minister ever got the opportunity to meet Dave Rickwood [*phonetic*], honestly, one of the funniest human beings ever—like, I just love him. He's retired, but he's gone on somewhere else. He was amazing to work with. Sandra Delaronde, Glen Lewis—Glen Lewis, who is, like, just crazy, crazy intelligent and just brilliant, and Louis Goulet. I don't

know if you had an opportunity to meet him, but he was really funny. He was a really good guy. So just as I was listening, too, I was kind of reminiscing of all of these folks that I've had the opportunity to work with and get to know over the years, and I feel really privileged and blessed to be able to know them.

I will share that the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and I spent all of last week at the national inquiry and, you know, it's—certainly, it's work that I've been doing for the last 20 years and, obviously, the member for Point Douglas is actually an MMIWG family member and, in fact, her sister Claudette Osborne went missing from Point Douglas.

And so, certainly, we have a lot of invested energy and spirit into the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. And, you know, we saw, you know, a process last week that certainly could have looked a lot different and a lot better and a lot more supportive, and there were certainly aspects of the national inquiry in respect of the Manitoba process that were not good and could have been a lot better, particularly in respect of even financial support to families to be able to participate in the national inquiry. In fact, just as you were reading your opening statements, I just received an email from my constituency assistant who had an MMIWG family member reach out to him, because she actually had to pay for all of her involvement—her hotel room, her bus tickets, everything.

So the process and the supports that were offered the families were not enough, and when we look at some of the work that we've done here in Manitoba in the past, particularly if we look at Wiping Away the Tears, so, you know, that's about a two and a half day gathering that I—we had done six of them. And families—you know, you got your hotel room was covered, all of the food, and if you know me you know that every time I put on an event for community but, in particular, for families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, I make sure that there's so much food because our people struggle every day just to eat, and it's not something that we say kind of on the periphery. It literally is that people are starving, and so I wanted these opportunities where you come and you engage in your healing and you engage in being connected with family members and you eat as much as you want. Like, you had nice hotel rooms; we always had it at the Clarion Hotel so that the kids could go to the pool.

For the families that we brought in from the North we always had it at the Clarion so they could go to Polo Park and they could go shopping. We bought movie tickets. Like, if you and I are stressed out from our job, you can say to your family, let's go to a movie. The reality is that actually most people can't, and so we would offer movie tickets for them to be able just to veg out and just to relax and just to have some fun.

So we really, here in Manitoba, set the bar at the supports that could be offered for MMIWG families to be able to fully engage in whatever process, and there were families at the National Inquiry that didn't get—some of them didn't get any of that. And, also, we saw opportunities where families—I mean, it ended up that they did speak, but there was, in the beginning, not time, a room for them to speak. That's problematic.

So, certainly, we'll have some questions on that, but I just—I wanted to share with you, as the minister from—you know, my perspective—but also the member for Point Douglas—as an MMIWG, that the process for Manitoba should have been better. It should have offered more supports for the families. And I keep saying that this is the one and only time that families will have an opportunity to have their journeys and their narratives and their justice in honour of their loved ones as part of the Canadian official record. And I feel like we let down and failed many families in that respect.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We want to thank both the minister and the critic of the opposition for their open remarks.

Under the Manitoba practice, debate for the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered in the department in the Committee of Supply. According, we shall defer the consideration for line No. 4.1 dash A and be proceeded with the considering of the remaining items referred to resolution 4.1.

At this time, I would invite the minister's staff to join us in the Chamber, and once they are seated, the minister can introduce their—her staff and then also the opposition staff too.

Could the minister please introduce her staff in attendance today?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I have with me today our new deputy minister of Justice, Mr. David Wright, and I have our acting ADM of Admin and Finance, Maria Campos.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you. We'll just wait until the opposition staff is seated.

If the member from St. Johns wanted to introduce her staff.

**Ms. Fontaine:** And so this is Emily Coutts, and she's our research director extraordinaire.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you.

Okay, I guess going forward here, does the committee wish to proceed with these Estimates to be a chronological manner or to be more of a global discussion?

**An Honourable Member:** Global.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Global?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** We don't have a problem doing that. I'm just wondering, if you do have blocks of areas that you maybe want to ask questions, it would be very helpful just so all of the staff doesn't have to be here from all the different divisions of the department. That would be very helpful, so if the member would agree to that, that would be great.

**Ms. Fontaine:** And that's fine. I get that, absolutely. And so—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. So we'll—oh, go ahead.

**Ms. Fontaine:** And so maybe what I'll share with the minister and your staff is that I think, for the remaining 12 minutes that we have, I will be asking questions in respect of meth and opiates.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Now the Committee of Supply will go on a 'chronological' order, providing that—like a global discussion, providing that we actually have—considering one of each—part of the departments—that's the same topic, so that we can have the staff from the department, okay?

Okay, the floor is now open for questions.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech. So I'd like to ask the minister—so we understand and we know, obviously, that the Winnipeg Police Service, doctors, front-line addiction counsellors and professionals have reported a rise in meth use in Winnipeg. And we know that the police have actually seized it about 480 times last year. Is the minister developing a plan to combat meth use here in Manitoba?

\*(16:50)

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, I would thank the member for that question. It's a very good one. And I know recently I had the opportunity to go on a ride-along

in the Point Douglas area, and we did stop in, spoke to Sel Burrows, and I've met with him on this as well. He indicated that there's been some concerns in the community as well with respect to an increase in the meth use. We certainly work very closely across government departments and have spoken to the Minister of Health about this very issue. It's something that is a serious concern to us and, indeed, all opiates, not beyond just meth as well and the concerns that we have with addictions problems that we're facing here in Manitoba. So we are in the process. We don't work in silos, just particular—you know, in the Department of Justice, but we will work across government departments and, indeed, not even just within our province, because this is not an issue that's unique to Manitoba.

It's something that we're faced with across the country when it comes to opiate use. And so we work with our federal-provincial-territorial counterparts to develop, you know, collectively, a strategy that could work not just here for Manitoba but, indeed, across the country, and we can share best practices, some things that work in other provinces, you know, that could work here that we want to look at how to move some of those ideas forward. And, certainly, if the member has some ideas, we're open to ideas; I don't think anyone has a monopoly on good ideas, and we're welcome—we welcome her input on this as well.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech for the minister's response. I mean, it's, you know—and, certainly I think everybody in the room understands—or I would hope it—understands, you know, really, what oftentimes what drug use is kind of predicated upon, right? It's predicated upon all of these other factors in respect of, you know, trauma, trying to—or trying to deal with trauma and/or, you know, kind of, you know, loss of culture or cultural dislocation or all of these other things. And so, certainly, any plan, any provincial plan, would require kind of this multi-, as you said, and I absolutely agree, multi-kind-of departmental response and certainly would require that we look at, you know, these issues in which drug use and often addictions is predicated upon.

And so, you know, my question is: Has the minister, you know, begun to look at—and if so, what are some of the things that the minister or the department has started to look at in respect of, you know, I—you know, those issues in which, you know, often, like I said, addictions is kind of predicated upon. So that, but also, you know, what would a provincial strategy or a provincial plan look like?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Again, another very good question from my opposition critic. And I first of all want to introduce—we have two other staff members who have joined us today. So I want to recognize and thank Greg Skelly for being here as well as Karen Lambert, who's here with us as well.

And certainly with respect to the answer to the question, I think this is something that's ongoing. Every day, things change with respect to, you know, whether it's new drugs or opiates that we're faced with on a regular basis here not just in Manitoba but across the country. And again, we look to our other provincial and territorial counterparts as well as the federal government to help develop strategies around this.

With respect to Manitoba, our approach is a whole-of-government approach to this, and we want to ensure that we involve—you know, whether it's the Minister of Health or Education, it really covers across many government departments, and we have committees that are set up where we have ongoing discussions with respect to this as we move forward and develop strategies with respect to the issues of opiates and meth and other addiction-related substances.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Would the minister advise us what committees exactly are starting to kind of explore some of those issues?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, it's certainly—we, again, we—there's no—I mean, I—we look at things from a holistic, a whole-of-government standpoint. Primarily, the person who has spearheaded this or the department that has spearheaded this is the Department of Health. So I do encourage you to ask some of the questions of them as well.

But I will say that, you know, we do share concerns about what we're seeing and we will take the necessary actions to move in that direction. From our perspective, we'll work with law enforcement, we'll work with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, we'll work with all stakeholders in the community, individuals who suffer from addiction. This is a very serious issue that we take very seriously and we want to, again, find a whole government approach to develop the strategies necessary to move forward.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, just to be clear, though, so there's—right now though—and I absolutely agree with you that—and I think everybody would agree, right, that it has to be a kind of holistic, multidepartmental,

jurisdiction response in developing a strategy. So—but right now is there a committee that is, you know, made up of, you know, different department representation that is solely dealing with this issue.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Again, I want to thank the member for the question, and in January of 2016, Manitoba established a Fentanyl Task Force to lead and co-ordinate a co-ordinated, province-wide response. The task force was co-chaired by representatives of the departments of Justice and Health and included representatives from the provincial government, Winnipeg Police Service, Brandon Police Service, RCMP, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Pharmacists, AFM and the Canadian Border Services Agency. This is one task force that's set up. They—you know, it was set up because of fentanyl and what we—the significant issues that we were dealing with at the time, but, again, we go beyond just looking at fentanyl. We look at other opioids as well and we deal with things on a regular basis as they come up and we'd look at a similar fashion.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Okay, so that committee was set up in January 2016 and, as you're indicating, that there was other discussions in respect of other drugs that were a part of this kind of discussion, this overall discussion. Can you advise how many times this committee met and when was the last time that they met?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I don't have that information right here, right now in terms of how many times they've met, but—since then. But I certainly know they're doing tremendous work and, you know, we work, again, not just across government departments, but we work with our stakeholders in the community including law enforcement, addiction services—you know—and with Manitoba Health, physicians and surgeons and others to develop a strategy on not just fentanyl, but on other opioids as well.

Again, I think the specifics about that, I know we have spoken—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Doyle Pivniuk):** The hour being after 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

**CORRIGENDA**

On October 10, 2017, page 2870, first column, ninth paragraph, the second and third sentences should have read:

It was not fault of the people who bought those taxis.  
It was fault of the government.

On October 12, 2017, page 2941, first column, eleventh paragraph should have read:

And what happens, like sometime discrimination further-caused discrimination. When I was working in the government services, at that time we were lumped with the women, all the visible minorities, and when chance come to get jobs, then women will get job and we were left out. And anyway, that used

to occur, discrimination because most women will be from the major culture group.

On October 12, 2017, page 2942, first column, fourth paragraph, the first sentence should have read:

So it's not only your size, there are many things that come into play.

On October 12, 2017, page 2968, second column, eighth paragraph should have read:

Madam Speaker, to date, lawyers for the truck drivers who are being asked to be tested again called a press conference, with the intention to fight against this injustice in the court.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 23, 2017

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