

**Third Session – Forty-First Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

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

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**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
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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
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SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
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TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
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WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 28, 2018

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

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon, everybody.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Wildfire Update

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Safety and security of Manitobans is our first priority. Thus, I wish to provide the House with an update on the current wildfire fighting activities in the province of Manitoba.

The Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization is currently monitoring the provincial wildfire situation. There are wildfires burning in various locations that have impacted communities due to the proximity of the fires and related smoke.

Fire danger levels are increasing in central and northern areas, as well as parts of the south, with warmer temperatures and patchy precipitation. More widespread precipitation is expected for southern areas later this week.

Work continues on priority fires, and mop up is being contemplated on a number of existing fires across the province.

Significant work remains on managing the fire near Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations. Due to this fire and the associated smoke, these communities are not considered safe for return of residents currently.

Total fires to date: 186; whereas the average for this date, so far, is 114.

Indigenous Services Canada has engaged the Canadian Red Cross to manage evacuations from the following communities.

The Canadian Red Cross reports the approximate number of people who are registered evacuees from Little Grand Rapids First Nation at 900, and from Pauingassi First Nation, 433. Canadian Red Cross is working with stakeholders in the City of Winnipeg to ensure continuity of health care, provision of social services and evacuation supports for evacuees from these communities.

The Canadian Red Cross reports approximately 897 individuals are registered as evacuees from the—Sapotaweyak and are housed in hotels in The Pas, Swan River and Brandon.

Indigenous and Northern Relations has co-ordinated the evacuation of Pelican Rapids, where approximately 46 people are evacuated and being accommodated in Dauphin.

The RM of Grahamdale and RM West Interlake or Ashern: the fires near Ashern have been contained and are being monitored and mopped up by Sustainable Development Wildfire Program resources.

Manitoba EMO will continue to monitor the ongoing situations across the province and co-ordinate teleconferences with the agencies involved.

Our government wishes to thank all agencies, governments and individuals who are involved in this very important work undertaken, especially with the challenging circumstances, to ensure the safety and security of all affected by the current wildfire situation.

We wish to remind everyone to obey all fire bans and to keep their properties clear of any combustible materials to reduce risk.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings had been provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, with three new fires starting over the weekend,

firefighting is far from over. I want to recognize and thank the many professionals and volunteers who continue to work around the clock in assisting with combating the wildfires here in Manitoba.

For the first time in a week, evacuees from Little Grand Rapids First Nation, Sapotaweyak First Nation and Ashern can sigh a bit of relief. Weather helped suppress the fire near Sapotaweyak First Nation and Ashern over the weekend.

While three homes were sadly lost in the fire in Little Grand Rapids, smoke has cleared in the community. With many evacuees eagerly waiting to return home, we hope that services can be restored promptly.

With the fire in northeast Manitoba now covering more than 25,000 hectares, fear and uncertainty still remain amongst the residents of Pauingassi First Nation as the fire is only about four kilometres away.

Evacuation efforts would not have been possible without many organizations and volunteers assisting with the operations in Winnipeg, Brandon, Swan River and The Pas to ensure evacuees have a place to stay, food and all essentials needed.

Challenging conditions for evacuees are being eased by recreation opportunities at the University of Winnipeg. The Canadian Red Cross is using the Duckworth Centre as a central location to provide services to the 1,200 evacuees here in Winnipeg ensure—to ensure they are kept up to date as quickly as possible.

While circumstances like these are devastating, Manitobans continue to show their resilience, kindness and bravery by assisting with the wildfire situation in every way possible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his update and to thank all emergency personnel and volunteers who are working so hard in this effort to battle the wildfires and to help the evacuees, and a special thank you to the University of Winnipeg for their help.

I note on the fire map today that the fire near Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids is still listed as out of control in the minister's recent news release, but is listed as in control on his department's fire map. Hopefully one of the notices will be corrected so there is at least consistency in what's being communicated.

I would also recommend that for large fires like this one, that the Province used an approach which was used in 2015 in Saskatchewan in which large fires where there were hot spots, the hot spots were shown clearly so it's possible to get some idea as to how much of the area covered by the fire is still active.

I think it's also, as a word of recommendation, would be that individuals with respiratory problems and who are at risk of smoke inhalation, that there should be considered some accelerated effort or advanced evacuation for such individuals.

I'm also hoping for information on when the power will be restored in Little Grand Rapids, as this will be one of the most critical steps forward in enabling people to go home.

I should add that there's quite a bit of concern over the safety of residents who are evacuated. I highlight this because it needs to be an ongoing concern which is monitored closely. I'd heard of some significant harassment happening, and I just want to alert the minister that this needs to be attended to. I hope the minister could also provide more details of the measures which have—put in place to ensure the safety of the evacuees.

I note that the minister promised me last week he'd provide the fire plans for the communities affected. I have written him a follow-up letter and hope he can give me that as soon as possible. Thank you.

\* (13:40)

I also note the presence of a small fire near Shamattawa which is listed as out of control. I'd hoped the minister might signal what effort is being made there to prevent it becoming a large fire which might threaten the community of Shamattawa.

Thank you. Merci.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Save Our Seine

**Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital):** Madam Speaker, local grassroots organizations are an important part

of our communities, and Save Our Seine is no exception. Today, it's my pleasure to recognize the keepers of the Seine River in the Manitoba Legislature.

With almost 30 years of dedication to preserving one of our province's most well-known rivers, Save Our Seine has demonstrated how a small group of passionate individuals can grow into a committed organization of environmental advocates who can make a difference.

Save Our Seine's mark can be seen along the river from the city limits all the way to where it connects with the Red River. Whether it's—whether it be through educational or recreational activities, annual cleanup or major projects that focus on sustainability, there is no question why this group's first goal is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment and heritage resource of the Seine River.

The riding of St. Vital is fortunate enough to have the Seine River as a natural boundary, and tucked along the Niakwa Trail near Fermor Avenue and St. Anne's Road you'll find one of the best hidden gems. Planted in 2015, the Niakwa Trail Rain Garden was a collaborative effort aimed at creating an urban habitat for vegetation, wildlife and patrons of the trail to find rest or make it their home. This garden also protects the river by eliminating any harmful pollutants from entering through the outlet leading from the nearby parking lot.

Through the planting of new trees and flowers, the removal of the hardy weeds that can take over our natural resources, the Naikwa Trail Rain Garden gives back to the environment in a much needed way. I would invite anyone who might find themselves along the trail to pause at the bench near the garden and reflect on the beauty that can be found right here in our neighbourhood.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the residents of St. Vital and my colleagues here in the Legislature, I wish to thank the board of directors, the staff and the many volunteers from Save Our Seine for their tireless effort to protect and maintain the beauty of our community. Your legacy of activism and environmental consciousness will remain for years to come. Thank you very much.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Vital.

**Mrs. Mayer:** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to add the names of the guests in attendance into Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to include those names in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

*Members of Save Our Seine in attendance: Isabelle Bertazzo, Anita Moyses, Laurie Ringaert*

### **Education System Funding**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speakers, hundreds of Manitoba teachers, parents and supporters gathered at the Legislature on Friday, rallying against this government's cuts to education funding and for our province's schools. Their message was clear: an investment in education is the smartest investment a government can make in our future. Yet not only has this government failed to deliver on the year-over-year funding required, they're spending less on capital improvements, less on supports for teachers and making class sizes bigger.

For the second year in a row, education funding has failed to keep up with growing enrolment, let alone with the rate of inflation. That means that there are more kids and less funding. And while this Premier (Mr. Pallister) focuses only on his bottom line, school divisions are being forced to make tough choices as they receive absolute cuts to their budgets. Teachers from all across Manitoba are telling me that they are taking on more and more responsibilities and personal costs so that their students don't suffer as a result of these cuts.

Manitoba's schools are becoming more diverse, and, as a result, students' needs are becoming more diverse. There is an increased need for programming and supports outside the classroom, but this government's out-of-touch approach to education is making it harder and harder to deliver on the supportive and growing environment that students need.

We believe that government should make real investments in literacy and numeracy and keep our class sizes small so that students who speak English as a second language and students who require additional supports for learning get the one-on-one time that they need.

This Premier is breaking his promise to protect our front-line services and making decisions that will cause lasting damage to our education system, to our students and ultimately to our economy.

Today and every day, Madam Speaker, our NDP team and I will continue to stand with teachers to

remind this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this government to support kids, not cuts.

**Lynne Parker**

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** Today I am honoured to inform this House about Lynne Parker, the executive director for Recreation Opportunities for Kids, or ROK, as it's known locally, in Portage la Prairie. She is the driving force of this non-profit organization that provides programming for local youth and their families who may be living in poverty.

Lynne Parker's passion and positive energy has made her an invaluable part of the ROK Central organization. Lynne was the 2017 recipient of Citizen of the Year award and led ROK Central to earn the recognition of outstanding not-for-profit at the Portage & District Chamber of Commerce annual Best Business Awards. In 2016, Lynne received the women of–woman of excellent award at the chamber's Women in Business gala.

Lynne Parker is very committed to creating opportunities for all children and youth to participate in activities that contribute to their overall health and well-being, no matter of their socio-economic status. This year's program for ROK includes the Roquette After School Program, Pals On the Playground, North End Summer Camp, hockey skills, archery and lacrosse. Parker notes that the improvements of skills by participating students is phenomenal and the kids themselves are proud of their accomplishments.

In this past fall, Lynne also secured a partnership with Manitoba Housing to open the Community Connections Outreach Centre, which provides resources, supports and family programming in the area that is home to many families living in high-risk situations.

I ask all honourable members to join me in congratulating Lynne Parker and the ROK Central organization for providing positive experiences and improving the lives of youth and their families in Portage.

**Provincial Government Record**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) got up not once, but twice last week in members' statements, and we hoped he was going to speak up on behalf of his constituents and demand that Concordia Hospital emergency room remain open, but instead all we got were tired old Tory speaking points.

We agree some things in Manitoba are up, like unemployment. Just two years ago Manitoba had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Now, for the first time in a generation our unemployment rate is above the national average. In March, Manitoba was in a–within a fraction of having the highest unemployment rate west of New Brunswick.

Tuition is up, way up. Students at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg will pay an additional 6.6 per cent for tuition alone this fall. Even if they have a job, this government capped the minimum wage at the rate of inflation.

Classroom sizes for K to 3 are up. This government has cancelled the initiative, meaning youngest students will have less individual attention from their teachers.

Crime is up. Statistics Canada tells us the violent crime rate went up in Manitoba by 10 per cent in just the first year of this Conservative government.

Illegal opioid use and–*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** –methamphetamine use are way up. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** You can find used needles in just about every community, even as this government closed its ears to calls for a supervised injection site. And this government even used used needles as one of their excuses–*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** –to close the Pine Grove rest area.

Hydro rates are up, but in one of the few good-news stories the Public Utilities Board rejected this government's attempt to jack up rates by 7.9 per cent.

Other good news is gas taxes won't go up on September 1st thanks to our NDP team, but the bad news is they eventually will, at–*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** –two-and-a-half times the amount required by the federal Liberals, without a single penny going to reduce carbon emissions or help low-income Manitobans.

Public sector wages are frozen, but the Premier and his Cabinet took a 20 per cent pay increase.

When the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said he'd aim higher, he wasn't kidding. And now we're all paying the price.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

I have called for order a number of times. Our gallery is pretty full with students today and I think that they're here to hear the comments that are being made on the floor and not yelling across the way. So I would urge everybody, please, to show some civility to members that are speaking and that we listen respectfully and demonstrate to all of these students what democracy is about, in the purest way.

### **Fire in Brandon**

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Madam Speaker, just over a week ago, on Saturday, May 19th, Christie's Office Plus caught fire in Brandon. That started a series of fires and events that had a dramatic effect on Brandon, several of its residents and several businesses.

\* (13:50)

Thank you to the many members of the Brandon Fire & Emergency Services that fought those fires over the next days. For the first time in Brandon's history, BFS called on neighbouring fire services under the mutual aid agreement. Fire fighters from Carberry, Oakland-Wawanesa, Souris and Glenwood, CFB Shilo, Manitoba 'hywo'—Hydro and the Office of the Fire Commissioner responded.

Madam Speaker, many businesses and staff were displaced by those fires and several of them already have plans in place to open in temporary locations.

The residents of Massey Manor and some of—other properties were evacuated to the Victoria Inn with few belongings under the able guidance of the Canadian Red Cross.

As the call went out for help and donations, Brandon and Westman residents responded. You name it, it appeared at the hotel and at St. Matthew's Cathedral. The Brandon Bear Clan was instrumental in getting the word out and in attracting volunteers. All of the pets were safely located and reunited with their owners.

Madam Speaker, the City of Brandon and their staff stepped up to manage the evacuees and took over for the Red Cross. The Premier immediately recognized the impact that the fire would have on Brandon, and 'mayorn' Chrest and the Province were in constant communication.

Manitoba Health and the nurses played a critical role in replacing medication. Teachers from the Brandon School Division came to assure the parents and students that school would be normal for them. Manitoba Housing, CMHA and the Friendship Centre have been working with evacuees to find new housing. The residents of Massey Manor were able to re-enter their units last Friday and 'refew'—retrieve a few items of critical importance.

Madam Speaker, yesterday St. Matthew's Cathedral held a service of thanksgiving—thank all the first responders, police, staff, volunteers, donors and anyone who contributed and helped. We continue to have much work to do, but I was told many times how well everyone worked together.

Madam Speaker, thank you to all who worked, helped and donated. We are most fortunate that everyone is safe and there were no significant injuries.

### **Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

Seated in the public gallery from Linden Christian School we have 24 grade 9 students under the direction of Kevin Gilmour, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister).

On behalf of all members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Physio and Occupational Therapy Request to Restore Services**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We know that Manitobans are waiting longer and longer for cataract replacement surgeries and they're waiting longer for hip and knee replacement surgeries.

In fact, they're waiting longer than before the Conservatives took office. They're waiting 75 more days than in 2015 for hip replacement surgery, 72 more days for knee replacement surgery as opposed to 2015, and these are the numbers compiled by CIHI.

While these wait times are getting worse, the Premier went out and decided to cut outpatient physio and occupational therapy. These services help people recover from these sorts of surgeries and

also help to avoid repeat surgeries and repeat hospitalizations.

Will the Premier reverse his cut to outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services for people who need that care?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, basically, there are two ways you can react to the challenges we inherited from the previous administration, Madam Speaker, where we languished near the bottom or at the bottom in every major rating for health-care access across Canada.

One way is to react as the opposition has decided to, by going on about their impeccable record of getting us to the bottom, and the other way, the more intelligent way, is the way we're reacting, why—facing up to the challenges of change by undertaking health-care reforms that are unprecedented; by working in partnership with not only experts but front-line workers to implement changes that will see positive results for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, we're choosing to react the right way, the Manitoba way. We face our challenges head on. We don't run from them.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, actually, previously Manitoba was ahead of the pack in offering outpatient physio and OT, but now, after the Premier's cut these services, Manitoba is languishing at the back of the pack among provinces in Manitoba.

Now, the government claims it's looking at programs like same-day surgery for hip replacements, but they leave out a very important part of what would be needed in order to make this approach effective: it requires intensive support from physio and occupational therapists.

It needs those outpatient services in order to guarantee that somebody can return home from the hospital on the same day, and yet it's those outpatient services, that's exactly what this government cut. Instead of supporting innovation, they're moving us in the wrong direction.

The evidence is clear. Will the Premier listen, and will he restore coverage for outpatient physio and OT?

**Mr. Pallister:** The member references the wrong direction. Madam Speaker, we saw what the wrong direction was in the last few years of the

NDP government: \$10 million a day of additional debt handed off to the future isn't sustainable management, it's the opposite of that. Doubling our provincial debt in relatively good times, that's what the NDP legacy is. And this year we'll see \$1 billion go to happy moneylenders, thanks to the NDP debt service costs.

Over \$1 billion, for the first time in Manitoba history, paying interest on past excesses of the previous administration wasn't the way to strengthen our health-care system. Cutting our deficit in half, Madam Speaker, that's the right way to go. Getting us to sustainability in our health-care system, that's what Manitobans want. They want services for today, for sure, but they want services for themselves and their children tomorrow too.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the First Minister talks about the money but he doesn't talk as much about the care, and that's what people across the province are standing up for is a modern and innovative health-care system that can provide things like same-day hip surgery, but also to have those follow-up community-based supports that are going to ensure that wait times are reduced, but also that wait times are reduced in a way that doesn't sacrifice the quality of care that Manitobans rely on.

That's the real concern here, that with the cuts that this government is making—the cuts to outpatient physiotherapy, the cuts to outpatient OT—that Manitobans are going to have less care, that perhaps they will reinjure themselves, they will need repeat hospitalizations and potentially even repeat surgeries. So changes cannot come at the quality of care.

So I'd ask the Premier again directly: Will he reverse his misguided cut to physiotherapy and outpatient OT?

**Mr. Pallister:** There's nothing new over there, Madam Speaker: new leader, same old same old spendP, and what the member ignores is the reality that we have to pay our bills in this province and that Manitobans understand we have to pay our bills.

They incurred a bill, \$10 million a day of new debt, Madam Speaker. But while they were doing that they were also jacking up taxes on Manitoba families, weren't they? They were broadening the PST. They were raising the PST. They were making it harder for Manitobans to make ends meet. And



they were doing that while they were running up the bill for our children and grandchildren to pay back.

All the press releases in the world about caring don't change the fact that \$1 billion this year alone is going to service NDP debt that we can't use for the things we'd like to use today.

So repeating the mistakes of the past is not something we'll do, Madam Speaker. We're going to get it right where they got it wrong. We're going to fix it where they broke it.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to moving on with oral questions, we have some guests that have also joined us in the public gallery.

From Springwell School we have 24 grade K-to-8 students under the direction of Lisa Rand, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

On behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

\* \* \*

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

### Education Funding Level Student-Teacher Ratios

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Want to shout out all the students in the gallery, including our friends over here on this side. How's it going?

It's important that we, you know, stand up for students in our province. We know that there were some 1,000 teachers on the steps of the Leg. just a few days ago, standing up and demanding that this government focus on kids not cuts, or, thought of in a different way, to focus on the students, to put the students first.

Now, we don't know if the government's listening to those voices or to the voice of the students here today. We know that they are listening to the consultants that they paid millions of dollars to since taking office. We know that they're listening because it's those consultants who called for cuts to our education system, and the Premier responded by bringing down de facto cuts to education funding in Manitoba year after year since taking office.

It doesn't take a math degree to know that when you have more kids in school you need more teachers, and yet we see under this Premier that class sizes are rising.

Will the Premier finally listen? Will he back off his de facto cuts to our education system?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, the kids in the gallery will learn something from this, Madam Speaker, I hope.

The member opposite talks about de facto cuts. He qualifies it because he knows that this year we're spending \$468 million more on education than the NDP ever did when they were in office. So he can't say we're making cuts, Madam Speaker, because we aren't.

\* (14:00)

We're investing in education because we know it's a priority. We know it's a priority to help people learn about math, and the member opposite needs to demonstrate better math skills. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, if we want to continue the lesson in economics, we could also call these real cuts, Madam Speaker, because the cost of providing services in Manitoba gets more and more expensive each and every year. It's because of inflation; inflation rises every year.

So how do you describe money after you have accounted for the effect of inflation? Well, you call it real dollars, and so when we look at the real dollars that are being spent on education under this government, it's cut every year since they took office.

Again, these are real cuts that they're bringing—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —down in the education system.

What's happening at the same time? Enrolment is increasing. So under this Premier class sizes are getting bigger, and yet I have yet to meet a single parent in this province who wants their child to have less one-on-one time with their teacher. And, apparently, the government has not been able to find any teachers who would back up their position on that either.

So I would ask the Premier: Will he listen to parents, will he listen to teachers and commit to bringing forward real investments in education funding year over year?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, a couple of things, Madam Speaker.

First of all, the NDP wants teachers to spend more time out of the classroom in about 40 different bargaining tables. They'd like them to all go out—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —and volunteer to bargain. They don't want them to be preparing for class or working with students off hours. They'd rather that they were at a bargaining table bargaining.

Well, every other province threw that one out a long time ago, Madam Speaker, and we're going to throw it out, too, because we want the teachers to be with students and the teachers want to be with students too. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the Premier's actions contradict his words because—how can he stand in the House and say he wants teachers to spend more time with the students, and yet under his watch see a year-over-year increase in class sizes in Manitoba? His record is clear that, because of the real-dollar cuts that they're bringing down in the education system, that teachers in Manitoba are now able to spend less one-on-one time with their teachers.

The consensus is clear from educational experts: students flourish, students do better when they have an opportunity to engage one-on-one or in small groups with their teachers. And yet, because the Premier's real-dollar cuts are creating larger class sizes, students are the ones who are going to be impacted.

So I would ask the Premier again: Will he listen to the voices of the more than thousand teachers and their allies who were here on Friday? Will he listen to the hundreds of people who were on the steps of the Leg. yesterday and commit to real dollar investments in Manitoba education so that we can assure that small class sizes continue for years to come?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the member's got a little bit of a problem and the kids in the gallery will notice it.

First, he says that spending \$468 million more on education is a cut, and now he's talking about class sizes as if the be-all and end-all would be how many kids there are in the class and nothing else would matter. He's ignoring a lot of things that really matter more.

But that being said, Madam Speaker, I was concerned about his assertion the other day and—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —so I checked on it, and I found out that in the last three years of the NDP's time in office the average number of students in a classroom was 19 and then I found out that the average number of students in a classroom today is 19.

The member's got to quit making it up. He's got to do better than that, Madam Speaker.

We're after better quality education with the dollars we invest. That's what Manitoba parents and students want and that's what Manitoba teachers want too.

### **Teachers Rally at the Legislature Government Attendance**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** It's pretty clear this Education Minister doesn't like to listen. He had a chance on Friday to go out on the front steps of this Legislature to listen directly to those teachers who came here to voice their anger and their concerns about his cuts to education. Their message was clear: kids, not cuts. I was there with our leader and members of our NDP caucus along with over 1,000 teachers and their supporters.

Can the minister tell this House why he didn't think it was important to attend the rally on Friday and listen directly to Manitoba teachers?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question. We're always opening to listening to Manitobans that are related to education, whether they be teachers, whether they be part of the trustee process and part of the school divisions or whether they be parents, and so I was pleased to join Manitoba Teachers' Society on Thursday to speak to them in the morning and then join them again in the evening to talk to teachers on an individual basis.

I don't have a problem with listening. It appears the opposition does only want to listen to some people.

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

### **Education System Funding Concerns**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Well, Madam Speaker, if the minister had bothered to go to the rally and listen to those teachers that were there, he would have heard from Tammy Tutkaluk, a grade 7 teacher from Brandon, who told us how this government's cuts are impacting her classroom. She's seen her class sizes go up, and she's now paying over \$1,000 out of her own pocket to provide classroom supplies.

This doesn't sound like a teacher who has the supports that they need to meet. This sounds like a teacher who's being asked to do more with less.

So will the minister please tell Ms. Tutkaluk why she think—why he thinks that she should have to pay out of pocket for her classroom supplies? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question, and he certainly knows that local school divisions are the ones responsible for creating budgets for each individual school.

We work constructively with the school divisions and we work constructively with the teachers, as well, to make sure that we get the best quality education for Manitoba students.

Certainly the member should be paying attention to the outcomes for Manitoba students, and in this case, we could certainly do better.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, Madam Speaker, this minister can equivocate and he can spin all he wants. The facts are clear: his government underspent education by \$40 million last year and a \$25-million cut to capital spending.

How he expects outcomes to improve when he cuts education is beyond me. Last week he even tried to take credit for 10 years of funding increases to public education, ignoring the fact that under his

watch most school divisions have seen absolute cuts and the rest are getting next to nothing.

So instead of listening to parents, instead of listening to teachers, this minister tries to convince them that less is more, and—but they know that his numbers just don't add up. So will this minister admit that he just doesn't care about what his cuts mean to our education system in Manitoba?

**Mr. Wishart:** The member opposite likes to manufacture his own set of statistics. On something like this we know, by comparing across Canada, that we are—we fund our students in the K-to-12 system at the second highest rate of any province across Canada.

And the member opposite also likes to ignore the fact that we are investing heavily in capital by building seven new schools. He's enjoying the benefit of the schools but doesn't want to admit they exist.

\* (14:10)

### **Public Services Sustainability Act Request to Repeal Bill 28**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Over the course of this last weekend, over 1,200 people—teachers, front-line workers, supporters—gathered on the steps of this Legislature to protest the government's treatment of working people in this province, particularly with the Pallister government's—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —Bill 28.

Contrary to what this government might like us to believe, wasn't just union folks out there, but it was concerned citizens. And this is the—marks the beginning of the legitimate court challenge to Bill 28.

Will this government just do the right thing and repeal Bill 28?

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like to again remind members, there is a lot of heckling going on. We do have students in the gallery. I am having increasing difficulty; even though I've got my sound system turned right up, I am having trouble hearing what is being said on the floor.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation again. It is not just for me. It is the respect for this Chair that I am asking that to be addressed. So I

would ask everybody to please co-operate with this so that people can properly be heard. And I do need to hear if there's any breaches of parliamentary language. So I would urge everybody's co-operation, please.

I have stood a number of times. I've tried to bring silence right from the beginning of oral questions, and it's off track. And I would ask everybody, please, get on track again so that we can show these students that are here that we are sincerely looking to hear the questions and the answers.

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

That member knows that we inherited a mess in respect of a \$1-billion deficit, in respect of debt-service charges that are now eclipsing \$1 billion a year.

Bill 28 is a recognition that something needed to change and we've taken the position that all hands on deck—indeed, the negotiating process goes on. Many groups have already negotiated contracts, and we are saying to teachers you cannot be exempt from that process.

We believe this takes all Manitobans together to build a brighter future. We are correcting the course.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** This Premier continues to ignore the brewing storm he has created. The government is facing a legal battle and, quite frankly, it should know it will lose. The Premier's own senior adviser admitted that Bill 28 may not be legal. Instead of doing the right thing by respecting the rights of working people, the Premier is using the threat of Bill 28 as a weapon to discourage actual, real bargaining.

Will this Premier repeal Bill 28? Respect the constitutionality of respected rights of working people in this province. Repeal Bill 28 now.

**Mr. Friesen:** We believe that Bill 28 is a moderate piece of legislation that respects the collective bargaining process and, indeed, it doesn't open existing agreements. It says that everyone will come into a provision of a four-year sustainability question. It asks the question, how do we sustain this system not just for today, but into the future?

So we believe that there—that it is a reasonable, that it is a multi-faceted approach and that it will work over time to actually help us on our road to sustainability in this province.

We are saying to that member and to all Manitobans, this will involve all of us. It is truly all hands on deck for this work.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** This minister talks about all hands on deck, but fails to take into account that his own Cabinet ministers all took a 20 per cent increase and not all hands are on deck, Madam Speaker.

This government—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —refuses to meet with or work with or bargain with any public sector workers in good faith. Over and over again this government refused to listen.

So will the Premier do the right thing, will he withdraw, repeal Bill 28 now?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, this is—these are questions, Madam Speaker, that reflect the reality the NDP is controlled by public sector union bosses and sadly is not interested in standing up for working families, front-line workers in our great province. We are.

We know what front-line workers don't want, Madam Speaker. They don't want higher union dues. They don't want more red tape. They don't want less job security. They don't want more time at the bargaining table and less time at what they were trained at, and they sure as heck don't want higher taxes. But those are exactly the things the NDP stands for, exactly the things the NDP gave them in the past and exactly the things the NDP would like to give them again.

Front-line workers don't want that, Madam Speaker. We'll give them what they want, not what they don't want.

#### **Seniors Units at Lions Manor Rent-Geared-to-Income Units**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Last week we learned that Lions Place, not this government, will cover the extra cost for seniors with expiring rent 'subsidies'. But this is cold comfort.

With no additional support, the 67 units at Lions Place that are currently rent-geared-to-income will rise to the market rent when a new occupant applies. So, due to this government's austerity, we are slated to lose an additional 67 units of affordable housing for low-income seniors.

Will this government commit today to maintaining and increasing the number of rent-geared-to-income units at Lions Manor?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** This government is always interested in creating housing solutions for Manitobans. We know what the NDP did when they were in opposition, not only leaving over \$500 million in deferred maintenance, but we are very surprised at the fact that they didn't make more progress in terms of social and affordable housing.

We're not going to make the same mistakes as the NDP. In fact, we have built, operated, extended funding through operating agreements or rent-geared-income to close to 487 new units. Madam Speaker, 42 per cent—42 per cent—are social housing. We think that is progress.

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

#### Affordable Housing Units Support for Low-Income Seniors

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I'll repeat it again this week: NDP government built hundreds of social housing units every year. This government's been in government for over two years and zero social housing units have been built.

If this government moves—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** —low-income seniors from rent-geared-to-income rent-housing to Rent Assist, it looks like those residents will no longer qualify for the full Education Property Tax Credit. That tax credit can save low-income seniors hundreds of dollars a year. This means they may actually be worse off financially than they are now.

Will the Minister for Families stop playing games and commit to real support for low-income seniors?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** We are making progress in terms of providing affordable and social housing for seniors as well as for all Manitobans. The agreement that I spoke of last

week, in fact, taking a proactive stance to address a solution is something this government likes to do on an everyday basis.

The agreement that we have with the Lions, we had a meeting with the president of the Lions association. We are able to extend the Rent Assist program, supports from government that are there, and the Lions is the one, through their board, that agreed to top up the additional amount of money that a residence would have so all residents be whole.

They'll be not paying any more. That's two years that the board has agreed to doing it. We think it's a creative solution to addressing this.

Something else that we've entered into is National Housing Strategy and the federal government has committed to addressing the issue of expiring operating agreements.

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

#### Fire at Massey Manor Housing for Displaced Residents

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** It's the Lions Place that is 'subsidizing', not this government. I don't know why he stands up and tries to take credit for it.

As the government hides its cuts to affordable housing, we've learned from media reports that more than 20 families who were displaced at the Massey Manor fire in Brandon are in need of housing.

This Friday, 23 families and one individual may have no place to go. All of these families are low income, working or on Employment and Income Assistance. These families are looking for answers from Manitobans—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** —from Manitoba Housing, but no one has been forthcoming.

Will the Minister for Families—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** I'm glad that the member from Brandon is sticking up. Maybe he'll give these families some answers.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** Will the Minister for Families intervene to ensure that every one of these families will have access to quality housing as soon as possible and maybe set the member from Brandon straight that they'll be homeless by Friday?

\* (14:20)

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I don't think yelling in here makes us hear questions any better or heckling makes it a better environment. I would just urge everybody to please, let's do this the way we should be doing it so that we're good role models for all these students here. I think the level of yelling in here is not necessarily the way we want to demonstrate the roles we have to play here. And I would caution people on their tones as well, because sometimes tone can be very provocative and it leads to the extra noise in the room.

So I would ask everybody to give some thought to the questions, the tone, the answers so that we could progress better and more professionally and civilly through question period.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I can advise you that I think that's shameful, the comments that you make when you use this versus Brandon. There's two things that I can guarantee you today: that the member from Brandon West and the member from Brandon East will always stick up for the residents that we'll all—

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

**Mr. Fielding:** —for the residents. That's something.

I want to thank the emergency service workers, I want to thank the members from Manitoba Housing, I want to thank the MLAs from all different levels—the politicians from all different levels for their support.

What the government has clearly said is we will support the immediate needs of individuals for housing, and we are working on the long-term and medium-term solutions for that. That is something that we've guaranteed. We will continue to stand, and I can guarantee you the members from Brandon and Brandon East will continue to stand as well, Madam Speaker.

### **Offender Skills Training Program Dissolution of Mancor Program**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, inmate reintegration into society is essential, especially if you want to lower recidivism rates. This is why many of us are alarmed by this decision to discontinue the employment training program that is currently being offered by Mancor Industries.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice why she is choosing to cancel the employment training program when we know how beneficial it is to our justice system.

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thank the member for the question.

And we know that the particular program was not yielding the results that we expect out of the program, and so we did a review of that, as we have in many programs in the government. And we will continue to vest in—to invest in programs that really work for Manitobans. It's why we have reallocated resources into the Responsible Reintegration Initiative, which will provide training for those individuals to responsibly reintegrate them back into society.

So those are the programs that we are investing in that we are already seeing some real results on.

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, this government has already cut restorative programs such as the Elizabeth Fry association and the John Howard Society, and now there are budgeted cuts for this coming year for our community corrections.

This government needs to invest in restorative justice so that those who are released from incarceration are prepared to transition back into society.

What is this government doing to help with restorative justice, specifically, in our province?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** It's why we conducted a review of our entire criminal justice system, because we weren't getting the kinds of results under the previous NDP government that Manitobans expect in our criminal justice system. It's why we embarked on that review. It's why we have focused the resources in four main areas, Madam Speaker:

crime prevention, restorative justice, responsible reintegration and looking at the most serious of crimes first.

And we will continue to work with various stakeholders in the community, including John Howard Society, especially in the areas of responsibly reintegrating offenders back into society.

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, this government needs to start being smart and proactive on crime. Manitoba still has the highest incarceration rates of all the provinces.

Can the minister acknowledge that employment is essential to restorative justice and thus reverse the cuts to the employment training program for inmates as a retrograde move?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** And gone are the days that, under the previous NDP government, where they used incarceration as the only tool to deal with our criminal justice system and some of the challenges that are faced—that we face within our criminal justice system.

That was under the previous NDP government. We've taken a different approach. We've taken a proactive approach. We've looked at crime prevention initiatives; we've looked at restorative justice; we've looked at some programs in areas where we can responsibly reintegrate offenders back into society, and so those are the areas that we will concentrate our resources because it will provide for more—safer communities for all Manitobans.

#### **Safety on South Perimeter Highway Public Engagement Meetings**

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** Madam Speaker, Winnipeg and the capital region continues to grow at an exciting pace. This is especially true in south Winnipeg where we have seen many new neighbourhoods come to life: South Point, Prairie Point and Bridgewater Trails, to name a few.

Last week the Minister of Infrastructure made an important announcement to the public.

Can he share what it was with the honourable members of this House?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** I'd like to thank the member for St. Norbert for that very important question about safety.

Madam Speaker, over 30,000 vehicles travel on the south Perimeter Highway every day. That's 30,000 cars every day, and tonight and tomorrow night we're going to have open houses where we're going to consult about what safety measures we should come up with on the south Perimeter.

Madam Speaker, our government has advertised in six newspapers, Twitter. Over 17 organizations that represent tens of thousands of Manitobans—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Schuler:** —have been invited, along with the website.

We would encourage all of those that have some input—that would like to have some input on the safety on the south Perimeter Highway to come forward. The meetings are tonight and tomorrow.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### **Manitoba Judicial System False Confession Case Concern**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Earlier this month the Manitoba Court of Appeal directed an acquittal of Mr. Richard Catcheway. I submit, Madam Speaker, that the legal system failed Mr. Catcheway. Neither the prosecutor or the defense or anyone else in the justice system saw the obvious truth: it was impossible for Mr. Catcheway to commit this alleged crime.

What steps is the Justice Minister taking to address this miscarriage of justice?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I want to thank the member opposite for bringing this up.

This is obviously a very unfortunate incident and, certainly, I'm not going to comment on the specifics of the incident itself, Madam Speaker, but I will say that, from the system standpoint, we want to always look at ways to improve the system and improve communication within our criminal justice system. It's why we have conducted that review. It's why we're focusing resources in specific areas so we can prevent some—things like this from happening.

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

#### **False Confession Prevention**

**Ms. Fontaine:** A simple check of Mr. Catcheway's incarceration record would have revealed it was

impossible for him to have conducted the crime for which he served over six months in jail. A victim of FASD suffering from drug addiction, Mr. Catcheway couldn't recall anything about a break-in. He nonetheless pleaded guilty. Inquiries across Canada into wrongful convictions have recommended changes to better equip investigations against false accusations—confessions, Madam Speaker.

What concrete steps is the minister taking to better guard against false confessions like that of Mr. Catcheway and to protect all Manitobans from this?

\* (14:30)

**Mrs. Stefanson:** As I said as—in a response to the previous question, we are looking at ways to improve communication between various agencies involved in the criminal justice system so that we can avoid incidents like this from happening in the future.

It's—the backlogs within the system that we inherited from the previous NDP government were significant. That's why we conducted a review of the criminal justice system and came up with our four-pillar approach.

So we will continue to work with various stakeholders in the criminal justice system to ensure that we put the mechanisms in place and the proper communications in place to prevent these things from happening in the future.

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

#### **Legal Aid Services Request for Funding**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** And yet, the Pallister government froze the Legal Aid budget for 2017. This year's budget certainly doesn't keep up with inflation and it certainly doesn't keep up with the growing need for these vital services.

While we don't know the full circumstances for the wrongful conviction of Mr. Catcheway, certainly an overloaded and underfunded Legal Aid service opens the door to a miscarriage of justice.

Will the minister revisit her budget and ensure that Legal Aid gets the necessary and adequate resources that it needs?

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

In fact, we are undertaking a review of Legal Aid in Manitoba right now. It's one of the things that we are embarking on with respect to our criminal justice system review, and that will continue. And we will continue to look at better ways to communicate between agencies to prevent these types of things from happening in the future.

#### **South Winnipeg Recreation Centre Request for New Facility**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** The provincial government has reneged on its commitment to recreation facilities.

Winnipeg city councillors have made clear that the Province is no longer funding the south Winnipeg recreation centre. These facilities are badly needed for a growing area of Winnipeg, as what the MLA for St. Norbert just stated. Yet the responses we have heard demonstrate the Pallister government simply doesn't care about a rec centre in south Winnipeg.

Why doesn't the Pallister government value these important facilities?

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** Thank you so much to the member opposite for that question.

I am absolutely delighted to tell all members in the Chamber about the announcement that we attended, the groundbreaking ceremony that took place on Friday at the Inuit—or at the Winnipeg Art Gallery regarding the Inuit Art Centre. And our government announced an additional \$5 million in funding to this very iconic and very important piece of our Manitoba culture and heritage, Madam Speaker. I'm so thrilled to be able to tell all members of the House that it's \$15 million that we have now contributed to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Inuit Art Centre.

Members opposite should take note: they did—absolutely talked about it, they never got it done, they never put a penny, a nickel, a dime—

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

The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions. The honourable—[interjection] Oh, not petitions?

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I wish to raise a matter of privilege.



### MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a matter of privilege.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** So, I do just want to bring to your immediate attention, Madam Speaker, the back and forth that occurred when the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) was rightfully asking her question, her last question.

There were some very aggressive heckling from the member from Brandon West, and I would submit to you, Madam Speaker, some of the comments that were being yelled at—to the member for Point Douglas while she was asking her question was: Don't go there. I'm appalled. This is appalling. Don't go there. I'm appalled by your politics. Did you listen to my statement? That's disgusting. I'm appalled.

Not only was the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) infringing on the member for Point Douglas's right to raise issues of concern in this House, but he was also infringing or attempting to limit and silence her freedom of speech.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** And while—and, clearly, I'm attempting to raise a matter of privilege here, but I'm not even afforded the respect from members opposite to actually finish my member—my matter of privilege.

While these were being uttered to the member for Point Douglas, the member for Brandon West was—aggressively turned his back to her—or, turned towards the member for Point Douglas in a very aggressive, bullying way. And there is simply no place in this House for a male member to be so aggressive towards another female member in this House. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** It is unacceptable, and I would ask you, Madam Speaker, to—if you need to—review the audio and to render a rightful decision so that women in this House and women MLAs in this House can raise the issues that they need to and that they can feel safe in order to do so.

**Madam Speaker:** Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether

the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I would offer these comments.

I think the—Madam Speaker, you have, indeed, yourself risen many times in this Chamber to talk about the approach that has been taken to heckling. I think it is time that this be looked at very clearly. It's not appropriate for one member to say to another, don't go there.

There is a limit in terms of heckling, and I'm very much in support of the member for St. John's in her efforts to bring this forward as a matter of privilege and I hope you will use it as an opportunity to send a very clear message in terms of where the limits are in terms of heckling in this Chamber.

Thank you.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** I certainly appreciate your intervention here today in the House.

Certainly, members of the House are very passionate in how they feel and how they approach House business, and I know when what can be, maybe, displayed as almost personal attacks to members, members will be very passionate in terms of how they defend themselves. And I appreciate the member for Brandon West standing up for his position.

Madam Speaker, I know there was situations here raised last week in the House across the floor, from the opposition, and we chose not to raise the issue. Unfortunately, maybe we should have raised the issue at the time, but name calling in the House cannot be—stand. We cannot stand for that, Madam Speaker.

So, you know, I appreciate you trying to bring decorum to the Chamber. I appreciate your ruling going forward, but I think we all have to be cognizant of where we go in some of these questions and making sure that we're abstaining from personal attacks and we're sticking to the facts of the matter.

**Madam Speaker:** A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I am going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and I will return to the House with a ruling.

## PETITIONS

### Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition.

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed on—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** —was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIWG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations on numerous reports and—of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

(2) To urge the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by Bonnie Bjornsson, Barbara Jones and Stephanie Mark [phonetic] and many, many other Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17th, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

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(2) To urge that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****House Business****Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):**

First of all, could you please canvass the House for leave to waive rule 119 for the remainder of the 'firty'-41st Legislature to allow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, either by previous agreement of the steering committee or by leave of all the committee, to call witnesses it deems appropriate in addition to ministers, deputy ministers or the chief executive officer of a Crown corporation?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to waive rule 119 for the remainder of the 41st Legislature to allow the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, either by previous agreement of the steering committee or by leave of all the committee, to call witnesses it deems appropriate in addition to ministers, deputy ministers or the chief executive officer of a Crown corporation? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Cullen:** Would you call Committee of Supply?

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider Estimates this afternoon.

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY****SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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

This section of the Committee of Supply will continue consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Sustainable Development.

We shall now resume debate on the following motion, moved by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that line item 12.1.(a) be amended so that the Minister of Sustainable Development's salary be reduced to \$33,600.

The floor is now open for questions. Any questions?

Is it the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Now, I hear a no.

**Voice Vote**

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for—all those in favour, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

**An Honourable Member:** On division.

**Mr. Chairperson:** On division, by the member from Minto.

So the motion is defeated on division.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chairperson:** So we'll go on to the resolution of 12.1.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$31,592,000 for Sustainable Development, Finance and Crown Lands, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Sustainable Development.

The next set of Estimates will be considered for the Committee of Supply for the Department of Municipal Relations. We shall take a recess to allow the minister and critic to—opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department.

*The committee recessed at 2:48 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 3:02 p.m.*

**MUNICIPAL RELATIONS**

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

consider the Estimates of the Department of Municipal Relations.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations):** It's a great honour to stand here today on behalf of a wonderful department in Municipal Relations. And I'm honoured, of course, to be the Minister of Municipal Relations. I've been tasked with establishing and building relationships and partnerships with municipalities across this great province, Mr. Chair, and this is an important and meaningful work for our government, and I'm proud to have a great relationship with AMM and municipalities across the province.

I would—pardon me—I would just like to acknowledge the hard work of my department staff and the work that they do to assist with Manitoba municipalities, AMM and community development organizations. My department remains committed to working closely with both municipalities and community organizations across Manitoba to ensure that partnerships remain strong and that they—that we work together to best serve the public interest.

Mr. Chair, my department will continue to work with the City of Winnipeg, AMM and municipal officials to identify shared priorities to ensure funding impact is maximized at the local level. We are also continuing to expand and build our single-window application process for our granting programs.

We are also working, Mr. Chair, with community development stakeholders to review our community development programs, services and of course funding. Budget 2018 announced an 11 per cent increase, for example, in Community Places, demonstrating our continued commitment to community development here, right in here in Manitoba.

I've talked today and, of course, at a shortened version, but certainly trying to hit a couple of quick points, Mr. Chair, and some of the commitments that our government has made with respect to Municipal Relations and how we are continuing our work to fulfill these commitments. We are also committed to making decisions responsibly to put Manitoba back on track with the balanced budget.

With those quick few comments, Mr. Chair, I thank you and thank, of course, thank the members

of this House for taking time to work with this really interesting democratic process. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Obviously, we've had a great number of questions on a number of departments, so for this minister we'll have to address some of the most important questions in his department in the concurrence process, which I'm hoping we can wrap up in the next two or three weeks.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank the opposition critic for these comments.

Under the Manitoba practice, debate on minister's salary is the last item considered in the department of Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer the consideration of line item 13.1.(a) contained in resolution 13.1.

Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or a global discussion?

**Mr. Swan:** I believe a very short or maybe illusory global discussion would be useful, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is that agreed by the minister too? Okay, global discussion is considered.

Thank you, and it's, again, it's agreed that the questioning for the department will proceed with a global manner, with all resolutions to be passed once questioning is concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Swan:** We have no further questions, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, so then we'll go on to the resolutions. Okay.

Resolution 13.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$30,792,000 for the Municipal Relations, Community Planning and Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Next, resolution 13.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,616,000 for Municipal Relations, Infrastructure

and Municipal Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 13.4: RESOLVED that be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding three hundred and twelve million dolls, four hundred and seventy-eight thousand for the—sorry—\$312,478,000 for Municipal Relations, fiscal assistance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019—Financial Assistance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the resolution pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The resolution is accordingly passed.

The last item on—to be considered for the Estimates of the department is the item 13.1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 13.1.

The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Swan:** Mr. Chair, I have a motion that I would like to move.

I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that line item 13.1.(a), the minister's salary, be reduced to \$33,600.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion is in order. The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Swan:** This resolution will look somewhat familiar because we've raised it for a number of other ministers, even today in question period.

Of course, we had members of the government saying that they want all hands to be on deck. It's very difficult to do that when you're freezing public sector salaries, cutting other things, and yet the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and Cabinet took a 20 per cent increase in their wages.

All the resolution seeks to do is to take back that 20 per cent and to, perhaps, have them practise what they preach. I think it's a very reasonable reduction and would still pay this minister an additional \$33,600 for his Cabinet duties.

That's all I have to add, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister, do you have—want to add—make any comments?

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Wharton:** To the member's point on all hands on deck, I guess, I'd really like to ask the member if he could confirm that his members from the NDP have also put their hands on deck to ensure that their COLA is going back to the government to ensure that, you know, folks are really playing and we're playing as a team, as we are, collectively, to put Manitoba back on track.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the motion pass?

**An Honourable Member:** Pass.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

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

**Voice Vote**

**Mr. Chairperson:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

**Mr. Swan:** On division, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Was defeated on division.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, so we'll go on to the last resolution of Municipal Relations.

Resolution 12.1—or 13.1: RESOLVED that be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,471,000 for the Municipal Relations, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Municipal Relations.

The next set of Estimates will be considered for the 'consecution' of the Committee of Supply for the Civil Service Commission.

Shall the—we—shall we briefly recess to allow ministers and critics to—the opportunity to prepare for commencement for the next department?

**Mr. Swan:** The minister opposite is looking very, very keen to do this, so why don't we just keep moving?

**Mr. Chairperson:** We'll keep on moving.

#### CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

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

This section of committee supply will now consider for the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I am pleased to be the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, as it is an important part of the government's work. Many areas of responsibility under this area are being changed. Of course, we've made some broad statements about the need in government to modernize and to transform not only the work we do but the environment in which we do that work. We're very proud of the work that goes on at Civil Service Commission and very proud of the changes that will continue in order to strengthen this part of the government's operation.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank the minister for those opening comments.

Does the official opposition have any remarks? No.

Is the floor open for questions? No? No questions?

So we'll go on to resolutions.

And at resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,702,000 for the Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

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

This completes the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission.

The next set of Estimates for the—be considered for the section for the Committee for Supply for the Legislative Assembly, we're going to take a little bit

moment here just to get ourselves organized, and we'll continue in a moment.

Thank you.

*The committee recessed at 3:14 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 3:17 p.m.*

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

I am interrupting the proceeding of this section of Committee of Supply as the 'toldi' time allowed for Estimates of consideration has now expired.

Our rule 76.3 provides that when the 100 hours allowed for the consideration of business of Supply is expired, the Chairperson shall forthright—with put all the remaining questions without debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am now—I'm there—now—I am therefore going to call the—in sequence all resolutions for the following departments: Legislative Assembly, Enabling and Other Appropriations, Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

I would like to remind members that according to the rules of the House, this questions may not be debated, adjourned—amended or adjourned.

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk):** So now we'll go on to resolution 1.1 of the Legislative Assembly.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty not—a sum not exceeding \$10,466,000 for Legislative Assembly, for the Assembly expenditures for the fiscal year ending—[interjection] Oh. Okay, I'll just read this again—for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

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

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,330,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

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

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,898,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of

the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,663,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,373,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Children's Advocate, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

\* (15:20)

**ENABLING AND OTHER APPROPRIATIONS**

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,501,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$131,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 2 point–26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$142,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Green Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 26.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$100,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Capital Assets - Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 27.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$51,800,000 for Other Appropriations, Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty not exceeding—a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Other Appropriations, allowance for loss or expenditures incurred by the Crown corporations and other provincial entities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

**EMPLOYEE PENSIONS AND OTHER COSTS**

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,913,000 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This concludes consideration of Estimates for the Chamber section of the Committee of Supply. I would like to thank the ministers, the critics, the honourable members, and all the departmental staff for their hard work and dedication during this process.

The committee rise.

**IN SESSION**

**Committee Report**

**Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted the—certain resolutions.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

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\* (15:30)

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, would you call main and Capital Supply, please.

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting—[interjection]

I will just repeat that, ensuring that all the mics are working. The House will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the Capital Supply bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### CAPITAL SUPPLY

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

We have now before us the consideration for the resolution respecting the Capital Supply. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,805,759,000 for Capital Supply, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

#### *Resolution agreed to.*

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### Committee Report

**Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted the Capital Supply resolution.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere), that the report be of the committee be received.

#### *Motion agreed to.*

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### Concurrence Motion

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** The honourable—*[interjection]* Oh, yes. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services):** I moved that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019, which have been adopted at this session, whether by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) previously tabled the following list of ministers to be called for the question in the debate on the concurrence motion: the Premier (Mr. Pallister), the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Sustainable Development

(Ms. Squires), the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton). The ministers are to be—*are* questioned concurrently.

And the floor is now opening for questions.

The honourable Opposition House Leader—or the honourable member for St. Johns.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, we know that last October the minister launched an advisory committee to come up with a detailed framework for a new administrative model for family law. And I guess I would ask, has the committee committed its—completed its work?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thank the member for the question, and the committee has completed its work.

And I just want to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in the—on the committee and all those who participated in what I think will be one of the most robust changes to family law and a reform to family law that we'll see from a provincial standpoint across the country.

We're very much looking forward to releasing that review that took place, and I want to thank Allan Fineblit, who was the chair of that process, and all those on the committee who participated. It was a rigorous process, and I know that they got into some of the areas that I think are going to be very substantial in terms of family law reform in our province. And I just want to thank them for that.

\* (15:40)

Certainly, we will, over the course of the next short while be in the position to release that report and we look forward to that in a very short time.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech for that. I would ask the minister, when will the report be made available?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** It will be released very shortly within the next few weeks.

**Ms. Fontaine:** With regards to the idea of a new administrative model, can the minister explain what that means?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I think at this point in time it's important to not go into the details of what is in the report until we—at such time we release that and we have Allan Fineblit talk about what the committee went through and all of the deliberations that they had. There was a significant process that took place



and part of that was consultation with stakeholders all across our family law system as well as people who have gone through this process, and we know that it hasn't been a very family-friendly process. It hasn't been very good to children. And we wanted to make it much more, you know, friendly to people who are in the position—the unfortunate position of having to go through our family law system. So I think at this stage in terms of what that will look like, those will—that will be unfolding over the course of the next several months.

As the member opposite knows, as she mentioned before when she was asking questions of this in the last couple of weeks, she knows that we will be bringing forward legislative changes as well, and there's a significant amount of discussions around what that will look like going forward and how that will be implemented in the way of legislation.

So those things will take place over the course of the next little while. What we will be releasing is what the review—the report from the review.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Can the minister—I know that when she talked about this advisory committee that there was a lot of consultation that was done with stakeholders. Could she tell us which stakeholders?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes. Those stakeholders will be released as part of the review, and that will be within the next few weeks.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Does the minister—can she tell us if that means that family law will effectively be taken outside of the justice system and, if so, what will that look like?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** No, it will still be very much a part of the justice system. But what we're looking for is trying to find a way to make it an—even the—I'll just take a step back.

The member opposite will know that the federal government recently introduced their family law reform legislation on a federal level, and within that they have asked the provinces to look at better ways to administer family law within the provinces. And so we took a more proactive approach prior to the federal government even stating that this is a necessary way of moving toward family law reform from a provincial standpoint. We took the steps, as the member opposite knows, back in October to move in this direction to make it less adversarial and—for people who have the unfortunate position to go through the family law system.

And so our main focus and our main hope at achieving anything here is to ensure that we implement a way of providing a less adversarial system to those who go through that, and in many ways that can be done outside of courts. Courts can be a very adversarial approach to it and so we are looking at ways through other means to implement family law reform to make it less adversarial.

As the member opposite will know it's—the people who suffer the most in the current system are the children and we want to ensure that we protect children at all costs.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Well, back in October, the minister had said that legislation for family law reform could be introduced as early as this spring, so can the minister account for why legislation wasn't tabled this particular sitting?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** That's very, very good question, and I know that when we went through it, you know, we've been reviewing the review of the committee led by Allan Fineblit, and because this is a significant change to the administration of family law in our province, we felt that we needed to take the time to get this right, and so we will do that.

We didn't want to rush through that process right now, and we felt that given the time frames, given the amount of work that needs to be done and to put into drafting of the legislation, rather than rushing through that, we wanted to take the time to get it right to ensure that, you know—and again, this is significant—this will be a significant change to family law in our province and the way it's administered.

So I think it's more important for us to take the time to get it right. Certainly, what I had indicated is that we will be announcing what that system will look like this spring, not the legislative detail, per se, but certainly what the system will look like and it will allow us a chance to have the appropriate drafting take place over the course of the next several months.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So if—and it was, I think, that the minister had said that it would be tabled this spring. So if it's not tabled this spring—and I know that the minister had indicated that the report will be available in the next couple of weeks—can the minister provide us an update, particularly in respect of a timeline?

So when does the minister believe that legislation will be ready to be introduced in this House?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, the member opposite knows, as being the Opposition House Leader, that this legislative sitting extends into the fall. Of course, anything that is introduced and not implemented and passed at that time falls off the Order Paper.

So there is a process within all of this that we need to comply with, with respect to the rules of the House. And so we expect shortly after that to have legislated—legislation introduced. But we will take the time to ensure that we set up this administrative model which, it will take some time, it will take some consultation and so on to be able to get it right. We feel that it's necessary to take the time to get that right.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So is the minister saying that she will table legislation when we come back in the fall?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, we will be introducing legislation some time in the fall.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech for that.

We also heard that as part of the reform, the minister or the government is considering the use of administration officials to help ease the combative nature of the family law system. Can the minister confirm if this is indeed something that they're considering?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I thank the member for the question and, of course, what we're looking for is trying to create a system that is less adversarial and better for families as they manoeuvre what is—through what is one of the most difficult situations and most stressful times in their lives.

And so what we're trying to do here is trying to find a way to make it less adversarial, and we will do so through the use of all aspects of the family law system.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Sorry, I apologize. I wasn't quite sure if I heard the minister confirm that they are going to be using administration officials, and I know that the minister just said that they're going to be using a variety of different forms, but I'm just wondering if she can confirm that.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** We will continue to use—utilize people within the system and consult people within the family law system to ensure that we get this right, and that will include administrators as well.

\* (15:50)

**Ms. Fontaine:** Could the minister, then, explain what she sees as the roles and responsibilities of

these officials and how that would translate into executing this new model of family law?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I think it's important through all of this, again, and I'll reiterate the importance of creating a less adversarial system. We've had many stakeholders within the family law system right across our country who have stated how difficult it is that, in many ways, where mediation should be occurring and so on before it necessarily gets into the court system. There are various experts in those areas. So I think what we're going to try to achieve from all this is to ensure that we can find the experts within those areas to ensure that we can find a better system that is less adversarial for Manitobans.

**Ms. Fontaine:** And who would these officials report to?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, again, this will all be part of what we will be introducing in the coming weeks, and so I would say to the member opposite that—stay tuned.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Well, I mean, I am trying to stay tuned, but I am also still trying to ask questions, so if the minister would be so kind as maybe to share what kind of qualifications these officials would be expected to have?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, no, I thank the member for the question.

Again, I'm just going to go back to, I mean, the terms of reference for the committee when it was first established is to establish the administrative model for family law is to make it less adversarial and to ensure that families, when they're going through one of the most difficult times in their lives, that they have the appropriate mechanism to try and maneuver through our family law system. So that's what this committee has done, and I think it would be premature to suggest today which way we are going with all of that, but these are the types of questions that will be announced when we release the report.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So any changes to the justice system, and I'm sure the minister would agree, you know, should be predicated upon, you know, the needs of ensuring that we move towards and recognize the need for reconciliation, particularly in this era of reconciliation, post-TRC and the calls to action.

So I would ask the minister: In this pursuit of family law reform, who, exactly, has the government consulted with in respect of First Nations issues?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, we have consulted with First Nations right across the board when it comes to our Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy and with the family law as well. And I know that members of my department have met with and take this very seriously when it comes to reconciliation. And I do know that this committee that was established was consulting all Manitobans, and certainly that will be, in terms of which stakeholders have been consulted to date, that will be released in the report. But this is by no means the end of this. This is an ongoing process, and we will continue to involve First Nations communities and indigenous communities as we move forward with this.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So I know the minister is saying that she consulted across the board with First Nations, but I'm specifically wondering who. The—in pursuit of the modernization and the family law reform, who exactly has the minister consulted with?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I know that our department is in touch with members of the indigenous community across our province. I know that when it comes to the Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy, when it comes to family law, when it comes to all aspects of the justice system, indigenous or—indigenous people have been consulted all the way through the process.

I think it's important to understand as well that our minister responsible for indigenous and northern affairs has been very proactive at reaching out to all of the communities in Manitoba, and to the extent that issues are brought up that—or within the justice system, we work together as a team on trying to address some of those issues.

The member opposite will know that under the previous government, we had some of the highest incarceration rates in Canada, and—at that time—and we're moving towards a reduction in those incarceration rates and trying to find ways through our Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy of diverting people by way of our restorative justice initiatives. We're looking at crime prevention initiatives and we're looking at responsibly reintegrating those offenders, who have been incarcerated, back into society. We're looking at things like bail reform. We're looking at all sorts of things where we can find ways to appropriately keep people within the communities where they can get the programs that they need, that they can get the help that they need to lead active lives within our communities. That's been the main premise of

our criminal justice system, and that—the member opposite will know in terms of incarceration rates, indigenous people are among the highest people within our correctional facilities.

We're trying to move in another direction. We're trying to find ways to find solutions to the challenges that we inherited from the previous NDP government, by working with indigenous communities, working with elders, working with chiefs and council, working—and, more importantly, working with women and children within those communities to see what they need in order—some of the tools that they need in order to combat some of the addictions issues, the mental health issues that we're faced with.

So we will continue to work with our indigenous partners as we move forward.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, again, I think—I did ask specifically—I mean, if the minister is saying that, you know, they've done, you know, significant consultation across the board, I'm specifically asking who the department or the minister has consulted with. In that long answer, the minister didn't name one organization or one First Nation or one Inuit community or one Metis community or one, you know, indigenous social service agency that—in respect of the modernization act and the family law reform—that they have consulted with. So I'm specifically asking who the department or the minister has met with.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I know the department has met several times with a number of indigenous communities and I'm not—it doesn't just—it's not just left up to the Justice Department to meet with indigenous communities. We work as a team across our governments. The minister responsible for indigenous and northern affairs meets each and every day with—or speaks to or is in contact with members of our indigenous communities across this great province of ours.

We take some of the challenges, especially the challenges within our criminal justice system, very seriously, when it comes to incarceration rates of indigenous people. It's why we're focusing on and—restorative justice initiatives. We have a number of restorative justice initiatives out there through MKO, the MKO First Nations Justice Strategy, Onashowewin Justice Circle. We've got Southern Chiefs' Organization Restorative Justice Program. We've got the Hollow Water Community Holistic Healing Circle. We have St. Theresa Point First

Nation Justice Program. There's also the Fisher River Cree Nation restorative justice; restorative justice in Cross Lake.

\* (16:00)

We're looking at, you know, how can we partner with all of these communities and more to ensure that we find ways to better deal with some of the challenges that we're faced with 'wis' respect to—especially within—with respect to incarceration rates of indigenous people in our communities.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So I know that the minister just listed off some organizations, and MKO's and SCO's restorative justice and MMF, I get that. But—and so that, you know, that's great that she knows those programs. But it—again, she didn't specifically say that she actually met with them to draw them into the—and again, I want to use the minister's words in respect of, you know, a robust change to family law.

So it's one thing to just name off these organizations, but did she or the department actually meet with MKO or SCO or AMC or MMF or Onashowewin or Hollow Water or St. Theresa Point, all of these organizations and all of these really, really amazing restorative justice programs in the development of and in response to the changes for family law? There's a fundamental difference of just listing off and saying that you know about them versus did you actually consult with them and did they provide input into those changes necessary for our communities.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, there's two different things here. What we were speaking of was restorative justice issues that fall within the criminal justice system, not the family law system, but certainly within the criminal justice system.

All of those organizations—all of those restorative justice initiatives, all of those organizations were consulted as a part of our Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Okay. And if the minister can recall a couple of questions back, I was actually speaking specifically about the family law reform and those consultations or—with stakeholders that took place in respect of the family law reform that the minister is going to release in the next couple of weeks.

So I'm curious, and again, I'll ask the question for a couple of times now, who the minister or the department met with and consulted with and engaged

with and got feedback from within the indigenous community.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I thank the member for the question and I did mention, as an answer to her question, that this—there was a committee that was set up to specifically look at ways of finding an administrative model that would be less adversarial for families within the family law system. And, as part of that, there were a number of indigenous organizations I know that were a part of it.

I don't have all the names in front of me right now. That's one of the things where, I guess, we didn't get a chance to talk about some of these things when we were in Estimates. But I don't have all of the answers to this in front of me in terms of the list of all the people and all the organizations that were consulted as a result of this.

But I can tell you there was an extensive list, but is by no means an exhaustive list. And this will be—the reforms to family law will be ongoing, and we will continue to expand on the consultation, those who have been consulted. And if the member opposite has some suggestions of organizations or First Nations who should be consulted, I mean, you know, we're—we have tried to reach out and do—as to as many as we can. But, again, that was the committee that did that consultation process. I don't have all of the answers in front of me right now, but that will be released coming out—up shortly when we release the results of the committee—committee's review of family law.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Okay, so I just want to put it—I just want to reiterate it again that the minister has indicated that there is an extensive list of indigenous communities and organizations and non-governmental organizations that have been consulted with in respect of family law, and I get that the minister doesn't have that list. And from what I've heard from the minister is that that list will be part of the report or the family law reform that will be released in the next couple of weeks.

I—and I guess why I'm asking those questions is because we—I've personally heard from a couple of folks that they didn't even know that a family law review—or a family law reform review was actually taking place. And so I had to explain that, yes, it was, and it was being done by a committee. And so there was already some concerns that First Nations, in particular, but certainly, indigenous as a whole, as a collective, haven't been adequately engaged and participating in the process.

So, as the minister knows, and I absolutely agree with her, it is an adversarial system and we do have many indigenous folks that find themselves within that system, and one of the concerns is that when you have an adversarial system, coupled with or compounded with being divorced from understanding those cultural and traditional understandings of, you know, family or even the understanding of the intergenerational trauma, and if those communities, if our communities and our First Nations haven't been consulted with and engaged in the process, then there's a fundamental gap, then, in the reform that potentially is coming down the pipe.

So I do share with the minister that there have been concerns raised that there has not been adequate consultation or engagement and so it does beg the question, then, how robust the consultations were with stakeholders, what the stakeholder list looks like, and then, I guess, you know, how robust the changes will be to the overall family law reform.

So, I feel that that's important to put out there on the record in respect to, particularly again, First Nation communities who I've heard from a couple that I've said that they didn't even know that this process was being undertaken.

I will say, as well, we've heard that in its own family law legislation, the government is proposing more child-focused language, replacing terms like custody and access that are seen as adversarial.

Is the provincial government considering these types of changes?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Could you repeat the question—the honourable member for St. Johns, would you repeat the question. The minister didn't hear.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Okay. So, is the minister considering changing the language in respect of, you know, replacing terms like custody and access, which are intrinsically seen as adversarial. Are they considering changing overall the language in their family law reform?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes. I want to thank the member for some of her comments, and by all means, if she could get me the names of those individuals that she had spoke to who feel that they haven't been consulted in this process, you know, we'd be happy to reach out to them.

I think this is a time where we can all come together and have—be a part of something that could be very historic in our country to create a system that

is much less adversarial to those who are unfortunate enough to have to utilize the family law system, so I hope the member opposite will understand that, certainly, we want to reach out to as many stakeholders as we can and the indigenous communities are a big part of that, as well.

So I think it's important to understand in all of this that this is the beginning of a much broader discussion that will lead towards legislation coming up late in the fall and I just want to say to the member that this start of the discussion is just that; it's a start of this discussion, and it's one of the reasons—I mean, on one hand, the member was saying earlier, why didn't she introduce the legislation this spring, but we want to ensure that this is a step-by-step process. This is the beginning of a much broader discussion on family law reform, and we look forward to expanding on the discussions that we've had to stakeholders within the community, and those stakeholders also include those in the indigenous community.

\* (16:10)

In terms of the language the member opposite mentioned in terms of custody and access and some of the language, I think those are some of the things where we will get a broader consultation moving forward. That's why we didn't rush forward to get the legislation introduced. We want to take that time to ensure that we get this right.

But this, by no means, will be the be-all and end-all. This will be the start of something. There's been many changes over the years, although not in the family law system, which the member opposite knows—well, I won't go there, I guess, but certainly the member opposite knows the NDP was in power for 17 years. And while there was some tinkering with and changes to the family law system, there's really, we're not—they never really got at what needed to happen, and that is the root of what the problem is within the family law system, and that is the adversarial nature of having to deal with all family law matters—well, divorce and so on—within the courts. And so I think that what we're trying to do is achieve a different way, a different approach, a less adversarial approach for families. And, certainly, the language that we use will all be a part of that.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Sorry, and I apologize to the minister for asking this question again, but can the minister just confirm that she has the report and that the report will be released in the next couple of weeks?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** The report will be released in the next few weeks, yes. That's right.

**Ms. Fontaine:** And the minister has the report?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, we've seen the report. We've—you know, we work closely with the committee and—but, again, we will be releasing that over the course of the next few weeks.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So as the minister knows, the federal government has proposed changes that would include a list of factors that a court must consider when deciding what's in the best interest of the child. And as the minister knows, this includes physical, emotional and psychological safety alongside cultural factors like linguistic and cultural and 'spiritual'—spiritual heritage.

So can the minister provide some information as to whether or not her own changes to family law will include these considerations and what these changes might look like?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** There's really—this is sort of an administrative model. It's more of a procedural thing that we'll—or system that we're putting in place. And, certainly, when it comes to some of the aspects of it and the language used and those types of things, I mean, we very much look forward to consulting with members of the—of various indigenous communities as where as—as well as members in, you know, other parts of the province as well. Geography is a part of this as well within our vast province, and it's important that we reach out and speak to people in rural and northern Manitoba as well.

And so this is the start of a dialogue that will continue, I know, for years to come. And we will continue to find ways to improve the system.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, when I ask the minister questions about, you know, what her changes to family law reform, you know, would they be looking at cultural factors like linguistic and cultural and spiritual heritage, and then the minister, she responds with that it's a procedural model and an administration—administrative, can she just explain to me what that means?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Again, the details of all of that will be released when we release the review of the committee. And—but, you know, again, this is—it's setting up an administrative-type model to take it out of the court system to allow for it to be less adversarial in nature, which we think and we hope

will have a better impact on how families proceed through their family law matters in Manitoba.

And so, certainly, you know, the report is a first step. We will continue to have discussions, broader discussions, leading up to the legislation. And we look forward to having those discussions.

The member opposite mentioned the federal legislation as well, which I'm in the process and the department is in the process of reviewing all aspects of that. But, certainly, within that, from what I can see so far, is that the federal government is looking to provinces to find less adversarial ways, to find better ways of administering family law matters within the provinces.

And we think that we—by looking at an administrative-type model, that that fits into what the direction is that they're looking at from the provinces and we look forward to introducing this. Of course, you know, this is about, you know, not only about just getting it out of the courts but it's about making it less adversarial and hopefully to provide outcomes and positive outcomes for families.

So that's really what it's all about.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, when the minister talks about taking it out of the court system and certainly attempting to make it less adversarial—which I would submit all of us would want for Manitobans and, particularly, for children, obviously—as I said earlier, what the federal legislation is specifically looking at or trying to entrench some type of language or understanding about cultural factors, and, certainly, if the minister is trying to take it out of the courts system and make it less adversarial, a fundamental piece of that for indigenous peoples would be incorporating or entrenching, you know, indigenous ways of understanding and indigenous ways of executing justice within the communities.

So is that going to be a part of the minister's family law reform and have—the department, again—and it goes back to my previous question—has the department specifically—or not the department, the committee and the department, have they specifically engaged with indigenous peoples and First Nation communities and First Nation, you know, organizations and indigenous organizations in respect of how that might look and what that would mean in practice for indigenous families that find themselves going through that family law court process?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, I think what's important here is—and I know that there—again, we'll get a list of those groups, organizations and stakeholders within the family law system and those who have utilized the system and have had, you know, really, quite tough times going through the family law system in the past.

It's one of the reasons why, you know, we've made it a priority of our government to look at reforms in this area to ensure that we find a better way to achieve better outcomes for Manitobans who have to go through this system.

And part of that, of course, includes indigenous people, and I will get that list, you know, or that—the member will get a copy of that list when the review—the report is, sorry, is released.

So—but the whole idea here is to find a better way to achieve better outcomes for families that are unfortunate enough to have to utilize the family law system. And this isn't—it's important to also state that this is not something that is unique to Manitoba.

This is something that I think provinces across the country are looking at finding better ways to improve outcomes for families. And I know it has come up at our federal provincial territorial meetings several times, and has now resulted, I guess, in the federal government coming up with some changes to family law.

And again I mentioned to the member earlier that the department and myself were looking at reviewing those changes to family law, and as we do that, we will look at our administrative model and how that will work within that process.

But, certainly, I know that there were a number of stakeholders within the family law system that were consulted as a result of this and have got us to where we are right now, but as I mentioned earlier to the member, it's important to put this into perspective.

This is a start towards a much broader conversation on how we can create a system that is better for all Manitobans, including indigenous Manitobans.

\* (16:20)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, on the family court, the Free Press article today says that domestic violence allegations are often not being taken into account before family court orders are made under the federal Divorce Act, when legally

and for the protection of children, they often should be considered.

I'm presuming that the minister would agree that such domestic violence concerns should be taken into account and I'm asking, what will the minister do to make sure that such domestic violence allegations are taken into account under these circumstances?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I want to thank the member.

And I think Manitoba is already kind of at the forefront there and has made some of those changes already to take into consideration some of the things that the member opposite is discussing with—and that are in this article that the member is referring to today.

But I do want to say and commend our Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. Squires) in what she has done, all the work that she's done in the area of domestic violence. And, you know, it's been extensive. She's worked with many stakeholders within the community. We work together as a team. And we will continue to work together and work with stakeholders and the community groups and organizations who help women primarily but all those of domestic violence as well who go through these tragic situations in their lives. It's very important to us as a government that they get the help that they need, and it's why we have put that kind of help at the forefront. And, again, I want to just commend the Minister responsible for the Status of Women for the work that she has done along with the stakeholders in the community who have really come forward and we have been working with and listening to on this very important file.

So I thank the member for River Heights for his question.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the minister for affirming clearly that when there are domestic violence allegations that they need to be taken into account before family court orders are made under the federal Divorce Act, as the article suggests.

I—one other question for the minister: Can the minister provide an update on the performance on the drug treatment courts?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I want to thank the member for that question.

And I certainly, I don't have all of the information in front of me right now, but I can say that they do play a significant role, drug and mental

health courts, in our system. We know, and the member opposite knows, that mental health and addictions issues are paramount when it comes to our criminal justice system and our modernization strategy in moving forward in looking at ways to find better ways of, rather than incarcerating people, but finding them the help that they need. And so, certainly, those drug courts help out in that fashion, and we will continue to work with stakeholders towards utilizing those tools that we have out there to, I think, find better ways than incarcerating people and getting them the help that they need.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for River Heights—the honourable member for Wolseley.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Question for the Municipal Relations Minister.

Bill 19 contains a number of changes to—I'll let him get mic'd up here. Bill 19, of course, makes a few changes to existing laws in a few different areas. Broadly speaking, would he consider these to be minor or major amendments to the existing legislation that we have in Manitoba?

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I thank the member for the question, and if I may ask the member again just to repeat the preamble to his question so I can ensure I can give him an answer—apologize.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Yes, it wasn't much of a preamble. I just noted there were a number of changes to the legislation, and I wondered if the minister considered these to be major or minor, more housekeeping in nature.

**Mr. Wharton:** Well, I thank the member for the question.

And certainly, in the consultation that we had throughout not only the early spring but over the last several weeks, we heard from community stakeholders and Manitoba municipal—AMM members along with the Manitoba Community Newspapers Association, a number of producers in—regarding Bill 19. And, certainly, Bill 19 addresses a balanced approach to the planning amendment act and certainly from what some of the discussions that we've had and the number of presenters that we had during committee, we felt that going forward it was a very—as mentioned and as quoted by a number of proponents and presenters, that Bill 19 struck a balance. And certainly, one presenter had said, and I recall but I don't have it verbatim, but I can remember them

saying that, you know, we understand that legislation is not going to please everybody, but we certainly appreciate the balance that your government has taken to move forward with this particular bill.

So, with that, you know, we feel that we've—we have been listening and we continue to listen.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** On the same topic, can the minister explain to the House how he will be deciding when a municipality—once Bill 19 passes—a municipality could come to the government now and, with no conditional use requirement for a agricultural operation over 300 animal units—there does not appear to be any limit in the size of such an agricultural operation.

How will the minister be deciding how large an animal unit operation—how many animal units would he allow to go into an operation, and what factors will he use in making that decision?

**Mr. Wharton:** Well, thank you to the member for that question.

And I know this question has come up by the member and a couple of his colleagues on a couple of occasions, and I will try to make sure that I can make this clear to the member opposite that municipalities will make decisions on what conditional-uses thresholds are in the—as far as livestock operations.

And essentially it—you know, talking and communicating with municipalities is, I know, something that was devoid of the former government, but I can tell you that we certainly have been building on this—on those relationships with our municipal partners—all 137 of them. And we're very proud of the relationship that we're continuing to build on fair say and a number of other initiatives, of course, as a government.

We understand that, you know, local governments are responsible forms of government and certainly with my background coming from the municipal era back in 1998, I can share with the member in the House that it was one of the most enjoyable local government issue—or, areas that I've ever experienced. I learned so much as a municipal councillor and deputy mayor and taking on the responsibility of your grassroots communities, in working with folks from—you know, from drainage to simple things like garbage collection.

And I—you know, I can share with the member that, you know, this is an area that certainly—you



know, I know the member is planning on retiring soon, and I would certainly encourage him to potentially look at running at the municipal level, maybe right here in Winnipeg or maybe move out to rural Manitoba where you can really—you really get an understanding of some of the—you know, some of the challenges that rural Manitobans and municipal leaders face on a day-to-day basis, like back in 2012 when they were forced amalgamations by the former government. And, you know, certainly that was a challenge for communities. They were thrown into disarray and—simply because they—some communities had two mayors, two reeves, a dozen or so councillors, representing different demographics.

So, you know, certainly—I don't think there was a lot of thought or consultation put into that process by the member and his former government but, you know, we've certainly picked up that ball, and I'll assure the member that we're going to continue to pick up that ball.

And as far as livestock and conditional use, we won't be imposing a threshold because we know local governments are responsible and they certainly have the ability and the knowledge to make decisions within their communities that would best suit the needs of their community while building economic development. As you know, taxation is one form of building revenue for a municipality.

\* (16:30)

And, again, I encourage the member to potentially maybe look at a municipal run because you'll find out that, well, something of course that the former government wasn't familiar 'wis' was balancing budgets. You know, they figured I guess they would almost balance on their own, running deficit after deficit after deficit. But, you know, at the municipal level, you'll really get a grassroots hold of what you need to do in order to ensure that, you know, you're acting responsibly for your residents.

And, you know, the fact that their say is now on the table, I, you know, again, back when I was in municipal council back in the early 2000s, you know, I really would've welcomed the opportunity to sit around that table, that council table, with my members and my mayor at the time and our CAO, and by the way, talk about CAOs. Our CAO, she was just fabulous. When I was serving on council, if we had a question, I could literally go there after a council meeting, and the council meetings would run anywhere from three to four hours, and I could sit with her for an hour or two, depending on what the

issue was, and she would be able to give me the information like conditional use, you know, that really gave me the tools.

And that's one thing that we lack as new members, you know, tools to ensure that we can do our job to the best of our ability, because let's face it, that's what we get elected to do. I mean, the bottom line is that when we go the polls as municipal and provincial representatives, we stand there, we go door knocking, and we go out to our constituents and we reach out to them, and we certainly would ask for their support, but in turn, we have to make sure that we find that balance between what's good for the community at large and what's good for, of course, the province at large as well.

So, with that, Mr. Chair, I hope that that gets a fulsome answer to his question on conditional—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister's time is up.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Yes, the question isn't so much one about whether municipalities are responsible or not as entities. It's a question of jurisdiction. If the provincial government now, as the minister has just said, no longer has any say in local development plans in this area because, quote, the municipalities will decide what happens in their area, what is the minister going to do if, for instance, a municipality receives a proposal for an industrial agricultural operation of 10 times the current limit, 3,000 animal units, why not? And let's say the municipality is interested in saying yes to that. There's a fair number of questions about potential damage to the environment; water, runoff from agricultural fields. There may not even be enough agricultural field space available that can handle that amount of nutrients.

Is the minister saying that, thanks to Bill 19, he and his government will now be powerless to have any say in what happens on those very important issues?

**Mr. Wharton:** Again, I'd like to thank the member for that question. And, again, I'm glad I have five minutes because I can probably take 10 to get this point, hopefully, across to the member.

The member talks about potentially a municipality having conditional-use thresholds or animal units of excess of thousands of units coming into their communities.

Well, you know, I can certainly tell the member that that simply isn't a fact. And, again, I welcome the member to consider a run in municipal politics because it'll certainly give him a real eye-opener on exactly how zoning works in rural Manitoba. And maybe, again, I can help to educate the member on that. Certainly, planning, zoning communities have planning districts and planning areas and—such as commercial areas, residential areas, conditional areas and livestock areas. Quite frankly, these are all done through their planning and zoning bylaws. And, in those zoning bylaws, these are already pre-identified.

So, I mean, the bottom line is, though, if they're looking at—if somebody's coming in and they want to put up, let's call a, oh, a hen operation, and they want to expand their barn from, you know, 10,000 hens to 20,000 hens. Well, I guess, you know, that would be, you know, the old chicken-and-the-egg aspect, but, I guess, the bottom line is—for that is, we do have, and communities have livestock areas, conditional areas, are already identified in their planning and zoning bylaws.

So what they would do, of course, is somebody could come in and every right they do to come in and make an application with their council and their community at a council meeting. And, course, they have to set up a meeting prior to, to actually come, you know, as a delegation because, obviously, they're looking at doing expansion of their livestock operation or, you know, essentially maybe just upgrading their livestock operation. But, again, the RM, or the municipality, would have full control and fair say on how large the operation can be based on their current bylaws.

So, certainly, Bill 19 doesn't take away the rights of municipalities to make informed decisions. As a matter of fact, the member would be very happy to hear that actually we're introducing a technical review as well as Bill 19.

Well, I can tell you that that'll help when it comes to councillors, and, again, when I was first elected in '98, green as green can be, I mean, going in there as a young councillor and then deputy mayor shortly thereafter, boy, I tell you, I wish we could rely on some technical review committees in support in the early 2000s from the provincial government at the time because, you know, quite frankly, you know, some of the decisions we made were probably not as informed as they could have been if we had the opportunity to get a little bit of support on what exactly, you know, what exactly the community

could, I guess, essentially, take on in respect to, say, a larger operation or, potentially, a pit or quarry operation in their community.

You know, I know, in consultations with the Capital Region, the Capital Region areas' mayors and reeves are saying, you know, we really—we really enjoy the fair-say component that you have given us as a new government, and, certainly, we respect that. And we know that this will help—the technical review will help them make decisions on how best their local—I guess, their local economies can grow based on input from municipal leaders, of course, other technical review leaders, provincial support and industry because, I'll tell you, and the member would know, industry plays a big role in really assisting.

These are the grassroots, the stakeholders that, you know, help our economy and actually keep the wheels on the bus, even going through the city of Winnipeg, through St. Vital and even up into the Wolseley area, and, you know, when people are driving through the city and they keep the wheels on the bus, and I can assure the member that, you know, when it comes to animal units and fair say, I really feel confident that, you know, adding a technical review process in Bill 19, again building on fair say for communities and for, of course, our mayors and reeves. And, I might add, we're on the eve of a municipal election.

So, with municipal elections around the corner, certainly, I know I've just had meetings with the executive board of AMM, and they are just overwhelmed right now with getting—going with the election, and we're looking forward to supporting them throughout the process.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Chairperson, I wish to inform the House the current concurrence list will carry on, subject to 78(8).

**Mr. Chairperson:** The current concurrent list will continue, and I want to thank you for the list and we'll continue.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I don't know if the minister intended to do this, but he's actually brought us back closer to an answer to my first question.

Would he, for instance, consider an application that came to his desk, if it went that route, for a doubling in the size of a hen operation from

10,000 to 20,000, to use the minister's example? The reason why this is a relevant point is that if he would classify that type of change as a minor amendment, then there's no requirement for public hearings. And, if the municipality has set the threshold for animal units at a very high level, that's a way to avoid having any public hearings and public accountability.

So would the—and the minister is then—it's up to his discretion that he could approve such a change to a development plan or municipal bylaws, so I will ask him directly.

\* (16:40)

If a municipality came to him with a request to allow for the doubling of a hen operation from 10,000 to 20,000, would he consider that a minor change that didn't deserve public input, or would that be a major change that would have to go through a conditional-use hearing?

**Mr. Wharton:** Well, thank you, and, you know, I believe the member opposite—I did speak specifically about that in your preamble, and I thought I provided a rather fulsome answer, but let me try again just to make sure that we're on the same page because I know that's obviously important. Communication is so important as, you know, we obviously appreciate that on this side of the House because, certainly, we can't move forward without good, solid communication. So let me try again.

You know, essentially, the member says if a 20,000-hen operation crosses my desk, that the stroke of a pen, I think, I can make this happen. Well, quite frankly, the contrary to that. You know, certainly, I share with the member that Bill 19, you know, simply gives the municipality the fair say that they've been asking for for over—probably over 10 or 15 years now. And we're pleased as a government to allow them to move forward because, again, and I'll repeat myself, coming from a municipal background, I certainly can appreciate certain rules and regulations that need to be upheld, but by the same token, when you have several thousand regulations that, quite frankly, are duplicated over and over again where you can have one regulation that is written seven times but really gets to the same issue, well, it certainly is probably a wise move to review all that and to ensure that we can have a regulation that is on the books that, you know, has the—essentially the meat and potatoes to ensure that good decisions, informed decisions, can be made by our municipal leaders and, of course, the City of Winnipeg, naturally, too, as well. You know,

working in concert with the City of Winnipeg over the last—in my own personal experience—over the last several months has been a wonderful experience, and we've had the opportunity, the mayor and I, to meet on several occasions and discuss, you know, many areas from, you know, from basket funding to streamlining how the Province and how the City of Winnipeg work collaboratively to ensure that citizens are—concerns are looked after.

And, again, I land back right to communications, you know, as my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), can relate to. If you're not communicating with those constituents, you're probably not going to get, you know, the input that is much required by us and, quite frankly, back and forth. So it's really a collaborative effort when we talk about, you know, areas of trying to find streamlines and reducing red tape and all those kind of interesting things that go along with that.

But, you know, we're ensuring that the safety—and one thing that the member should talk about, too, and I hope he does ask me this, but I'm going to throw it out there anyways, but we're talking about the safety aspect of this, too, as well, in Bill 19. And Bill 19 really addresses the safety of the livestock and—stocks in Manitoba. And, you know, the fact that Bill 19 gives producers the opportunity to essentially go in and update some of these, I guess, 25- and 30-year-old facilities that, you know, we've heard and they've heard and they've been telling us, like, for years that these are outdated, they're aging. A lot of them are—the condition of them are non-repairable. Well, actually, it's a lot like some of the assets that the provincial government ignored—the former provincial government ignored—for 17 years where now we're having to go in and spend hundreds of millions of dollars to bring these assets up to code and to bring them up so that we can utilize them for the safety of, you know, our children and our teachers, for instance, in some of our schools where roofs are, you know, potentially leaking, and there's some serious concerns and health issues.

So, you know, Bill 19 really approaches that. It looks at the concerns of the livestock sector as far as the health and safety of these animals. Now, producers can come in. They don't have to go through another conditional-use process. Simply by adding 15 or 10 per cent more to their facilities gives them the opportunity for more free range for their animals, whether it be hens, whether it be hogs, whether it be cow-calf production. It certainly gives them the opportunity to, you know, obviously, build

on that and to ensure the animal is safe, you know, during the process while they're, of course—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister's time is up.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** In the case of competing visions on the rural landscape, which legislation takes precedence: Bill 19 or Bill 7?

**Mr. Wharton:** Well, certainly, I mean, I can speak to Bill 19. And, I—you know, I think Bill 19, again—you know, in our earlier—in my preamble earlier, in the first question that the member from Wolseley brought up was, you know, simply, you know, we're not sure what Bill 19 does. And, well, I can tell the member that Bill 19—and, according to many, many presenters at committee, Bill 19 strikes a balance. Simply strikes a balance of legislation.

You know, I—and I—you know, as I said earlier and certainly the member should recall, you know, that balance is tough to find. And that's why you consult. That's why you go around Manitoba. You don't just go within the Perimeter and try to get, you know, input from just within the Perimeter. You need to go outside the Perimeter.

And, again, I certainly welcome—I think the member's been up to Gimli a few times, and I certainly welcome him to come up. It's a great time of year and certainly all the chip shops and ice cream stores are open. So I invite you up there. And Winnipeg Beach, too. Come up to my hometown and check out the bandstand because, you know, I remember when I was on council and we had the opportunity to move forward with federal and provincial funding and partnering with the federal government—and I can tell the member, too, that, look, that is the way we need to look. There's an opportunity now to maximize provincial and federal investment. We are going to take every opportunity to do that.

And, you know, back to Bill 19, that will even help as we move forward with some of these larger areas that we need to look at. You know, obviously, our roads and highways are in terrible shape, and we need to continue to make investments. But we need to be strategic in those investments. And the member—the member knows and he can appreciate that, you know, any time we have an opportunity to maximize federal investment here in Manitoba—well, guess what, I can tell the member from Wolseley that we are going to absolutely take full advantage of

'partnering' with the federal government to ensure that we maximize those investments.

You know, whether it be in sewer and water infrastructure—and I know the member is obviously—talks a lot about, you know, sewer and water and Lake Winnipeg and the health of Lake Winnipeg. And I can, again, assure the member that the health of Lake Winnipeg and the health of our rivers and streams are the utmost importance of members opposite. You know, I know that the former NDP government, well, they had a plan for Lake Winnipeg, and, unfortunately, that plan ended up dumping \$600,000 worth of chemical into marinas in Winnipeg Beach and Gimli. And they said problem solved. I remember the former Conservation minister said it's done, we've completed it. It's done, that we've eradicated the zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg. Well, boy oh boy, let me tell you were we ever excited to hear that. You know, this was just great news for Lake Winnipeg.

Well, guess what, lo and behold, they're back; 600,000-plus dollars dumped into the lake and did absolutely nothing. But, you know, it's too bad that the NDP—former NDP government didn't take more, you know, take—didn't take seriously the issues with Lake Winnipeg and the nutrient loading because, you know what, quite frankly, Mr. Chair, we do. And this government does.

And I can tell—and I'd like to commend the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) for her leadership in bringing forward some great legislation that's going to help lead Manitoba down the path to ensure that we—our lakes and streams and our kids and grandkids—especially, you know, our grandkids that are going to be around—and their grandkids, because, look, I have four grandkids and I have a fifth one on the way. And I tell you, they live in Gimli, in Winnipeg Beach, and I want them to be out and go out into Lake Winnipeg and surrounding bodies of water and go swimming and have some fun like we did when we were growing up down in the beach.

And I tell you, we didn't have the fear of zebra mussels or any of those other exotic or terrible species coming into our lakes and streams. And, you know, it's a good thing that, you know, the Minister of Sustainable Development has a handle on it because I could tell you there's a lot of work to do.

And, you know, it's too bad that—you know, and, obviously, the member from Point Douglas and the

member from St. Johns don't take the health of Lake Winnipeg seriously, and that's sad, and that's shameful, actually.

\* (16:50)

But maybe they should, because, again, I invite them to come out with the member from Wolseley and come to Winnipeg Beach, in Gimli, and actually come out, walk the boardwalk and actually check out that beautiful body of water we have, the inland ocean we like to address it as, here in Winnipeg and in Manitoba.

So I do 'inmite'—invite all members opposite to come out. I know the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) joins us from time to time, and I will extend the offer to the members from St. Johns and Minto to come out—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister's time is up.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** It seems we have rather quickly reached the limits of this minister's knowledge on this front, so allow me to share a little bit of info.

Bill 7, the watersheds act, will create watershed districts, which can go out and do all the planning they want and it won't amount to a hill of beans because his own legislation, the planning act, Bill 19, what actually happens on the landscape.

So—just so he knows when he's making those decisions, those are the impacts he's going to be having, and I hope that it works out, but there's absolutely no legal protection or requirement that the environment be considered when he makes those decisions.

With that, I will turn the floor over to my honourable colleague from River Heights.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The minister of municipal affairs is responsible for the oversight, from a provincial perspective, of The Forks, one of our premier tourist destinations.

With the changes that have happened over the last three or four years, which are making alcohol much more available all over The Forks Market—some are very enthusiastic about this, some are not so—but one of the things that I have been getting a lot of calls about is an increase in individuals who are intoxicated and an increase in crime.

And I'd ask the minister: What will be his approach to these issues?

The other thing that I've been getting a lot of calls about in The Forks corporation is that there are a lot fewer children and families coming in the mornings and at lunch and the early afternoons, whether it's on weekdays or on weekends.

And I'm told that this is, in part, because there's been quite a cutback in the activities that are there for children and families in the mornings and afternoons. So my question to the minister who's responsible from a provincial perspective for oversight of The Forks: What his approach is going to be to The Forks Corporation, and how will he address these two issues?

**Mr. Wharton:** I thank the member for the question, and the member, of course, is correct. One of the responsibilities of Municipal Relations is The Forks board, and certainly share with the member from River Heights that we've had initial talks with the board at The Forks.

And I know that they're a great group of folks that are very—obviously, very motivated to ensure that this prime asset at the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine continues to grow in a sustainable fashion.

And, you know, as far as the question the member had on intoxication at The Forks, certainly I have not been informed of that issue. So I will endeavour, and I have made a note, to ensure that I get some more background on that, because obviously any examples of that happening, obviously, in a public place—whether it be The Forks or whether it be anywhere else, any other park we have in the city or in the province of Manitoba—obviously, that is a concern.

And I would certainly be consulting with my colleagues, and it sounds like it could be a cross-departmental issue and concern, so certainly I would let the member know that we would—we take that very seriously.

Fewer families taking part in activities at The Forks—again, another area that I appreciate the input on, the member from River Heights for advising me of these concerns. I guess I would ask a follow-up of the member, too, is where he would be getting this information from, so potentially we could follow up and make sure that if there are any concerns for the public as far as activities at The Forks, certainly something that the board's mandate is to ensure that that is what they do.

And I'm not one hundred per cent sure that that is included in their mandate. I know it's a great opportunity, The Forks, to build, and they've been trying to continue to grow that area, whether it be—on a number of fronts, whether it be commercial, whether it be residential or multi-use, mixed—I mean, there's prime opportunity, and I think the member knows that there's been a—several discussions about several opportunities, and I know those discussions are ongoing, and I'm sure that they want to get that right, going forward.

So, with that, again, I thank the member for bringing attention to those two areas, and I ask him again if he could provide us with the information—doesn't have to be today, but certainly can catch me on the side, and be more than happy to look into those two concerns that the member from River Heights has brought forward today.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I appreciate the minister's attention to this, and we'll provide him with additional information. Certainly, I'm at The Forks very regularly because it's a great place to be, and I hear things, just talking with people, talking to people who are there, talking to some of the merchants and so on. I think it's really important that as one of the premier places that we have in Manitoba that it is really attractive and has a comprehensive approach to bringing in people, and that includes what it historically has done very well, which is children and families to The Forks Market.

There—the other area, which has been brought up from time to time, is that although there's been some significant changes, that sometimes there are spaces there which have been left vacant for quite some time, and so the question would be, you know, is this optimum? Can the space be better managed? Is there a way of making sure that, you know, if somebody leaves, that you're ready to have people moving in soon, and the—historically, I will add one more thing—historically, the merchants at The Forks have made investments, and some of them, very substantial, you know, well over \$100,000 and

sometimes considerably more, in the space. And there was a change in policy so that merchants who have made those investments, now they cannot pass that lease on, they cannot, you know, use that investment, as small businesses often do, to enable them to have, as it were, a pension, to look after or to live on when they retire. And so that there have been some concerns raised with me as to the approach that's being taken with merchants because of this shift in policy.

So I thank the minister for his attention.

**Mr. Wharton:** Thank the member again from River Heights. Just regarding the board, the member is likely aware that the board is made up of federal, provincial and municipal leaders, of course, within Manitoba and Canada and Winnipeg. So, you know, it's great group of folks that are obviously working together to ensure that the best investments are made and the—obviously, we take full advantage of the—some of the areas and ensure that we get it right as far as investment in some of these areas that the member from River Heights is talking about that are—that have been sitting empty for quite some time. And, you know, in my initial discussions with the board, in my early tenure as Municipal Relations Minister, it's encouraging to see, you know, the, obviously, the enthusiasm, the excitement about moving forward a lot further and a lot faster than has happened in the past. I mean, obviously, it's—we would like to see it fully done and developed and just a vibrant place. It is an attraction, as we know. I have folks coming in this summer that—coming from the States and—

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

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Madam Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 28, 2018

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