

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 31, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to rise to address some of the concerns you had with the ruling on my matter of privilege and I am raising a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Earlier, in the absence of further clarity from the member it made ruling on a matter of privilege somewhat more difficult, so I wish to provide you, Madam Speaker, with more clarity on the matter of privilege.

Specifically, on May 16th of this year, at the end of question period the Premier (Mr. Pallister), in answering a question I believe by the member from Wolseley, was seen to be waving around several pieces of paper, using them as a prop without introducing them. You, Madam Speaker, made a ruling on a point of order, saying that in fact it was a legitimate point of order, that the Premier couldn't be using props, in fact none of us could be using props.

If you continue to listen to the audio, specifically, at the conclusion of that ruling it can clearly be heard by members saying, he's doing it again, he's still doing it, he's doing it again, clearly in violation of your ruling on the point of order.

So I hope that that provides enough information for the Speaker to make a more fulsome ruling on the matter of privilege.

The question then becomes, how does that impact either myself or any of us on our privilege?

And really, it comes down to, Madam Speaker, that when you make rulings about specific things, about rules, about rules that apply to all members of this Chamber, I would expect that we would follow those rules. I would expect from the Premier, from the First Minister, from the leader of this province, to accept a ruling from the Speaker and to, in fact, be the person most expected to follow the rules of this Chamber.

Because, if we do not follow the rules, if the leadership shown by the Premier shows us that we can ignore the rules of this Chamber, that we can ignore a ruling from the Speaker, then in fact we have no rules. Decorum breaks down. That will impact all of our ability to ask questions, to conduct business that we are here as legislators, as duly elected representatives, to carry out our function. Without rules, without the practice that the Speaker quotes often when making your rulings, if we just choose to ignore those rulings and carry on as if you hadn't spoken, then there are no rules. So that really impacts each and every one of us in our ability, and really and truly, we would expect better, particularly from the leader of the province, from the Premier.

The display that was witnessed, unfortunately after the cameras were not highlighting the Premier's actions, were really troubling to say the least, Madam Speaker. That sort of behaviour should not be tolerated in this Chamber and it really and truly does impact each and every one of us as we try and carry out our duties as elected officials.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): And I think—I'm not sure the intent of the member's matter of privilege. I think you dealt with this particular issue in your previous ruling and I think the matter before us has been dealt with.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): In regard to the matter at hand, the member has provided additional information, but it does point to a larger issue. We take, for example, in the rules, it discusses that debates should be done in a serious, solemn manner, very—and respectful. That does not happen in this place, and your rulings on that very issue have also been ignored.

So, Madam Speaker, I would just make that observation that not one but many times it appears that there has been a very negative tone in this place,

including the 'sh-ing' of female members of this House from male members of this House—very condescending, and it's not worthy of this place, or any place, for that matter.

Thank you.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I rise today to table the written response to a question posed by the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) on May 16th, 2018.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Baseball Manitoba's 50th Anniversary

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to extend the government of Manitoba's sincere congratulations to Baseball Manitoba as they celebrate their 50th anniversary as a provincial sport organization responsible for fostering the participation and development of amateur baseball in our province.

Baseball Manitoba celebrates this remarkable milestone while serving more than 15,000 members. In response to this impressive history and Baseball Manitoba's ongoing efforts, I had the opportunity to sign a proclamation recently to proclaim June 9th, 2018, as Amateur Baseball Day in Manitoba and extend greetings and congratulations to Manitoba's entire baseball community.

Manitobans love baseball, Madam Speaker, which is a great team sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and all abilities. Let us also recognize that participating in sports such as baseball

helps to promote active living, which is so important for the health and well-being of our communities.

Madam Speaker, my husband enjoyed many years coaching our sons on the ball field. As a proud mom, some of my fondest memories were cheering on our boys and their teammates, and I can tell the members in the Chamber there's no better sound than hearing that crack when the ball and the bat connect.

Baseball is a sport that is fun, exciting and enjoyed at so many levels from the recreational and competitive leagues. They play on all diamonds throughout our province, all the way up to the professional ranks over at Shaw Park with the reigning American Association champions, the Winnipeg Goldeyes.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the many coaches, the athletes, the managers, the parents and the volunteers who participate and support and—the continued growth and development of baseball right here in Manitoba.

I would like to invite all Manitobans to join us in congratulating Baseball Manitoba's staff, the board of directors and the thousands of members and volunteers upon reaching this very historic milestone.

* (13:40)

I am honoured to extend our sincere best wishes to Manitoba's entire baseball community as they look forward to the next 50 years.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Whether you're playing T-ball, slo-pitch or a club game, amateur baseball is a great opportunity to get together with community, make friends, have fun and get active. Throughout our province's history, baseball has been a popular sport for kids and adults to play.

We understand the important role of sports in the lives of youth and their families. By joining a team, youth learn how to train hard, work with others, encourage their teammates and learn how to win or lose with respect and a positive attitude.

For these reasons, kids and their families need access to affordable recreation facilities like baseball. They need their government to make investments in local community centres and leisure centres. By investing in affordable programming, recruiting quality coaches and improving fields, this

government can ensure that all Manitoba families can partake in amateur baseball.

Families in south Winnipeg have been calling on provincial government support for the creation of several new recreational centres to help serve that growing population. We are disappointed to see this government has failed to commit to these projects.

To all the coaches, volunteers and parents who make amateur baseball possible, on behalf of all of the NDP caucus, I would like to thank you. And thank you for giving so many athletes throughout our province the opportunity to play the sport that they love.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage. Had she not been finished her ministerial statement?

Mrs. Cox: No, I wanted to ask for leave to have the names of the executive from Manitoba sports—or baseball organization read into Hansard, please.

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

Baseball Manitoba executive: Jason Miller, executive director; Brenda Horz, executive assistant; James Zamko, program director; Tony Siemens, president; Haley Hayward, media relations co-ordinator

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

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

Ms. Lamoureux: It's nice to rise to speak to amateur baseball here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we know that active people tend to have lower rates of diabetes and high blood pressure. We know that exercising regularly through sports programs can contribute to better heart and lung functioning. And we know participating in sports as a child leads to being a more active adult.

Madam Speaker, amateur sports builds communities, it garners excitement and it gives us something to be proud of. Yet not everyone has the ability to participate. There are countless barriers to youth joining teams, such as expenses, the time commitment and physical barriers.

As elected officials, we can support programs such as Baseball Manitoba's scholarships, grants and programs with the Winnipeg Goldeyes that help people have the opportunity to play.

On behalf of all the MLAs, we'd like to thank all the volunteers and donors for Baseball Manitoba and both congratulate them and wish them a wonderful season ahead.

Thank you.

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

Would the minister please proceed with his statement.

Wildfire Update

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): The safety and security of all Manitobans is a top priority for our government. As such, I wish to provide the Manitoba Legislature with an update on the current wildfire-fighting activities in the province.

I'll start today by expressing our thanks to all of those who have been involved in managing the fires and ensuring that all Manitobans at risk have been protected from these fires and their consequences.

Manitoba Sustainable Development, the Wildfire Program, has provided us with the following update. Total fires to date: 206; and the average to this date: 119.

Suppression of—activities continue on larger fires, and recent participation has assisted suppression efforts.

Suppression efforts continue on the fires near the communities of Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation. Fire lines have been established around both communities.

There are currently 80 initial attack firefighters from Ontario and two water bombers from Quebec assisting Manitoba Sustainable Development fighting crews. And, again, the safety of residents and first responders remains the top priority.

Indigenous Services Canada has engaged the Canadian Red Cross to support evacuees from Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation. Indigenous and

Northern Relations and Manitoba Families continue to support evacuees from Pelican Rapids.

Re-entry planning is under way for the evacuated communities, and Manitoba Hydro is scheduling aerial and ground assessment of damage to its infrastructure from the fires near Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation. Timelines for repairs will begin once their assessment is complete.

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

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

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): While the fire near Pauingassi has disrupted the lives of so many people, the hard work of our firefighters and water bombers has helped ease the minds of many communities.

With fire suppression efforts being successful in Little Grand Rapids First Nation, the community is eager to return home. Little Grand Rapids chief, Raymond Keeper, was tasked with drafting a return plan for the community before 14 members would be allowed to return to survey the damage and begin cleaning up. But his efforts are being delayed.

Residents from the community want to begin cleaning up the wreckage to make it feel more like home, but they can't do that without food, supplies and the generators that they require.

It's important that the government work co-operatively with Indigenous Services Canada and the Canadian Red Cross to ensure safety plans are being finalized and necessary supplies are provided to Little Grand Rapids to ensure their return.

The government also needs to continue working closely with Manitoba Hydro and communities to ensure essential services like electricity and running water are restored promptly.

We all need to be working co-operatively and efficiently to ensure evacuees from the affected communities can return home safely as soon as possible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the minister for his update on the fire situation in the province. We continue to have record numbers of fires and we clearly will need to be prepared for a long fire season, which we may have this year. I look forward to receiving information on the fire plans.

One of the things that this year's experience has highlighted is the—was a need to bring in 120 firefighters from Ontario, and while we are very thankful to the people from Ontario and their contribution, clearly it highlights the need to make sure that we are training sufficient numbers of firefighters in communities all over the boreal forest.

Clearly, having expertise in individual communities will help with fire prevention efforts and with efforts to put out fires and I think will enable us to deal better with this. There are many First Nations people, Metis people, in the past, who've contributed as firefighters, and we need to build on their local expertise of the terrain and the country and make sure that they are really part of our overall firefighting team.

So I look forward to the minister's plan to make sure that we are doing a lot of firefighter training. We will need this because of climate change in the years ahead, and I'm sure the minister will be getting on it shortly.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Harvest for Kids

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, anytime there's a four-wheel drive combine on the front of the Legislature and it's not a protest, it's a good day.

Madam Speaker, it's going to be an exciting summer in Winkler, as Winkler will once again make an incredible record-breaking harvest attempt. It was 2006 when Children's Camps International launched the initiative known as Harvest for Kids, in which 100 combines harvested simultaneously and consistently on the same field to five minutes, sending hundreds of kids to summer camp.

And they set a new Guinness World Record in the process. In 2010, Winkler broke its own record with 200 combines. But after that, the record was broken by Saskatchewan in 2012, with 244 combines.

*(13:50)

Madam Speaker, six years later, we are taking back the title. On August the 4th, I invite all honourable members to the city of Winkler to witness a new world record attempt of 300 combines harvesting simultaneously in a row. I plan to participate as well, but the organizers have not yet promised me a driver's seat.

Organizers anticipate 1,000 volunteers, an on-field audience of 20,000 spectators and a worldwide audience in the millions. This year's fundraise goal is to provide—is to raise \$3 million and give 1 million children the opportunity to have a summer camp experience.

Madam Speaker, today, the organizers have parked a shiny green John Deere combine in the front of the Legislature in order to draw attention to the event.

Seated in the gallery today, I welcome Ray Wieler, president of Children's Camps International; Dave Thiessen, national director of Harvest for Kids; George Klassen, event co-ordinator; and all of their guests, including illusionist Greg Woods, who made a combine appear.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of all members in the Legislature, thank you all for your efforts in this spectacular initiative. We look forward to this wonderful event this summer to create summer camp opportunities for kids.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Friesen: And, Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of the other guests that are here with us today included in Hansard.

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

Harvest for Kids: Steve Klassen, Drew Friesen, Greg Woods, Lionel Wiens, Dan Giesbrecht, Marv Letkeman, Nelli Neumann.

First Nations Together

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important work of an

inspiring group of young people at Kildonan-East Collegiate.

First Nations Together is group of young leaders from diverse backgrounds who came together after being inspired by Mr. Klassen's Metis and Inuit studies class.

These students took it upon themselves to take action and began to foster positive conversations around school about indigenous heritage and culture, and to bring greater awareness 'about'—about both the inherent biases and reconciliation efforts.

Their first student-led project was creating a medicine garden. This green space provides educational opportunities for students, staff and the community to grow indigenous food and plants and to learn about the spiritual significance of plants in the indigenous community.

The group is also leading an indigenous awareness week from June 4th to 8th. Organized in recognition of June as National Indigenous History Month, this—the purpose of this week is to increase indigenous cultural understanding along with ideas for reconciliation among the staff and student body. Each day will have a different topic and different guest speakers and events such as cultural teaching, treaty education, cultural dancing, singing and, of course, food.

With all their success so far, the group is now pushing for the creation of a permanent symbol of the school's dedication to reconciliation: a traditional Sioux-style teepee.

For KE's indigenous students, the teepee would be a welcoming and inclusive place for current and new students and also help to increase the intercultural understanding of all, as it serves as an outdoor indigenous learning space to hold classes, teachings and cultural ceremonies for KE and the other schools in the area.

While the group works on these important initiatives, they are also focused on the future as they engage younger students so the group can continue to grow and spread their incredible work.

I want to thank the members of this group for inspiring me and also for their ongoing efforts to increase awareness, respect and understanding of the reconciliation process in your school and beyond, and I invite all members to welcome them to the gallery here today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Before—oh. The honourable member for Concordia.

Mr. Wiebe: I ask for leave to include the names of the students in the group in Hansard.

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

First Nations Together members: Madison Anderson, Michael Breland, Kiera Fleury, Anthony Guerreiro, Amber Heyward, Nate Lenton, Darian Ronald, Jada Ross, Nic Serbin, Isabelle Young

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Before proceeding with members' statements, we have some students in the gallery that are going to be leaving the gallery shortly, so I wanted to introduce them before they left.

We have, seated in the public gallery, from Woodlawn School 55 grade 4 students under the direction of Simmy Gandhi and Lisa Martens, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Goertzen).

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

Margy Nelson

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I am honoured to rise in the House today to recognize Margy Nelson and her incredible team at the Movement Centre for providing individuals with neurological conditions a warm and supportive treatment environment.

In 1997, Margy took her son Bryce, who suffered from cerebral palsy, to a rehabilitation center in the United States. She was so impressed with the Bryce's remarkable progress, she decided she would dedicate her life to ensuring the same treatment program was available to Manitoba families.

The very next year, thanks to Margy's get-it-done attitude and a generous donation from the late Martin Bergen, the Movement Centre opened its doors in River East in what was originally a parking garage.

Since opening its doors, Margy has raised a total of \$8.7 million for the Movement Centre. For 20 years, Margy has been the driving force behind the Movement Centre. Brightening the lives of

children and adults with disabilities remains Margy's passion.

And I am proud to share with my colleagues in the Legislature that Margy was recently awarded an honorary life member designation by the Association for Conductive Education in North America for her tireless dedication to providing the highest quality conductive education services.

Thanks to Margy's dedication and determination, the Movement Centre has assisted thousands of individuals to regain their independence, one step at a time. This non-profit organization is committed to improving the physical life of children and adults with physical disabilities.

Madam Speaker, Margy Nelson is retiring tomorrow on June the 1st, and I would like to personally thank her for the 20 remarkable years she has so humbly served our community. Margy, we will miss your passion, your desire to bring out the best in people and your warm, compassionate smile. I ask all members to join me in wishing Margy a very happy, healthy and very well-deserved retirement. Margy—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Cox: Margy, we will miss you, but I know your heart will always remain in River East.

Madam Speaker, I ask that we are able to put the names of Margy and her family members and the team be read into Hansard.

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

Family members and Movement Centre of Manitoba staff: Margy Nelson, John Nelson, Bryce Nelson, Sean Nelson, Tanner Driscoll, Olivia Doerksen, Tanya Joss, Justin Burley, Nancy Gregory

Palliative Manitoba Breakfast Fundraiser

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, this morning I, along with four or five of my other colleagues here in the House, attended the Palliative Manitoba's breakfast fundraiser to celebrate life. Every year, this fundraiser is a big success, but allow me to share to with you what made this morning's breakfast so extra special.

First and foremost, I was seated with some wonderful people: Mike Goldberg, who is the community outreach and education co-ordinator, and Greg Connor, the treasurer on the Palliative Manitoba board of directors. Between these two

individuals I learned more about the programs being offered through Palliative Manitoba, as well as enjoyed some genuine conversation about our health-care system.

The president of the Johnston Group, Dave Angus shared with us a bit of his personal experience, as well as his mother's, and reminded us of a very important point. Madam Speaker, not only do we need to be here for others, but sometimes we also need to be needed and Palliative Manitoba provides a great opportunity for this, for example, through their compassion care course that is open to the public and volunteers.

Madam Speaker, the other distinct part of this morning's breakfast was the speech that Mackenzie Harrison shared about the teens grieve program that Palliative Manitoba offers. This young woman's leadership and ability to share her experience was inspiring and is a true testament to Palliative Manitoba and how they are also here for family and friends through the grieving process.

Madam Speaker, Gandhi said the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others, and Palliative Manitoba allows for this opportunity. We need to do our part, and we can do this by spreading awareness, educating others about the great programs offered, by talking about aging and death and we can even volunteer.

In closing, I just want to send out a big thank you to Jennifer Gurke, the Palliative Manitoba executive director, and for all of those who helped make this morning's breakfast fundraiser a big success.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Thunder Ridge Motorcycle Rally

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): I rise in the House today to recognize an event that will be happening this summer in my Agassiz constituency.

*(14:00)

The small community of Arden will host to hundreds of motorbike enthusiasts at the Thunder Ridge motorcycle rally July 6 to 8. This event is the third year and it hopes to even be bigger and better than the last.

This fundraiser rally attracts motorbike enthusiasts from all across the country, bringing in approximately 400 people to visit rural Manitoba.

The event was spearheaded by a group of like-minded enthusiasts who wanted to engage bikers in support of local charities or for a worthy cause. Although the rally is held in my constituency, many committee members, sponsors, organizers and volunteers come from the surrounding areas. Committee members include Henry Verner, Grant Winder, Krystal Tillie, Jim McGhie and Jim-Kim Verner.

There's a long list of sponsors that includes businesses and organizations from Brandon, Dauphin, Minnedosa, Plumas and local support from the Arden community.

In the last two years, the organization has provided donations to Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre in Brandon, as well as Food for Thought program in Brandon. And support and assistance were provided to an individual who required a prosthetic foot after a motorcycle accident. The committee is building on the success of the last two years and is working to have new attractions and displays this year.

On behalf of the Manitoba Legislature, we thank the organizers, sponsors and volunteers of the Thunder Ridge rally for their vision and contributions to area residents and organizations.

We wish you a safe and successful rally again this year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery.

Seated in the public gallery, from Pineview Mennonite School in Barwick, Ontario, we have 10 grade 7 and 8 students under the direction of Mr. Robert Heatwole. On behalf of all members, we welcome you here today.

Also we have in the gallery grade 9 and 10 students from St. Aidan's Christian School, who are the guests of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), and we welcome you here in the Legislature today as well.

And I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Mr. Prasad Panda, member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the constituency of Calgary-Foothills, who is the guest of the honourable member—or the honourable

Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler). And on behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And as is our tradition, we have two more departing pages, and I'm just going to tell you a little bit about each.

Hailey Hansen is graduating from Glenlawn Collegiate class of 2018. She is attending the University of Manitoba this fall and has received direct entry into the faculty of science. Hailey is planning on spending time at her family cottage at Longbow Lake in Ontario. She is also considering an employment opportunity with the City of Kenora.

Hailey has thoroughly enjoyed her time working as a legislative page. The experience was one she will never forget. Hailey has gained a deep respect for the work done in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. She appreciates the kindness and dedication shown by the MLAs. Working at the Legislature of Manitoba has been an eye-opening and inspired experience for her. She knows that the lessons she has learned during her time here will stay with her throughout her life.

And also we have Freja Cuddington, who is a grade 11 student who will be graduating from Portage Collegiate Institute in 2019. This summer, she will be working as a lifeguard and teaching swimming lessons, as well as volunteering at the K-to-9 daycare in Portage.

Freja played varsity basketball with the PCI Saints this past year and continues the sport in Winnipeg's spring basketball league. Her interest in politics began while living abroad. Born in Kuwait City and growing up in Turkey gave her a different outlook and unique learning opportunities. She completed her schooling in Turkish and English up until 9th grade and participated in Model United Nations, which included debates about worldly political issues. This sparked her interest in local and international politics, which attracted her to the page program.

Working at the Legislature has been an incredible experience for Freja. She is grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of such a historic and fascinating work environment. Freja will probably remember her position as a legislative page and the lively days in the Chamber.

On behalf of all members here, we welcome you both. The very best.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Churchill's Railway and Port Transfer to Local Authority

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to start by acknowledging Churchill Mayor Mike Spence, the leaders of the One North consortium, Missinippi Rail and the federal government—my MP, Jim Carr, in particular—congratulate them on reaching a tentative deal to take over control of the rail line to Churchill.

We know that for over a year the people of Churchill have struggled with a rising cost of living as a result of OmniTRAX's inability or unwillingness to take over their responsibility to fix the rail line.

We also know that for some two years that workers in Churchill have been put out of work, have been unemployed, unsure whether or not the only Arctic deepwater port in our province will function yet again. That's why this development that we heard about last night is so important, but we also know that this plan requires that everyone be at the table.

So I begin by asking the First Minister if he could update the House on what the involvement of his government in these talks has been to this date.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, it's an exciting announcement for—not only for the people of Churchill, but for the people of Manitoba and, frankly, for the people of Canada because, of course, Churchill offers a tremendous and important asset and a benefit to our country that has hitherto not been as well utilized as could be the case in the future, and we all hope for that.

And so I would definitely offer thanks and congratulations to all partners involved in the progress that we've achieved to date and look forward to more of the same as we move forward to achieve the real potential of Manitoba's North and the real potential of Churchill as well.

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, it's been said that Churchill makes our province a maritime province and it opens up tons of opportunity as a result.

Now, this deal with—that we learned about last night is still being finalized, and that means that there's a lot more detail still to be worked out. Now

while that process is going on, we need a provincial government that's willing to step up and play an active role, an important role, a productive role in advancing this deal to the finish line. We know that there's been a lot of delays getting the province to act in the past, but with this new deal in hand I would hope that there's a renewed emphasis and a renewed approach.

The time's now for the province to get active, particularly on those related areas: infrastructure, transportation, the environment, municipal affairs and others where they can be real leaders on this front.

I would ask the First Minister: What concrete supports will his government offer in order to ensure the smooth transition of the rail line, port and other assets to this consortium?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, we have, as a government, been very pleased to be partnering with not only the community, but the federal government and others as we have addressed some of the short-term challenges presented by the initial flooding damage done to the rail line and, of course, the consequential damage to the community and to its business base, its tourism base as well, not just limited to making sure that the people of Churchill and visitors to the community are protected with respect to things like heating fuel and various other assets that were needed in the interim period, but also in working on the longer term planning necessary to secure a stronger future for the community.

With that in mind, of course, we've put together a half-a-billion-dollar commitment to the community over the next 10 years that will allow us to make sure that we assist and partner with others in the fulfillment of the real potential that exists in that community, Madam Speaker. We're excited about that.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, we've heard a lot this week about things being in the national interest in this country, and I think it's very clear that the rail line and port in Churchill are of a national interest to get those things running. I'd invite the Premier to comment if he agrees that that is of national interest.

We also know that in order for this deal to proceed there's a number of questions that need to be addressed by the Province. There's the tank farm

adjacent to the port; there's the issues which would be addressed by Sustainable Development, the environmental issues related to that. We also know that there's the municipal concerns and, of course, there's questions around infrastructure and transportation that need to be addressed, and we would invite and ask for this government to play an active role in helping to resolve.

So, with that in mind, I'd ask the Premier: Will he commit to using the full extent of his government's powers to participate in a productive, collaborative role towards moving this deal towards the finish line?

Mr. Pallister: Well, we've learned a lot through this process, Madam Speaker, and I hope—and it is naturally a consequence sometimes, of losing resources that you have or access to things that you might have taken for granted in the past, a consequence that all Manitobans and all Canadians understand the tremendous value that Churchill provides, that as a community, as a port, that it has been threatened, but that its future need not be threatened and we work co-operatively together to achieve those goals.

*(14:10)

We've learned also the things that don't work. We've learned that subsidizing OmniTRAX, as the previous government chose to do, put, you know, \$20 million in the hands of a profitable multinational corporation and nothing in the hands of the people of Churchill and that that is not a long-term approach that would work is clearly in evidence today and has been in evidence for some time.

So we've departed from the past misguided practices. We are working together co-operatively and, I think, Madam Speaker, this week's events demonstrate to effect results that will benefit the people of Churchill, the people of Manitoba, the people of Canada in the future.

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

Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Stop ER Closures

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, to date, the Premier has spent money interfering with the bargaining rights of teachers in Nova Scotia, but he hasn't spent anything trying to stand up for the people of Churchill in this

process. That's why we're asking for him to get involved now.

Now, again, he hasn't been listening on the topic of Churchill. So I wonder whether he will begin to listen when it comes to his misguided cuts to our health-care system. We know that the WRHA, under his orders, announced phase 2 today. But according to the First Minister's own wait-times task force report—and I'm quoting here—that the Concordia ER should not be closed until sufficient physical capacity in Winnipeg's remaining emergency departments be created and maintained.

Now, we know that this report went on to say that a new emergency department for St. Boniface Hospital is a high priority, and unless that happens then all these changes would not meet the long-term needs of our health-care system.

With all of this in mind, I would ask the Premier: Will he reconsider phase 2 and call off those portions of the plan that call for the closures of Seven Oaks and Concordia emergency rooms?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, it's been an enlightening session, Madam Speaker, in respect of the nothing-new questions from the Leader of the Opposition. These are questions that could've been written by his predecessor, perhaps were, maybe ghost written; I don't know. I do know this: I do know that the system we had was broken. I know that because we ranked at the bottom of many major categories of importance to Manitobans, who deserve to get health care in a timely manner.

Health care that's available in theory only is not health care at all, and people were walking out of emergency rooms in frustration. I just met with a couple this morning who walked out in frustration while waiting over six hours with their child in an emergency room in our city, who had a—ultimately they found a broken arm, and, Madam Speaker, that's not health care.

We're going to cure the system they broke, Madam Speaker, and we're making progress and I would encourage the member to offer encouragement rather than simply the dull repetition of misguided and misrepresented statements such as cuts, when we are actually spending well over \$600 million more this year than the NDP ever did in our health-care system and getting better results too.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the cuts are real. They cut physiotherapy. They cut drug coverage for epilepsy, for cystic fibrosis, for diabetes and so on down the list. And now we know that under this Premier, emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg are closing and EMS stations across the province are next up on their list of cuts. That is this Premier's record.

Now, the wait-times task force that this Premier commissioned was clear. They said, and I quote here, that any renovations that they've announced for St. Boniface and other hospitals should merely be the first phase of an integrated emergency department redevelopment plan. Piecemeal renovations to accommodate an accelerated consolidation timetable would not meet the long-term needs of the system. End quote.

Again, we know that what the Premier is offering will not be enough to meet the long-term needs of the system. We know that the advice that he received was not to close the Concordia emergency room and was to not close the Seven Oaks emergency department.

With that advice in mind, will he change phase 2 of the consolidation plan to ensure that the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia remain open?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, the member, again—not for St. Boniface, I'm sorry, for Fort Rouge—reads a question that could've been prepared a year or two ago when the NDP was afraid, as they were afraid when they were in government to implement necessary changes to our health-care system.

We've just announced the opening of a new emergency room, for example, Madam Speaker, at the Grace Hospital, as you well know, that has five times the capacity of the previous one, that will serve over 35,000 people this year alone, but it will do so in a more timely manner, in a more effective manner than has ever been the case under the previous administration.

So the member speaks about going back. He wants us to turn around and support a system that was broken, that wasn't serving the needs of Manitobans for—out of fear. But, Madam Speaker, although it takes courage to face the challenges of change, we will continue to do it on this side of the House because the ultimate beneficiaries of that acceptance of challenge will be the people of

Manitoba who get access to the health care they deserve.

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

Mr. Kinew: I've said it before; I'll say it again: Sometimes courage means being willing to listen and having the courage to be able to accept the advice that you hear.

We've heard very clearly the expert advice that the Premier has received, which is that the conversion of Seven Oaks ER was to be reconsidered in the light of—I'm quoting here from his own report—limits to St. Boniface's physical capacity. End quote.

Again, that report asked for them to delay the closure of Concordia ER. And we know that under this plan that not only will Concordia not have an emergency room, they won't even have an urgent-care centre. No care under this Premier for Concordia.

It's very challenging to understand. And again—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —the plan is for—there does need to be a plan to modernize health care in Manitoba, but it should focus on investments, it should focus on prevention, it should focus on moving upstream. What it should not focus on is closing emergency rooms in a misguided attempt to save money.

With that in mind, I would ask the Premier: Will he back off this edition of phase 2 and come back with a new plan for phase 2 that would see Seven Oaks and Concordia emergency rooms stay open?

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired. *[interjection]* Order.

Mr. Pallister: The people of Manitoba spoke very clearly just a couple of years ago, Madam Speaker. They wanted change and they wanted change for the better, and that's what they're getting.

The member opposite speaks about listening. He should listen to the people of Manitoba. He should consider for a second and reflect on why the NDP is decimated and why they're at the rump position they're in. He's espousing the exact positions that were espoused previously by the government that was thrown out by the people of Manitoba. He says that's listening. That's evidence of being tone deaf. That's evidence of not listening at all.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans want better health care. They want it to be accessible to them and their families. They don't want to wait six and a half hours and have to leave before their child can be treated for a broken arm. They don't want that anymore and they're not going to get it anymore thanks to this Health Minister and the courage he's demonstrated and his willingness to listen to the experts that the previous government hired and then chose to ignore.

Madam Speaker, I thank our Health Minister for his service to the people of Manitoba and encourage the members opposite to get with the program of building a better health-care system by joining and supporting us in—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Changes to Health Services Impact on Front-Line Care

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) promised no cuts to front-line services and he has broken that promise. This minister and this Premier have ignored the families and health-care workers who said that their health-care changes were moving too fast and hurting patient care.

And now, today, we see the minister and the Premier have ignored their own wait-times report which told them to slow down and reconsider these major changes to our health-care system. But instead, they plan to barrel on with this rushed political plan and close two busy emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg. They have caused and they're going to continue to cause massive confusion and chaos for workers, which will hurt patient care.

Will the Premier just admit he made a mistake by not listening to patients, workers and even his own experts?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, let's review the definition—the member for Minto's definition of chaos.

A 16 per cent reduction in emergency room wait times year over year is what the member from Minto would define as chaos. A reduction of almost 7 per cent for the length of stay of patients who were in hospitals is what the member for Minto would define as chaos, Madam Speaker.

In fact, a record low number of people who are in hospital waiting to get into a PCH—a record low, Madam Speaker, never before recorded in the history

of Manitoba—is what the member opposite would consider to be chaos. Now, I know he has some experience with chaos from his previous experience when he was in the government, but this is not chaos. This is progress.

* (14:20)

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

Mr. Swan: That's not what Winnipeg patients would say after six successive months of increased wait times after this government closed the Victoria ER and closed the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre, and it's fascinating now that this new plan would require Health Sciences Centre to open a mid-to-low-acuity treatment area; sounds a lot like an urgent-care clinic to me, Madam Speaker.

You know, the heart of Winnipeg already had an urgent-care centre at Misericordia. It actually had the shortest wait times and the highest patient satisfaction in the city. But it was cut by this Premier (Mr. Pallister) even though the Peachey report made no recommendations to do so and the wait-times report said an urgent need to increase subacute beds.

Will the Premier now admit he was wrong to close Misericordia's Urgent Care Centre?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, there is one thing that I am more certain of today than I was 14 months ago when this government announced that it was moving forward with the healing our health-care plan, and that is that this plan is going to work.

And it is evidenced, Madam Speaker, every month by statistics. We continue to see the ER wait times going down. There was a 45 per cent reduction month over month in the last report it say largely because of the flu, but year over year we still saw a significant reduction. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has targeted another 15 per cent reduction and it is planning to get to the Canadian average for wait times by mid-2019. Those words were never uttered under the NDP where wait times got worse and worse and worse every year.

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

Release of KPMG Report

Mr. Swan: Once again, Madam Speaker, six successive months that Winnipeg ER times increased after this government started closing emergency rooms.

The wait-times report recommended delaying the Concordia closure until it could be proven that St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre are ready to handle the influx of patients that would come from tens of thousands of patients having to go elsewhere from Concordia. There is no such evidence.

We know the Premier's cuts have caused massive disruption in the health-care system. We know the plan isn't about improving care; it's about cutting cost.

You know, this minister also told us he'd be releasing the KPMG report by May 31st. Here it is.

When is he going to release that KPMG report as he and his Premier promised this Legislature?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, they are just wrong, wrong, wrong. You know, the former Health critic told Manitobans that the Zika virus was spreading across Manitoba and the RHA had to go out and correct the member opposite so there wasn't panic in the streets.

Yesterday, the member for Minto said that there was a school in Winnipeg where there were needles that were scattered all over the grounds, and the Winnipeg school division responsible had to come out and say that the member for Minto was wrong, Madam Speaker. We know, Madam Speaker, that every time they make these statements, they're wrong. Wait times have been reduced year over year and month after month.

And as for the KPMG report, he wonders where it is. He may want to listen up; this'll be a revelation: it's on the Internet, Madam Speaker.

Health-Care Services in Cross Lake Request for Provincial Commitment

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): The Province is failing to be a partner in northern Manitoba. Yesterday, I asked the minister what role he was taking in supporting Cross Lake. It's one of the largest First Nations in Canada with a population that rivals several cities in the province, yet those requiring dialysis or acute care must leave the community to receive treatment.

Will the minister be a true partner with the federal government to enhance health care for the people of Cross Lake?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I have met with officials from Cross Lake on

the commitment that was made by the federal government. Officials from my department have been involved in the planning process. We know that the federal government made a commitment. We certainly expect them to live up to their commitment and my department officials will continue to be willing to meet in the planning process of the federal government living up to their commitment.

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

Ms. Lathlin: The federal government's investment in a 24-7 health facility at Cross Lake will save the province money. It currently pays for transportation costs. The Province should be eager to engage in an open dialogue on how the Province can support this project, a project that shows value for money for the province. Instead, stakeholders told me yesterday that they have been frozen out and that the Province sees no role.

Will the minister intervene to ensure the Province shows leadership for the people of Cross Lake?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned to the member opposite, I've had the opportunity to speak with the leadership of Cross Lake on the project. Our department has been involved in the planning process as it relates to the federal government's commitment. We've continued to be open to having dialogue on that planning process and we certainly expect the federal government to live up to their commitment.

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

Ms. Lathlin: The federal government set aside funding for this new health facility in their 2016 budget, but it's been two years of inaction from the Pallister government.

There will be a presentation on Monday to show the design of this community to the community of Cross Lake.

Will the minister join me on Monday, or at the very least ensure that the Province has representation at this important announcement, and will he ensure that the Province comes as a true partner for improving health care in Cross Lake?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, the member opposite and I may not agree on everything, but we would agree, I hope, that we do need a true partner with the federal Liberal government. That is

something that's been eroded certainly since the federal Liberal government has come into place. They'd made a commitment, the Prime Minister did, to meet with premiers, one of his first actions to talk about and to negotiate a new sustainable funding model for health care in Manitoba.

That never happened, Madam Speaker, despite the tremendous efforts of our Premier (Mr. Pallister) of leading premiers across the country in trying to get that dialogue to happen. It didn't happen. I know that we continue, as a government, to want it to happen, so we're looking for a real partner for Ottawa to have sustainable funding when it comes to the health-care needs of Manitobans and all Canadians.

Education Funding K-to-12 Review

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Time and time again whenever we hear this government use the word review it's usually just a cover for more of their cuts, and increasingly these cuts are to the services that Manitobans rely on.

The Education minister has been so eager to wield the scissors that he's not even waiting for his review of the K-to-12 system, cutting funding for dozens of school divisions by millions of dollars each and every year.

The results are obvious, Madam Speaker, loss of teachers, loss of educational assistants and a loss of support staff for those teachers.

When the minister shapes his review in the months ahead my question is: Will he be focused on the improvements like, maybe, reducing class sizes, or will he continually focus on this Premier's arbitrary cuts?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I do not accept any of the member's premise in his preamble.

You know, certainly, our government is pleased to have invested a record amount in the Manitoba K-to-12 system, a \$1.323 billion this last year. So we are certainly looking forward to doing a review of the K-to-12 system, something that the previous government never got done, never had the backbone to attempt. It's the first one in a generation, and I know that many people, not only parents, but part of the school system, are really looking for opportunities to have a chance to make improvements in our school system.

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

* (14:30)

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, funding for K-to-12 schools isn't keeping up with inflation, let alone with enrollment. A closer look at this government's own budget paper shows that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is once again being—misrepresenting the facts, and now he's using accounting tricks—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —to mask their underfunding for K-to-12 education—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: Now, we know that every review that this government has conducted has resulted in cuts to the services that Manitobans rely on.

So will the minister call for improvements like small class sizes or supports for teachers, supports for schools, or is this just another exercise in cuts from this government?

Madam Speaker: I would just like to ask for members' co-operation. I'm having some difficulty hearing all of the language that is being said and all the words that are being used in the House because of the noise level in the House. So I'm actually missing out on a few of the sentences that might be coming forward, and then I can't rule on parliamentary language.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please, as we continue forward with oral questions.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member for the question. Certainly, I know members of our government and members of the general population in Manitoba are looking forward to the opportunity to review the K-to-12 system in a way that hasn't been done, as I said, in a generation.

And certainly, we are very pleased to continue funding Manitoba schools at a record level, and if the member wants to talk about statistics, we are funding Manitoba schools on a per-student basis at the second highest level of any province in Canada.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, the reality is, Madam Speaker, that the Premier's been misrepresenting the facts around educational funding for K-to-12 schools, including now money that they've moved around

between lines in the budget trying to support his false assertions. But the facts are here in black and white: K-to-12 education funding is below the rate of inflation, with absolute cuts to dozens of school divisions across the province, and this is just the beginning. The minister intends to once again follow Nova Scotia's lead in a relentless and adversarial relationship with its teachers and with the education system.

So I ask the minister: Will this review be a true effort to enhance the education system in Manitoba or just another consultant's report used as a pretext to make more cuts and more closures?

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

We are very serious about a review to the K-to-12 system, and I know that there are many Manitobans that have been in touch with us saying, when are we going to get started on this? We're really wanting input into this because we know that under the previous government, the results for our students went from fifth place to dead last in Canada.

They're looking for a chance to do better.

Provincial Nominee Program Criteria for Applicants

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, it has been just over one year to the date that I conducted a sit-in at the Legislature to urge the Minister of Education and Training to take action to improving the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program.

Now, our provincial immigration streams are a continual work in progress, so we must adapt to the changing needs of Manitoba's labour market while making the program more accommodating for potential newcomers.

Would the minister please explain what current applicants should be considering when applying for the Provincial Nominee Program?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question.

Certainly, we were very pleased to work through our department and with the—many of the people that are involved in the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program to take what was a system in great distress with four-year waits and put it in a situation where now applicants under that program are handled within six months. So that's certainly a massive improvement.

And as for what to put on an application, they need the skills that Manitoba needs in the future.

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

Professional Accreditation Recognition

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there's a great concern about professional certifications not being recognized. Think about a person who practised medicine as a doctor, then chose to immigrate to Manitoba but are forced to work at a minimum wage job not related to their field of expertise, all because their education isn't recognized.

With the new MPNP international education stream coming into effect this November, will the government use this opportunity to tear down barriers for skilled workers to pursue accreditation standards here in Manitoba?

Mr. Wishart: The member touches on the reason why we have put a special stream in for students so that they can get their accreditations here in Manitoba and there is no question about whether or not they're qualified to work in Manitoba.

As it exists to now, we certainly know that there are often many challenges in getting international accreditation recognized, which is why we have a special office of fairness to help immigrants with that process.

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

New Application Fee

Ms. Lamoureux: We know that (1) this government began charging new immigrants a non-justifiable \$500 fee for accepted applications; and (2) this minister's department acquired an increase of \$6.6 million. Madam Speaker, \$6.6 million is a lot of money.

How much of this is coming out of the pockets of new immigrants?

Mr. Wishart: I appreciate the question from the member. I know she's looking for the best service to new immigrants in Manitoba.

And I know that we recently did a call for proposals to get extra services to help with level 4 to level 8 English for those that were new immigrants to Manitoba, and that will be coming from that fee that was collected. We're doing this because the

federal government reduced their services in that area.

Winnipeg Art Gallery Funding Announcement

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): Last week, our Premier (Mr. Pallister) made an exciting announcement that will greatly help establish the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Inuit Art Centre.

Can the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage please share with this Chamber how our PC government is working hard on behalf of all Manitobans but also ensuring sustainable funding is available for our arts and cultural sectors?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I'd like to thank my colleague from the constituency of Southdale for that very, very exciting question.

Our government is very proud to support the Winnipeg Art Gallery. It really is a Manitoba cultural icon, and I am proud to say that, back in December of 2017, I was with many of my colleagues at the Royal Aviation Museum where we made a \$20-million announcement to support the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

And just last Friday, as a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I joined our Premier at the Winnipeg Art Gallery to announce a further \$5-million contribution to the Inuit Art Centre. And this will ensure that the Winnipeg Art Gallery has the ability to ensure that Manitoba is on the map, and we will have the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Sheriff Officer Shortages Impact on Public Safety

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Minister of Justice cut three sheriff officer positions, meaning larger workloads for workers and certainly stress on the justice system. These cuts come after a critical shortage in sheriff positions, leading to a dramatic rise in overtime being paid out. The minister's own department reported that nearly 32,000 overtime hours were paid out.

Appropriate staffing levels are critical to maintaining public safety and protecting our court systems, but instead, the Minister of Justice cut—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: –three positions from an already struggling workforce.

How can the minister justify these cuts to public safety?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): As I mentioned to the member yesterday, we've introduced a strategic innovation unit which will be looking at doing a review on law enforcement in Manitoba and how we're moving forward.

We're very much looking forward to the results of that review. There are better ways, I think, that we can deliver services than was previously done under the previous NDP government.

We inherited a mess in our justice system from the previous NDP government. Where they failed, we will deliver.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. John's, on a supplementary question.

* (14:40)

Ms. Fontaine: Well, actually, last year the Minister of Justice actually cancelled training classes for new sheriffs while she undertook this internal law enforcement review with actually no timelines or plan to disseminate any report. Then she released a vague criminal modernization strategy with no real commitments.

We know sheriff's officers play a key role in ensuring court processes go smoothly. Chronic staffing shortages only worsen wait times in our courts and put public safety at risk. Despite paying thousands of hours in overtime, this minister cancelled training classes and cut positions.

Will she admit that her cuts will threaten Manitoba's court system?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, the member opposite's myth of cuts is exactly that; it is a myth. In fact, we are spending more in justice, \$12 million more than members opposite ever did in the justice area.

But it's not just about spending more money; it's about spending money wisely. It's reviewing programs to ensure we create efficiencies within the system to create safer communities and more timely access to justice. That's exactly what we're doing within our criminal justice system by reducing crime, by using better use and more effective use of restorative justice, by responsible reintegration of

offenders. That's what Manitobans elected us to do, to create safer communities and provide more timely access to justice and that's exactly what we're doing.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Actually, when questioned by the media about shortages, the minister committed to increasing the use of video conferencing to reduce overtime rates. But the minister's own department made no new investments in this actual budget and actually cut funding to court operations by \$8,000, Madam Speaker.

Cutting three sheriff positions is not surprising, given the minister's cuts to restorative justice programming and prevention supports. At a time—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: –when our judicial system is in need of strategic investments, this minister is intent on cuts. Sheriff officers are struggling to maintain the same level of services with far less workers and this minister is only making it worse.

Will the minister reverse these cuts to sheriff positions and commit to reducing staffing shortages?

Mrs. Stefanson: What Manitobans elected us to do is create safer communities and provide more timely 'achess'—access to justice, and that's exactly what we're doing in our Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy.

In fact, some of the steps that we have taken, we've already seen some very positive results, especially in the areas of youth crime, Madam Speaker, where total youth crime is down 5 per cent; sexual assaults in youth, down 27 per cent; breaking and entering, down 21 per cent; motor vehicle theft, down 31 per cent; and the list goes on, Madam Speaker.

We're—we were elected to make real results, safer communities, more timely access to justice. These are just preliminary results, Madam Speaker. There's much more work to be done, but we will continue to do that work on behalf of Manitobans.

Pine Grove Rest Station and Sewage Lagoon Reeve Requests Meeting with Government

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I have a question for the minister of municipal affairs, which I hope he can answer today.

Madam Speaker, David Turchyn, the reeve of—for the RM of Reynolds wants to work with this government to find a solution that will allow them to keep their lagoon and also allow the Pine Grove rest stop to stay open.

Will the government meet with Mr. Turchyn to find a solution to keep the Pine Grove rest stop open and to give the people of Reynolds their fair say and their fair share of waste-water infrastructure?
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): In 2014, the previous NDP government—in fact, the member asking the question was part of that government—they decided to close 10 rest stops. They also offered two more rest stops to local communities and put Pine Grove rest stop under review. And never once, Madam Speaker, in the closing of the 10, of the offering the two to other communities and the putting Pine Grove under review, never once did they ever consult with the local community.

I want Manitobans to know that the review of Pine Grove will now be taking place and I've also asked my department to keep the Menisino Tower rest open until such time as we can consult with the local community.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired. Petitions?

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, on a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

In his third answer today in question period, the Minister of Health left the impression he doesn't believe that needles from illegal drug use are a concern for parents and students at Greenway School. So I'll table for him a picture of needles laying on the ground in the back lane nearby the school and also table a picture of the Street Connections van which drives around schools like Greenwood and Wellington and John M. King—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —picking up intravenous needles from illegal drug use.

I just—I tender this today and make this point of order to allow the minister to apologize to the people who live in the West End, because he has clearly left the wrong impression with his unfortunate comments today.

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker.

In one of our local papers this morning, the member for Minto claimed that there were needles scattered on the grounds of Greenway School. I was referring to the chair of the school division, Ms. Rollins, who then responded to the minister—the member for Minto and said that Greenway just recently did a full community cleanup and area cleanup, and no needles were brought to our attention, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would indicate what the member has raised is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: Any petitions?

Vimy Arena

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed by the provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial locations such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 20,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital or the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if

the land was owned by the City of Winnipeg. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence and ignores better uses for the land that would be consistent with a residential area.

(4) There are no standards that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the land acquisition for this Manitoba Housing project for the use as a drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by provincial government changes the fundamental nature of the community. Including park and recreation uses, concerns of the residents of St. James and others regarding public safety, property values and their way of life are not being properly addressed.

* (14:50)

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo and River Heights—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: —have not been considered for this Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and the operation of a drug treatment centre falls outside the statutory mandate of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The provincial government does not have a co-ordinated plan for addiction treatment in Manitoba as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running far under capacity and potential.

(9) The community has been misled regarding the true intention of Manitoba Housing as the land is being transferred for a 50-bed facility even though the project is clearly outside of Manitoba Housing's responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction treatment facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purpose of park land and recreational activities for public use, including being an important component of the Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and the Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation of PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Ave. location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to continue to be designated for parks and recreation activity—active neighbourhood/community.

This has been signed by Karen McKay, Ian McKay, Landon Mah and 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.

Further 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 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.

(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 of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous people 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 that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agents appointed by them.

Signed by Ian Christensen, Enrich [*phonetic*] Engel, Darian Millen and many, many other Manitobans.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): 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.

(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 failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the 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 that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be jointly developed with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by many Manitobans.

Gender Neutrality

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Gender, sexuality and gender identity are protected characteristics of human rights, both federally and provincially, in Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and soon will be in Saskatchewan, Yukon and other places in Canada. These governments have realized the need for this option on identification for the benefit of people who identify or who are identified by others as intersex, third gender, transgender, genderqueer or non-binary.

Identification in government documents should reflect gender neutrality to prevent issues that may arise from intentional bias on gender, and misgendering. The people described above face anxiety and discrimination in many aspects of day-to-day life such as: (a) interactions with health-care professionals; (b) interactions with persons of authority; (c) accessing government services; (d) applying for employment.

Gender neutrality describes the idea that policies, language and other social institutions should avoid distinguishing roles according to people's sex or gender in order to avoid discrimination arising from impressions that there are social roles for which one gender is more suited than another.

Many newcomers to Canada may already have gender-neutral ID.

Many indigenous persons are coming to identify as two-spirit as the effects of colonization are lessening, and this needs to be addressed in the process of reconciliation.

Being forced to accept an assigned gender affects children and newborns as they grow and become part of society. There are many psychological benefits for transgender and non-binary people to be allowed to develop without the constraints put upon them by having their gender assigned based on purely physical attributes.

The consideration to have a third option like X or Other on documents was on the previous government's radar for several years, but the current provincial government has not taken steps to implement it.

The City of Winnipeg is actively making its forms reflective of gender neutrality in respect to all persons who work for or come into contact with that government.

The federal government now issues passports and is educating personnel about the correct language and references for non-binary persons.

An Other option existed on enumeration forms for Elections Manitoba in 2016, was easily accepted, and provided a framework to provide accurate statistics of those who do not identify under the current binary system.

The foresight, along with training and making changes on required forms, acknowledges and accepts persons who fall outside the binary gender so that governments and people can more effectively interact with one another and reduce the anxieties of everyone involved.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to immediately begin implementation of plans to convert systems and forms to be more inclusive of two-spirit and other non-binary individuals, whether it be to include a third gender option or no requirement for gender on forms unless medically or statistically necessary, including health cards and birth certificates.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately instruct the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to offer a third gender option or no gender requirement for licences or any other form of provincial identification.

(3) To urge the provincial government to instruct Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living to offer the option of Manitoba Health cards with no gender in order to reduce the anxieties of transgender and non-binary persons accessing the health-care system as a first step.

(4) To consider revisiting legislation that may need updating to meet the needs of its citizens in this regard.

Signed by Shandi Strong, Alex Deezer, *[phonetic]* Matt McNeill *[phonetic]* and many others.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Would you please canvass the House for leave to waive the provisions of rule 2(14) relating to royal assent for specified bills so that (1) rather than requiring royal assent for specified bills to happen before the end of the sitting day on May 31st, 2018, royal assent for all eligible bills will begin no later than 5 p.m. on June 4th, 2018; (2) the House will not rise on June 4th, 2018, until after royal assent has been granted for all eligible bills; and (3) after 5 o'clock on June 4th, 2018, matters of privilege and points of order will be deferred until after royal assent for all eligible bills has been completed.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to waive the provisions of rule 2(14) relating to royal assent for specified bills so that (1) rather than requiring royal assent for specified bills to happen before the end of the sitting day on May 31st, 2018, royal assent for all eligible bills will begin no later than 5 p.m. on June 4th, 2018; (2) the House will not rise on June 4th, 2018, until after royal assent has been granted for all eligible bills; and (3) after 5 p.m. on June 4th, 2018, matters of privilege and points of order will be deferred until after royal assent for all eligible bills has been completed? Is that agreed to? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Cullen: I thank all members for that leave.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, would you call Committee of Supply and the concurrence motion?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence this afternoon. The House will now resolve itself into Committee Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

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

We have it now before us the consideration for the concurrence motion moved by the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) on May 28th, 2018.

The Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) previously tabled the following list of ministers to be called for questioning in debate on the concurrence motion: the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) and the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton). I will now note that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was on the list as well, but in accordance to the rule 78-7, the First Minister is only eligible to be called in concurrence for a maximum of three days, which has already occurred this week. Therefore, the Premier's name will be automatically be removed from the list.

The ministers are now questioning concurrently, and the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Just to review this government's track record on climate change to date. Since they came to office two years ago, there has not been a single new program introduced for anyone to be able to use to reduce their emissions. The massive amounts of new revenue that will be coming to the government, not a single penny of it is going to be spent on the green economy or in helping anyone save money and reduce their emissions. This has managed to annoy and aggravate a wide range of stakeholders, everyone from the Manitoba Trucking Association straight through to Green Action committee. In fact, the government is instead going to put all the money into tax cuts which will provide benefits to the richest families in Manitoba that are 10 times larger than the benefits that will go—the rebates that will go back to the poorest citizens in our society.

They have also, in their legislation, proposed to use a phony accounting system which no one else in the world or in the United Nations uses. They will only try to account emissions of that they feel they have reduced, while ignoring all other sectors of the economy where emissions may have increased. They are also going to use something phony called cumulative emissions, so that when they offer their reporting, any reduction that happened in the first year will be multiplied by five times and included in

that way at the end of their five-year reporting period. The phony reporting period will also not see this government provide any true documentation of the emissions in Manitoba until well after the next election.

On top of it all, the government has also cut funding to public transit clear across the province. They have destroyed the Power Smart brand and all of the work gone there with their rather botched move to something called Efficiency Manitoba, which still has no plan, no budget, no timeline, and no staff doing any work to actually help anyone reduce their emissions. They have let large emitters off of the hook, completely, from the carbon tax. They have excluded agriculture; they have excluded landfills; and, in fact, only half of the emissions in Manitoba are going to see the carbon tax assigned to it at all.

* (15:10)

Meanwhile, they have proposed, through their new board at Manitoba Hydro, that our green electricity should increase by 70 per cent in price, but there should only be a one-time increase on fossil fuel front—5 cents on a litre of gas is less than a 5 per cent increase, one time, at the pumps. For a group of people that claim to understand basic economics, the evidence suggests to the contrary.

They are taking us in exactly the wrong direction. They have consistently ignored good ideas from all sides of this House. They have voted against a private member's bill that would've seen emissions from apartment blocks reduced and renters' vulnerability to rent increases and increasing utility costs addressed by retrofitting buildings using carbon tax revenue. They didn't like that idea. They've ignored similar ideas that would see electric vehicles become more available through no-interest, long-term loans, both for individuals and for businesses, government fleets and for private individuals, their private vehicles, as well as for public transit. They've similarly ignored the idea of using carbon revenues to provide composting programs in all cities across Manitoba.

In fact, Mr. Chair, with the exception of one announcement where they provided a \$200,000 increase to the prairie climate research centre, an institution that we established, in partnership with others, at the University of Winnipeg, that is the only thing this government has done in the backdrop to all of the negative impacts

that I have just mentioned on their record of climate change.

So my question for the minister, quite simply, are there other lousy things her government has done that I missed in this list?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Well, I appreciate the member's opposite rambling stream of conscious thought that he just put into the record. And I do recognize that he is coming to the end of his time in this House and is reflecting on his abysmal record on climate change.

And he talked about phoniness. And he knows a lot about phoniness. His entire government's climate plan was phony. Their initiatives to reduce carbon emissions was phony. Their targets were phony. Everything was phony about that member's opposite time in government and their commitment to the environment. And, quite frankly, where they failed to protect even one inch of this province's environment, where they failed to reduce any emissions of importance, except when there was a major recession—they continued to take Manitoba back further and further and further—but where they failed—just like when the former member for St. Boniface, the MLA for Wolseley's boss, came into my office and said to me, you know, I'm sorry; we got it wrong on the environment—just like he said to the Manitoba people when he was going for re-election—I'm sorry; we got it wrong on a lot of fronts. He came to my office and he looked me straight in the face, and he says, I'm sorry; we got it wrong on the environment, and what we did—where we failed, I certainly hope you'll make things right.

And that's what the former member for St. Boniface, the MLA for Wolseley's boss, had said to me. And I'm sure that as he's sitting here reflecting on his last days in this House, he's probably thinking along the same lines of his former leader.

And, with that, I would like to table the documents requested by members opposite last week, which is the technical backgrounder on our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan. The document can be accessed at www.gov.mb.ca/climateandgreenplan. I encourage members opposite to read it. I know—I can provide him the documents; I can read it for him, but I cannot make him understand it, so hopefully he can find somebody who has a little bit of understanding about the environment and who can share it with him and help him understand what this government is doing for climate change.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, I'll just point out to the minister that much of the information that I just put on the record came from her. It was stream of consciousness, maybe, but let's consider the source.

She was the one who confirmed for me, when we had a meeting about her government's legislation, that they were going to use a cumulative emissions process. No one else in the world tries to cheat the numbers like that. It would basically mean that if the government found even a tiny decrease in emissions in any sector, that they could take credit for it. In year one of their five-year reporting period, they would multiply that by fivefold when it came time to report on the end of their five-year program.

Everyone else in the world reports emissions on an annual basis and a reduction is only counted once. It's this own minister who admitted that that's not what they're doing on either case.

And, as for what our government did in office, well, let's see: Brady landfill now has a landfill gas capture system. Who was it that brought in legislation to require that to happen? That would have been our government.

We also have a landfill in Brandon, which has been capped and is now capturing landfill gas. Who did that? That was us.

On the biofuels front there was a government which brought in an ethanol mandate and a biodiesel mandate, both of which are still in place. That was us.

We supported curbside composting in Brandon. That was done by our government. We greatly expanded the Power Smart program from the dismal status that it was in, left over from the Filmon government, not just for individuals, but also for industry. That would have been a part of our government's record.

We promoted the use and subsidized the adoption of hybrid-vehicle technology when it first came up.

We—check for this—we worked with other people and other levels of government to provide the world with one of the first all-electric buses on the planet. That was a partnership between Mitsubishi Heavy Industries or Heavy Industries division, and Red River College, Manitoba Hydro, and ourselves and New Flyer Industries to put that bus on the road. That was our government's record.

The only reason this government even has the option to expand electric vehicle usage in Manitoba—not that they've done that, of course—but the only reason it's even an option is because of work that we did while in office.

We brought in a green building policy such that any new building or any building undergoing a significant addition or renovation had to meet LEED Silver qualifications. That was done by our government.

We greened the grid by shutting down the coal plants, replacing them with natural gas and barely using them. That's why Manitoba's one of the few places in the world that has 99 per cent of its electricity come from no fossil fuels.

And, lo and behold, we were actually a positive voice speaking in favour of climate science, speaking in favour of climate action at both the national level and the international level, whereas this government has done nothing but cause problems at the national level and doesn't even bother engaging in the international discussions on climate change anymore at all.

All of which is to say, Mr. Chair, that the minister is certainly entitled to her point of view. She is not entitled to her own facts. These are the facts. This is what we did in office, and we made significant progress in reducing the emissions growth that we had inherited from the Filmon government.

She can go check the stats herself, not that she'll want to, but the option is there. Anyone can do it, and they will show quite clearly, under the Filmon Tories, emissions in Manitoba were getting larger and larger every single year. They were almost two megatons—two million tons larger by the time that godawful decade of the 1990s was finally brought to a close and the Filmon government was put to rest.

Now, in 2016, the rate—the average rate of emissions in Manitoba has dropped by over 90 per cent from that rate. You do not make that progress by doing nothing. You do not make that progress by making things worse, which is what this government is doing.

So I will ask the minister again: Can she tell us what the emissions in Manitoba in 2018, the current year, will be when it is reported on a couple of years from now?

Ms. Squires: And the members opposite talked about negotiating with other levels of government,

and I would just like to remind him his former government's record when it came to negotiating with other levels of government, including the United States, and, of course the member opposite knows we have a significant interest in working with our partners south of the border considering they send a great deal of water and nutrients here to Manitoba, and so his government's record, according to a leaked document that was revealed on WikiLeaks, his former, former leader, or was it former, former, former leader—I can't keep track of the cycling leaders that the NDP are going through—but it was one of the leaders that had said that the negotiations were unfortunately disingenuous and that they had taken on an air of empty moralizing.

* (15:20)

I think that pretty much sums up 17 years of NDP government is the air of empty moralizing.

Where they failed to reduce even any amount of carbon emissions, where they failed to protect any amount of the environment in Manitoba, where they failed, we're going to deliver.

Mr. Altemeyer: Oh, that's funny. The minister is fun to watch. I will give her that. She's never shy to take a whole range of facts which I just put on the record, ignore them completely and try and change the channel. So unless she does have something further to say about climate change, I welcome her to do that.

Right now, the record stands uncontested that as I described, this government has done almost nothing to make things better, and they have done close to a dozen things—major things—to make climate emissions in Manitoba much worse. So that's their record.

She can keep talking about, they're going to get right. They have no evidence to put on the table to suggest that that has happened, and I would encourage her to fix that because we only have one planet and we only have so many more decades before our children's and our grandchildren's future is literally cooked.

Now, the minister happened to bring up another favourite topic of mine, and that's water. And she would have us believe that our former Premier Gary Doer standing up for the water rights of Manitobans is a bad thing.

When someone is going to put pollution in the water that your citizens, that your municipalities, that

your industries, that your province, that your ecosystems depend upon, that is not being inappropriate. That is called doing your job.

So let me ask the minister: When is her government finally going to make a public statement opposed to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project in North Dakota, which could bring as many as two dozen additional foreign invasive species into Manitoba on top of a whole bunch of other additional problems?

They have stayed silent on this for months. It's time for action.

Ms. Squires: Well, speaking of action, the only action that occurred under member's opposite time in government was south of the border, they had spent \$135 million and laid several metres of transmission pipe to allow the water to flow across the continental divide.

What did members opposite do while the Americans were building all that transmission pipeline? What was he doing when the Americans were spending \$135 million towards building the water supply projects to bring in all of the water?

He now stands from a very eroding pedestal and purports to have taken action against the activities that were going on south of the border. We know their record. It was the air of empty moralizing and unfortunately disingenuous.

While they were filled with false rhetoric and their empty moralizing and their example of a failed diplomacy in their engagement with the United States, they—the Americans were proceeding full speed ahead on building the water transmission pipeline, on spending \$135 million towards the project.

They failed to prevent not an absolute, single project from being done.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, the Red River isn't all that deep, but this minister's drowning, quite clearly. Let's start with the facts here. It's not a water transmission pipeline. You don't put electricity and water through a pipe. We're—you know, it's—I'm sure it's in the briefing book somewhere.

This—these projects are something the Americans have wanted for decades and it was our government, Madam Minister, yes, our NDP government which stopped them both. It is now your job to continue that task and make sure they don't happen under the

terms of the injunctions that we won and the diplomatic victories that we won south of the border.

And I want to thank everybody in the public and in the environmental community and the civil servants and the lawyers who helped us make our case time and time again. We actually went into the US court system and we won. These projects would already exist if it hadn't been for our government.

Now, the US rulings did allow North Dakota to implement some parts of their project. We had no ability to stop that. But the projects were not finished. And as much the minister is now toting a \$130-million expenditure, in order to complete Red River Valley Water Supply, North Dakota will need to spend over a billion. So this project is nowhere near completion.

And the minister cannot possibly expect anyone with two brain cells to rub together, outside of her caucus, that the water treatment issue can just continue to be ignored. Right on the project's website it says: North Dakota has not decided what level of treatment that water is going to get before they ship it north, if it's going to get any water treatment at all.

This minister hasn't even contacted the federal Minister of Foreign Affairs to engage the federal government in launching a process under the International Joint Commission. That's the body which is only a hundred years old, it's only helped to resolve multiple water disputes across borders for decades, and she hasn't even activated that option. And here's the reason why. It's because her government is in favour of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

Will the minister please confirm that for me?

Ms. Squires: The member is clearly wrong.

Mr. Altemeyer: Will the minister, then, be prepared to issue a public news release, I'll even co-sign it with her, saying that both political parties—perhaps we can ask the Liberals, maybe it can be a unanimous position—that this House is opposed to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. If she wants to ask her staff to draft it, I will sign it this afternoon. Would she be willing to do that?

Ms. Squires: I see the member is working towards—the most unified pledge he ever came up with was his solidarity pledge, and I would suggest he focus on that work.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, this minister yesterday had to walk back from a rather glaring—she came

dangerously close to doing something useful for the environment, and maybe she's trying to do that now. I thought I just heard her say that I was wrong, that, you know, she is actually opposed to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Maybe she didn't hear me clearly. I will ask her directly again.

What is her government's position, in favour or opposed, to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project in North Dakota? Do they like it? Do they hate it? Are they going to do anything about it ever?

Ms. Squires: Well, Madam Speaker, our government has taken a very proactive approach. We're negotiating with all the partners involved in this project. We take the water quality very seriously.

Let me remind the member opposite about his record when it came to water and, you know, when, in 2013, when Lake Winnipeg was called the most threatened lake in the world. And I know member opposite, he had a view from the upper bench, but I wonder if the member walked into his minister's office at the time and said, could you do something about the cleanup of Lake Winnipeg? When aquatic invasive species, when he was warned by Dr. Eva Pip in 2013 that aquatic invasive species were coming and that his government was doing absolutely nothing, did he walk into his minister's office and say, can you do something? Or perhaps it was members opposite who had advised the—that his government to waste over a half a million dollars and dump a bunch of potash in the river for no effect. So I wonder if he had made those recommendations to his minister during his time when they were in government.

And I'm certain that he did not, because he seemed to have had no voice on the environment for 17 years. He did have, you know, the wherewithal to hop on an airplane to Paris, take—snap a selfie in front of the Eiffel Tower and promote his own initiatives on the environment, then fly down to Mexico, stick a \$5,000 cellphone bill to the taxpayer and then rush in this House with a solidarity pledge. So that was his—the sum total of his contributions during his time in office.

And, where his government did absolutely nothing to prevent not one single aquatic invasive species from coming into our waterways, our government will take a strong stand at protecting water in this province.

* (15:30)

Mr. Altemeyer: The minister referenced that she is actually in discussions with, quote, all the stakeholders. Will she share with the House what her government representatives have apparently shared with stakeholders about the Red River Valley Water Supply Project?

Ms. Squires: So here's the thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Member opposite, he does a little bit of poorly conducted research; it turns up negligible findings because he doesn't commit to doing a thorough research, and then he comes in this House and he says, oh, you've done nothing; you've engaged with no one. And I would like to remind the members opposite that we understand that research is hard, and we understand that writing FIPAs is also very challenging. And I wish him all the best at his continued—or maybe future success. He hasn't had a lot of success to date, but I wish him some success in the future on writing those FIPAs.

But I can appreciate that research is hard for members opposite and—but just because he can't find something doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, I'm giving the minister the opportunity to actually share with Manitobans what her government's position is on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Is the minister saying that Americans in North Dakota have a better understanding of where their government is at on this issue than Manitobans do? Why is she hiding her government's position from the people that she's supposed to be accountable to?

Ms. Squires: The answer is no.

Mr. Altemeyer: It was a why question, Mr. Speaker. You can't answer no to a why question. Try again.

Ms. Squires: I'm not even sure that there is a coherent question in that stream-of-conscious, rambling thought from this member opposite. So I'd ask him to rephrase that, if he could.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, this is not going to be tough. Why is the minister telling Americans what her government's position is on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project, but she's hiding that information from Manitobans?

Ms. Squires: Well, and there is no question, because his assertion is completely false. There is not one word of truth in that false question. And so how can I answer a question that is based on a false premise?

Mr. Altemeyer: Okay. It's the first time I've heard a question called false. Usually, you get asked the

question, you know, true or false, on your exam in, oh, grade 3. And 50 per cent of the time, if you're guessing, you'll get it right, and then 55 per cent—50 per cent of the time when you're answering, you might get it wrong. And it's the answers that are false, not the questions.

So the minister has refused to tell us what her government's position is on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project which could have devastating impacts on our province. Her government has refused to take any action at all. She has insinuated, in her own words just moments ago, that her government is in communication with stakeholders on the project. But she is refusing to reveal what her government's position is now. But she will share it, presumably, with people who might not even be Canadian citizens.

Minister, what on earth would you expect Manitobans to take from this conversation?

Ms. Squires: There were so many false assertions in that rambling stream-of-conscious preamble, and while the question might have been, you know, right at the tail end, it was based on an assertion that was entirely false. So I would encourage the member opposite to put aside his mansplaining. I would encourage the member opposite to put aside his, you know, false assertions. And if he wants a question—if he wants to ask a question, I will provide an answer.

Mr. Altemeyer: We've come full circle. What is her government's position on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project? Sorry to keep mansplaining in that question somehow.

Ms. Squires: Well, and I'll repeat my answer, and that we're engaged with our multiple stakeholders on this side of the border and south of the border. I have shared that with the member.

I have shared with the member that our government takes the water quality very seriously. And I have assured Manitobans that we are working to protect our water system, our watershed here in Manitoba.

We're very pleased that on—hopefully, in the next few days, our government's Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act, which is a huge step forward in protecting Manitoba waterways, will be passed in this House. It's—I know members opposite had said that they were going to support this legislation, but we also know that they say a lot of things that they don't mean, and they do a lot of things that they

probably don't even have an understanding of why they're doing it.

But I'm certain—I'm certainly hopeful that this member will support Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act, and continue to support our government as we're working to cleaning up the watershed.

Mr. Altemeyer: So we got a little bit more of a glimmer there. The minister did acknowledge that stakeholders south of the border are included in these stakeholders that her government has been talking to.

Tell me, when Manitoba's government officials have meetings with these stakeholders, do they say anything, or do they just sit in the room and count that as engaging stakeholders? What is—what are the orders, what direction has this minister or this government—if it's someone else, other than her calling the shots on this file—what instructions do Manitoba's representatives have when it comes to the Red River Valley Water Supply project? This is such a confusing lack of answers from this government. And here's why: after we raised the profile of this project and of its sister project, the NAWS project—Northwest Area Water Supply project—the government was finally coerced into doing the right thing.

They finally did what they should've done right away, and that was file an appeal of the judge's decision in North Dakota which allows the NAWS project to proceed. That was an injunction that we had in place, it was one that we had won in court, while we were in office. The judge had changed her ruling, and the government finally filed an appeal to it. And in filing that appeal, what was the minister's rationale? Oh, there's foreign invasive species in there. Oh, there's a lot of excess nutrients in there. It's the same source of water that the Red River Valley Water Supply project is going to do. Exactly the same threats to Manitoba's waterways exist in both projects, so on one, they've actually finally done the right thing. And on the second one, they won't even tell us what their position is.

So, when the minister sends her stakeholders to meet with Americans, or to meet with whoever it may be, what position do those stakeholders communicate on behalf of Manitobans, when it comes to the future of the Red River Valley Water Supply project? Are they speaking in favour of the project? Do they want it amended? Are they opposed outright? Or do they just say nothing and sit in the room with their hands over their mouths?

Ms. Squires: They advocate for the—for all Manitobans and the protection of Manitoba waterways.

Mr. Altemeyer: Do they do that by saying they are opposed to the Red River Valley Water Supply project?

Ms. Squires: They enter into negotiations with integrity and with honour, and with the—Manitoba's future—best interest at heart.

Mr. Altemeyer: Has the minister written to the federal Minister of Foreign Affairs asking for the International Joint Commission to become involved in this issue?

Ms. Squires: Our government has been engaged with numerous stakeholders and other elected officials on a variety of topics. We are in constant communication with our partners when it comes to all aspects of the environment, protecting Manitoba waterways, protecting the environment and working on transitioning to the low carbon future.

Mr. Altemeyer: For the record, that's a no. So with the time that I have left, why don't we shift gears slightly to a new water topic? Northern Walleye. Has the minister had any meetings or briefings on that lovely file recently?

Ms. Squires: Yes.

* (15:40)

Mr. Altemeyer: Is she willing to share with the House the results of that discussion or briefing?

Ms. Squires: I'm very happy to meet with everyone who's concerned about Manitoba fisheries. And we know that our fisheries are a strong asset in the province of Manitoba, and we're very concerned about a lot of the mismanagement of the fisheries that we'd inherited from the NDP government.

And so we're in a lot of discussions, and I know I am with the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton) and the MLA for Interlake and the MLA for Selkirk and many of my colleagues who represent many constituents who are involved in the fisheries.

Mr. Altemeyer: Just to refresh the minister's memory and everyone else's, Northern Walleye is the name of the company which, from the very first day of the end of the single desk in the freshwater fishery in Manitoba, following legislation that this minister brought in—Northern Walleye was the one which immediately began collecting freshwater fish from

four fish sheds in the Interlake, promising glorious prices and then did not pay the fishers for their catch.

On top of that—well, actually, pause there for a moment. Additional detail: the regulations underneath this act which the minister herself brought in—the regulations make it very clear that fishers have to be paid for their catch within a specific period of time.

This happened back in early December. We are now on the last day of May. Suffice to say that time period is long past, and yet this fish dealer still has their licence to operate. That licence had been granted by this minister, the same minister who brought in the legislation which created this possibility in the first place.

How much worse, Madam Minister, does Northern Walleye's track record have to get before she will suspend their licence?

Ms. Squires: So I have to apologize to the Chamber. I had taken my earpiece out of my ear when the member was yelling at me, and I failed to put my earpiece back in my ear, and so I didn't hear that question.

An Honourable Member: No, you were talking to Cliff.

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes. For the record, the minister was talking to one of her colleagues, which is fine, but don't blame it on me. Believe me, when I'm—if I ever start yelling, everyone will be able to hear it.

I will repeat the question though, Mr. Chair. The minister knows full well that Northern Walleye has failed in its legal obligation to pay the fishers who caught the fish that Northern Walleye took and didn't pay them for it.

How much worse does Northern Walleye's behaviour have to get before she will exercise powers she has under regulations that she brought in herself, which enables her to suspend the licence of a fish dealer who is not complying with the rules that are supposed to be there for everyone?

Ms. Squires: So, to clarify, I had taken my earpiece out when he'd asked about if I'd had any conversations about walleye. I—that's what I thought the question was. I hadn't heard the full question and had not realized that he'd specifically asked me if I'd had any conversations with Northern Walleye.

So I would like to revert back to that question, if I may.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay.

Ms. Squires: The answer is yes.

Mr. Altemeyer: How much worse does Northern Walleye's behaviour have to get before the minister will suspend their licence?

Ms. Squires: Well—and speaking about how much worse behaviour has to get, I wonder how much worse this member's behaviour can get in this House.

Now, I don't have a problem with him taking potshots at me, and I know many members of our government, we don't really have an issue when this member gets on his eroding pedestal and takes potshots at all of us.

But I will tell you that the one thing that I do take great offence to is when this member, and when members across the way, continuously cast aspersions against hard-working civil servants such as the chief conservation officer, who has headed up the special investigations unit, who's taken this matter, at my direction, very, very seriously and has conducted a very thorough investigation. And so I do take exception when this member casts aspersions about the hard-working civil service who go to work every day to fulfill their jobs with integrity and work for the betterment of all Manitoba resources.

And I would also like to warn this member that he treads dangerously close to the line when he continuously asks information about a matter that is under investigation. I have shared with him multiple times that everything involved in the unacceptable delay in payment to four fish sheds is under a thorough investigation, and I would just ask him to respect that process. And he doesn't have to respect me in my role; I don't care. But he certainly shouldn't be casting aspersions against the hard-working individuals who are working on this.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I have questions for the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) and also for the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson). I'm not sure how to answer—or ask the question to the Minister of Justice. If anyone can please advise, that would be great.

Mr. Chair, can you advise?

Mr. Chairperson: I just want to let the member from Assiniboia know that the—you asked for some questions to the Minister of Sustainable Development, so if we can start with her first.

Mr. Fletcher: I'd like to thank the Minister of Sustainable Development for—and the opposition for allowing the opportunity.

Really fast: carbon tax. The government seems to say they—the made-in-Manitoba carbon tax is still a carbon tax. If you accept that the feds can implement it, which they can, why not take the position of all the other Conservative parties in Canada that a carbon tax is nothing but a revenue grab? That's the first question.

Second question is dealing with Efficiency Manitoba. The Public Utilities Board report just came out about a month ago saying that efficiencies around Manitoba Hydro are not appropriate. The government claims that the campaign promise was based on a public hearing in 2014. But what they don't say is that there was no mandate or no suggestion of creating a new Crown corporation. And, in fact, Public Utilities Board just last month has stated that the efficiency, quote, unquote, programs are nonsense and will just cost Manitobans billions over time.

The other point that I would raise is Efficiency Manitoba, the Crown, has a huge amount of mission creep. Nowhere did we run on regulating potable water, transportation, on natural gas and the dozens of other things that are listed in the bill in part 2, section 4(1), which is the purpose.

* (15:50)

And specifically, I'd like to ask the minister: If electricity is clean in Manitoba, which it is, and Efficiency Manitoba has the mandate of reducing our demand from this clean water source or power source by 1.5 per cent per year, where are the carbon reductions? There are no carbon reductions, is the answer. In fact, by creating—trying to reduce demand for something that we have too much of by a thousand megawatts so much—with dams coming online providing more power, it just shows the absurdity of the main purpose apparently of Efficiency Manitoba. So there won't be any greenhouse gases that are reduced because Manitoba power is virtually clean. They're mandated to reduce the power consumption by 1.5 per cent. We learn from the Public Utilities Board that this Crown is going to cost billions of dollars over time, and it's not going to do anything for the environment.

Madam Speaker—or Mr. Chair, I wonder if the minister can help us through that. And, finally, I wonder if the minister can address the issue of why

it's important to have sustainable development, why Manitoba is a great place to invest when it comes to high-electricity-demand industries. And I wonder if the minister can tell us why Manitoba is the best place in the world.

Thank you.

Ms. Squires: Well, this is a breath of fresh air to see my friend from Assiniboia in the chair asking questions. And I do enjoy our dialogue and continue to enjoy our dialogue. We have a mutual interest in the environment and in sustainable development. And I do appreciate some of his insights.

Last week I did—I was asked about the modelling that we use to develop our carbon price and how we thought we were going to, how we would assert to reduce 1.07 megatons of carbon based on the price signal alone. And I shared with the members opposite that that information was in a very technical backgrounder and I tabled that this afternoon, so I certainly hope the member had received it, and I tabled that document before he entered the House. So I certainly hope he received it. And I know our clerks will certainly get him a copy. And I think it was—partly, I was negligent in not getting three copies so that might be the delay in my sharing and getting that information to you.

So, in that question—there were several questions in that one question, and I'm not sure if my failing memory will capture all of the questions enough and provide a satisfactory answer, but I certainly will endeavour in the time that I have. And so, but the member, I know—we're good friends—he will forgive me if I do not answer in the fullest on some of those questions, and we can certainly have ongoing dialogue about that.

So he asked about our emission reductions on the carbon price, and, again, our modelling, which he now has, will confirm for him that we will achieve 1.07 megatons of emission reductions over a five-year period of time. Now this is on the price signal alone.

As the member knows, we did also release a 64-page, robust Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan which has an array of initiatives that we're looking at to reduce our carbon footprint in other ways, looking at what we can do at the landfill for composting and diverting a lot of the organics from the landfill so we are not creating the methane. We certainly believe that the best way to reduce methane is to not create it in the first place, and so

looking at ways in which we can reduce the methane gas, which the member knows is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. And so the more methane that we can reduce through diverting our compostables and reducing the contents of our landfills, the better off we will be.

We are looking at an array of initiatives for the Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan, including \$102-million commitment to the Conservation Trust, which will be a fund that will generate revenue in perpetuity for investments in green infrastructure. And we do believe that those investments in green infrastructure will help us reduce our carbon footprint.

The member had also brought up Efficiency Manitoba and the very reason that he—what he pointed out, in that the focus on reducing renewable, clean, made-in-Manitoba electricity is not going to move us ahead in leaps and bounds in reducing our carbon footprint. And the member is absolutely correct in that we know that our grid is very clean. We've got one of the cleanest electricity grids in the nation, and we're very proud of that. And the more that we can switch the focus from reducing reliance on fossil fuels, the better off we'll be in terms of reducing our carbon footprint. So we're certainly cognizant of the shortcomings of the former Power Smart Plan; that is why we accepted the PUB recommendation to establish Efficiency Manitoba, which, of course, the member opposite ran under a platform that had promoted that as one our campaign promises to establish Efficiency Manitoba. And we were very proud last week to introduce the chair, the new chair of Efficiency Manitoba. I know Jeannette Montufar is going to be an incredible asset to Efficiency Manitoba and working towards helping us reduce our—using Efficiency Manitoba to reduce carbon—

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

Mr. Fletcher: In regard to the Minister of Justice's (Mrs. Stefanson) questions, I will just simply table the documents that I wanted to refer to her.

But, when it comes to the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), I'd like to thank her for using up her full five minutes, because in that five minutes, I was able—thank you, to the clerks—to get the tabled documents and read some very interesting sections on the documents. And I refer to figure 2, which, thankfully, is at the beginning of the document, where it says, first, there

can be no greenhouse gas efficiencies for reducing electric power in Manitoba. That's exactly what I'm saying. So why are we doing it? The minister's own document says that. A nice graph. The carbon tax, the models, the outline—and this, I've only had four minutes, maybe three, to look it over—they outline four scenarios from \$10 per ton, to \$150 per ton.

Mr. Chair, \$150 a ton? Yes, that may help reduce consumption, but it's also ridiculous. The fact that there is any carbon tax demonstrates that it is simply a revenue generation scheme. Manitoba is complicit with its made-in-Manitoba plan. *[interjection]* It should—

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Point of order—excuse me, the point of order on the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): And I apologize to the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher). Just in respect of protocols, I need to just advise the House that I will continue along with the same list for concurrence when we return.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), but it's not a point of order, but thank you for giving us the information.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: It's four o'clock, p.m., the committee rises.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Speaker: The time being 4 p.m., in accordance with rule 2(21), the House will now proceed directly to completion of concurrence and third reading of specified government bills. The House will not adjourn until all of the applicable questions have been put. Given that Bill 5, The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act, has already had the concurrence and third reading motion moved and debated, the House will proceed directly to a vote on concurrence and third reading of that bill.

Following the vote on Bill 5, the House will then proceed to deal with concurrence and third reading of specified government bills, using the following process: I will recognize the government minister to move the concurrence and third reading motion, with the minister also having up to 10 minutes to speak in debate. Following the minister, the opposition critic

and each independent member will also have the opportunity to each speak for up to 10 minutes in the debate; following the debate, the question will be put on the concurrence and third reading motion. This process will be used for bills 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 5—The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call the question on concurrence and third reading of Bill 5, The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 3—The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended)

Madam Speaker: We shall now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended).

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler) that Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: We look forward to the passing third reading of this bill and it receiving royal assent. This is the final implementation to be in full compliance with the Canadian free trade agreement act and various amendments to it. And, given the situation that we see in other provinces right now, particularly between Alberta and British Columbia on a pipeline issue, the fact that you can't take beer into Nova Scotia means that we've still got a lot of work to do under the Canadian free trade agreement act, but we look forward to working on these—resolving these issues, and we know that Manitoba will be at the forefront of leading the free trade across this country and around the world. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): This bill itself, I guess, isn't really the problem. The problem is what was negotiated by this government in the name of a free trade agreement. Or, I guess, more importantly, what wasn't negotiated by this government during the Estimates process. We've asked the minister some questions about the free trade agreement itself and how it applied. He didn't really know the answer to some of it.

We talked about some of the addendums, appendixes, if you will, to the free trade act that other jurisdictions, other provinces, built some protections in for some of their Crown services. This government didn't do that. They didn't build protections in for procurement. They didn't build protections in for anything. A lot of other jurisdictions had multiple things that—exceptions, protections, if you will, that talked about things like, if you mine it here, then you process it here. They built in some reciprocal agreements in some cases so that if somebody had—one of the jurisdictions had said that people from out of the province couldn't work on a project, then, conversely, somebody from out of the province couldn't work on their project.

This government refused to protect working people in Manitoba. They didn't build any of that in. They refused to protect jobs. They refused to protect the future. And, when we went to a separate bill briefing on this, the minister's department explained to us that, well, they thought they would just leave the page blank, and everyone else would magically follow suit, when at some point in time, I'm assuming—and perhaps wrongfully assuming—that they noticed that other jurisdictions weren't following suit. They were actually trying to protect some things in their province. They may have actually had the best interests of people in their province in mind because they recognized that they were the government for the people of their province.

This government failed to recognize that throughout the whole process. They just sat back and watched as other jurisdictions built protections in, and they built nothing in. They sat back and just hoped—hoped—that everybody else would leave the slate blank and that everything would be all sunshine and roses and pixie dust, I guess. I don't know.

Clearly, this government let down the people of Manitoba when they were in the free trade negotiation. They let the people of Manitoba down when they were in the New West Partnership negotiation. As they've done in a lot of things, I

guess, Madam Speaker, they've let the people of Manitoba down time and time and time again.

This free trade agreement that they've signed on to is not good for Manitoba working people. It may be good for some Manitoba businesses, but it won't be good for the people that are trying to make a living working for some of those businesses. I mean, when we look at protections brought in by other jurisdictions like our friends to the west in Saskatchewan, they protected some procurement things for Sask. hydro—or SaskPower I guess it is, in that province. This government didn't follow suit. They left the procurement parts empty, hoping that Saskatchewan would do the same. Saskatchewan—marginally better, I guess—said, well, wait a minute; that's not in the province of Saskatchewan's best interests. So they didn't follow suit. They didn't follow Manitoba's absence of protecting their citizens. They put some things in that actually protected SaskPower from the procurement end of things.

We spent some time during the Estimates process talking about some of those exceptions and some things that other jurisdictions had built in that protected certain levels, I guess, at the Canadian-European trade agreement levels to make sure that at least those minimums were maintained. This government didn't do that. This minister was, you know, I guess, just not paying attention, or maybe he didn't understand. Maybe the trade deals were too complex for him. The direction, I guess, that he gave the people that were actually negotiating from his department was, don't do anything. Let everybody else have their way. Let everybody else protect what they want. Let everybody else look after the citizens of their province. We will do nothing to protect people in this province. We'll just sit back and pretend that everybody's going to do the same when clearly they didn't, and at no point in time did the government wake up to the fact that, wait a minute, everybody else isn't just following suit. Everybody else—everybody else—every other signatory to that Canadian Free Trade Agreement did build some things in, some exceptions, some things that allowed their citizens to be somewhat protected in this free trade agreement. This government didn't.

* (16:10)

So, while this implementation act that we're talking about here today changes a bunch of different acts so that this government can get away with what it did to the people of Manitoba, we should all be

ashamed that the government of Manitoba failed to govern for Manitoba.

And, with those few words, I will conclude my remarks and just want to impress, as strongly as possible, that this free trade agreement as negotiated by this government is wrong, because this government abandoned the people of Manitoba.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, we have to understand the industries that contribute to Manitoba's economic prosperity. We have some of the best industries right here in our province. We produce some of the best buses in the world, and our aerospace industry is a world-class level. As well, we are one of the most important hog exporters to Europe and the United States. But these industries rely on domestic as well as international trade in order to thrive and flourish; this is one of the key reasons why trade should be a top priority.

Our caucus encourages any legislation that supports and improves Manitoba's capacity to trade with our provincial and international neighbours. Madam Speaker, I believe that Bill 3 does just that: It represents interest from different levels coming together to ensure a common, fruitful economic prosperity. It does this through modernizing trade rules that assist the transportation of goods and services, and investment and labour mobility. It also eliminates trade barriers, expands procurement coverage and promotes regulatory co-operation.

Madam Speaker, we recognize when it comes to trade deals, you win some and you lose some. Nonetheless, our caucus sees that the Canadian Free Trade Agreement is beneficial to Manitoba's economy; opening up trade with the rest of Canada gives our province access to a cohesive, vibrant, diverse and strong economic region. We are happy to be supporting this bill. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Free trade is obviously a important concept. Any agreement needs to be a good deal. It's not necessarily, by definition, a good deal with using the words free trade. However, I do think this bill is an improvement over what we have had.

We, in Canada, seem to have more trade barriers between provinces than we do with other countries. Free trade with the United States, and then with Mexico, now with Europe, the entire continent of Europe, soon no doubt with the United Kingdom and the Trans-Pacific Partnership all suggest that free trade raises all boats—provided that it's a good deal.

Madam Speaker, principles of free trade include fair tendering, transparency and a good resolution process. What we saw earlier this year with a sole-sourced contract going to a single bidder is not consistent with the free-trade philosophy that we have signed up for. And it's actually not consistent with the internal trade agreement that Canada—Canadian provinces signed in 1994. It's not consistent with the New West Partnership that we, Manitoba, signed in November of 2016. And the fact that what was obvious in what was happening, which was simply, or perhaps, a mistake or a bureaucratic-like, things happen. But rather than just admitting that, yes, we'll not do this again, the government instituted a whole range of delay tactics. They switched—even switched the minister. I don't even think the ministers may not—were probably not even involved in the decision in the first place. So it puts the ministers in an impossible situation.

When we at committee asked, we, you know, members from all parties asked the obvious questions, which is how could this happen, we were referred to the department. Okay, but we're not allowed to ask the department any questions. So we return to the minister, but the minister points to the department, and the department actually points to the minister in their way, in the only way they can, because, obviously, the department would've filed Manitoba guidelines when it comes to procurement and contracts, which includes First Nation participation. Doesn't matter which contract; these types of contracts all require First Nation participation. So to say, well, this company had First Nation participation is fine, but so would everyone else who had had to have been on this project. So that is not a reason for a sole-source contract. There are only exceptions in emergencies; this was not an emergency, obviously, as it's taken forever.

So it brings us back to the bill, free trade, transparency, the process, the dispute resolution process. The heavy construction industry was outraged. You know, we heard from the president, Chris Lorenc, who condemned the sole-source contract that occurred. And maybe it was too late for the government to get out of it. We will never know.

But what we need to ensure is that, going forward, that there is a open and transparent tendering system for projects, particularly projects that are worth millions and millions, tens of millions of dollars. We need to ensure that, yes, that's right, companies from outside of Manitoba can bid on

projects in Manitoba, as Manitoba companies can bid on projects outside of Manitoba.

I started my remarks by pointing out that we have very restrictive trade barriers, which include differential trucking regulations between provinces, that include different standards for labour mobility. It includes differences in taxation and environmental policy. And these all lead to barriers in trade and not consistent with free trade. And in a country like Canada, we can harmonize to the highest common denominator. So let's harmonize to the highest common denominator and let the chips fall where they may. I believe that Manitoba can stand on its own. Manitobans can stand on their own.

* (16:20)

To attract capital to Manitoba, we need to be able to demonstrate transparency, efficiency, reasonable taxes and that we are open for business in Manitoba. Unfortunately, this example in the government has not provided that transparency that we would expect, and I hope—I hope—that going forward, the government will do better, that the government will be more proactive. Mistakes happen. Even things that may seem right in the moment are not in hindsight. And that's okay. As long as—recognize the problem and move forward. What is not okay is covering it up, pretending it never happened. That's not okay, because it undermines everyone's faith in all the principles of free trade, which this bill is supposed to be about.

As I said, the bill is an improvement, Madam Speaker. There are issues around the dispute resolution process. There are issues around tort versus no fault and government responsibilities. Hopefully, that—this will resolve itself over time. But, in the spirit of co-operation, I expect the governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta and British Columbia and, eventually, all governments in Manitoba—or in Canada to be respectful and honour free trade throughout the country. And this is going to be tough. We can't even get certain alcohol products between New Brunswick and Quebec, famously, unless there's some sort of agreement.

So we really have to be progressive. We have to be conservative. Good old conservatism. Free trade. People benefit from the fruits of their labour. Honest day's work for an honest day's pay. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: We need to stop taxing ourselves with things like carbon taxes, when the provinces will—

don't follow the same policies. Like, we're knocking ourselves out from fair trade, reasonable trade.

Having said that, the bill's better than nothing. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

* (17:20)

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended)

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt,

Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 37, Nays 12.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 4—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties)

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties).

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that Bill 4, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: I'm happy to rise in the House to put a few brief words on the record regarding Bill 4, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties). Bill 4 will repeal the ban on floor crossing that was brought in for political purposes by the previous NDP government. The freedom of a member of this House to caucus with any party that will have him or her as a member is a long-standing tradition in our Westminster parliamentary democracy. Bill 4 will restore this long-standing tradition to this Chamber.

The NDP's decision to hold over the passage of this legislation has already cost Manitoba taxpayers in the form of legal expenses. I am hopeful that they will put partisanship aside and pass Bill 4 swiftly tonight, so that we can get on with our real agenda of fixing the finances, repairing the services and rebuilding the economy for Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): So I'm pleased to also put some brief words on the record in respect to the Bill 4, Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

First and foremost, I do want to just thank all the folks that have spoken to this bill in standing committee and I appreciate them coming out and putting their words on the record. And, as we know, most folks understand that a vote is not something we should take for granted in this House and that I would suggest to the House that a vote is a sacred trust between the voter and the—who you are voting for. And it is a trust in the whole democratic system of which we are all a part of.

* (17:30)

And I do want to say, contrary to my colleague opposite, that the NDP ban on floor crossing is—has nothing to do with political purposes. It is recognizing that an individual who votes for a particular member for a particular party has the right to ensure that that individual stays with that particular party, recognizing that that vote is a sacred trust. And so I do want to disabuse the member for that—those comments.

And I think the second piece that I want to kind of disabuse the member that he's put on the record is that somehow this happens to be our fault. I know that that is what they seem to say all the time and that somehow we incurred legal fees and taxes for the taxpayer. That—it's not our fault that a member of the PC caucus was kicked out of their caucus. How—we weren't a part of that caucus; we weren't a part of those decisions. And so, you know, I want to set the record straight that if there are any tax—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —any additional fees or taxes to be incurred by Manitobans, it is because of the government and the PC caucus.

So, again, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to say that certainly, we believe that if a sitting member wants to leave his or her party, which is certainly their right—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —he or she should have the courage, then, of his or her convictions to face the voters, again, who actually put them in this House. And, you know, I think that we can all agree—I would suggest and submit to you that even members opposite want this bill to pass because it is an embarrassing stain on their caucus that they had to kick out somebody who is fighting them on a lot of their egregious bills that they have.

And I have to say that, you know, I support the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) on some of his legitimate concerns—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —of his own previous party and the things that they've bringing forward. So, I mean, I get it. It's an—it's embarrassing for them, so they want to kind of deal with it swiftly. I'm glad the position that we've taken here for the last many months.

And I guess the other final thing that I would say is that, you know— *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —instead of attempting to deal with embarrassing consequences of the dynamics within their caucus, they could have actually been presenting bills like—or supporting bills like the Vital Statistics bill. Or they could be having those really important discussions on how they're going to make the abortion pill available to Manitoba women and girls.

So, you know, I'm glad to be able to put my words on the record tonight, and, you know, I think that that's it for now. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, this bill is aimed at eliminating the restrictions against members crossing the House floor, and currently, Manitoba is the only province that has bans on this.

Back in 2006, former Premier Gary Doer implemented a restriction against floor crossing. History has demonstrated that House crossings have happened before and, at times, for good reason. Winston Churchill, for example, did this on a matter of principle.

Madam Speaker, we need to consider the consequences of being an independent, as being an independent does not allow for many speaking opportunities or as many resources that a member of a political party would receive.

Ultimately, we will be supporting this bill, but we hope that if a member were to truly consider doing this that they would consult with their constituents first.

And on a lighter note, Madam Speaker, we're the only party in this House who have not lost or kicked out members.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): This legislation is unconstitutional. This is what the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) had said in the media. And I will table the documents. Our position, said the Minister of Justice, is that the judgment—our—this is the statement. Our government has already stated our view that this legislation is unconstitutional and intend to repeal it at the earliest opportunity, said the minister in a written statement. In a written statement, Madam Speaker—and I'll table these documents.

On October 2nd, I believe, or maybe the third—oh, it's the second—the government, and all summer the government had the opportunity to simply agree with the legal action that I brought forward and there would be no expense, no expense. But rather they decide to fight. Fight, fight, fight. Fight everyone. Fight. The principle has nothing to do with it. Every Tory in the history of Toryism is supportive of members' ability of freedom of speech and the ability of members to represent their constituents in the best way they know how.

Yes, I disagreed with the government on the Efficiency Manitoba, though I didn't actually ever vote against them, nor was I allowed to. The first opportunity, as I said, was at committee, and everyone who is informed on this issue knows that. Everyone in this place knows that I'm against a carbon tax, even half a carbon tax. Everyone in this place knows that. I don't know where my constituents or in social housing are going to put their solar panels that wealthier people will be able to put on their houses but be subsidized by the Manitoba ratepayers. Yes, I'm representing my constituents and I'm proud to do it as a Conservative with Conservative common sense.

When I brought forward this legal action, the government had numerous opportunities to just agree with the legal action, sign off, not fight, and it would have just disappeared. And, more importantly, because the legislation is unconstitutional, more importantly the democratic rights of the people of Manitoba, the members of this Legislative Assembly, would have greater freedom of expression and association. But no, no principle.

They said in the media, in the papers I have tabled, it says well, we'll introduce the legislation as soon as possible and get it—that was, what, nine months ago and we're dealing with it today. And we're only dealing with it because I brought forward

a legal action. The government had no intention of dealing with this, the fundamental issues of our democracy.

Now this legislative vandalism that occurred in the Chamber in '06, every party was complicit, and no party stood up to change it—ever. Madam Speaker, the legal challenge still exists because it is based on a issue of principle on the constitutionality of the legislation. We've had this discussion in, very briefly, in this Chamber as it is my view presented to the courts that when it comes to the basic rights of Canadians under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, nobody can take those away, not even a Legislature; they're fundamental rights—fundamental rights. Can't give your rights away, the rights of your constituents, your MLAs. This is a representative democracy.

* (17:40)

You know, the government decided to fight, even though two days before, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) said it was unconstitutional in a written statement. But the government decided to fight, costing me, personally, tens of thousands of dollars, but it's on principle—principle. So, while everyone is pointing at each other, the only person that has invested real time and money on this is me, not because of any other reason but principle.

Now, members opposite, you know, and the—or some members try to make a big, you know, soap opera out of this and make accusations about motivation. No, the motivation is pure and based on our democracy. And as a former minister of democratic reform, federally, how could I do—how could I not move on making this an issue? I wish the government would just have signed off on June 30th, but, no, they fought. Could have signed off in August, September. No, they fought.

Madam Speaker, the transcripts of the court hearing will show that the precedents the government used—they couldn't find anything in Canada, but they looked; they searched the Commonwealth and others, and it was from South Africa. That was what—the best argument the government could bring forward. I'm not sure if it was before or after apartheid, but it was a bad example in any case.

But they knew it's unconstitutional, this legislation, though positive—and, yes, the government's only acting on it because the legal situation was unsustainable for the government, so the government decides to incur all these costs,

inflict costs on me and stymie the democratic rights of all Canadians.

And, by the way, there's nothing stopping them from introducing this legislation when we or I leave this place. There's nothing stopping them until the court decision is read; that will stop the legislative vandalism that has occurred in this place. And shame, shame for fighting against the Constitution, and shame, shame.

Madam Speaker, let's see what happens to the caucuses now. Maybe the party leadership in each caucus will give more attention to their own members.

Thank you. I'm abstaining.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I would like to put a few words on this bill.

It's a very complicated situation, and I don't think this independent's choice of floor crossing is really independence. The proposed rights of floor crossing may look like independence of a member. Actually, this is not. In fact, this will create a system for a member to be dependent on a new party from an old party.

Independence should be independence in a real meaning. I respect that a party member must be loyal to most party decisions that are commonly harmonious and not conflicting. However, constituents or electors may wish their representative to speak about a completely different need which all party members do not subscribe equally.

In such a scenario, a member must be allowed to speak the needful, even if it goes beyond greater party line of thought. Otherwise, problems remain the same. An independent member, no matter how she or he became independent, must be treated as independent in her or his own right.

For example, when there are 17 opposition members their turns and frequency of speaking must be distributed equally, irrespective of their party membership or affiliation. Proper justice to one's independent identity can be established only through ensuring this time distribution. If this is not maintained, an independent member remains handicapped to speak against injustice and victimization.

When this independent choice of floor-crossing legislation does not ensure a level playing field, people with proven criminal records, bullying habits

and vindictive and harmful toxic minds with a tendency of backstabbing, conspiracy against own people can get rewarded, even with leadership.

So this to-be legislation cannot be effective and efficient without ensuring real voices of independent members heard in an intimidation-free manner.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties).

* (18:50)

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 36, Nays 11.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 6—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 6, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): It's my pleasure to put just a few comments on the record—

An Honourable Member: Well, you have to move it first.

Mr. Friesen: I move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: I'll put a few brief comments on the record in respect of Bill 6. We know that this amendment act improves the relevancy of public sector compensation disclosure.

When this legislation first came into effect, the intention was to capture the top 10 per cent of all wage-earners at the Province, and of course, because the rules never allowed for indexation, right now, we're capturing over 10,000 employees, or more than 50 per cent of all of the Province's employees.

The—that threshold has not increased since 1996, and that is why this amendment raises that threshold for disclosure from 50,000 to 75,000. And I would add, as well, that if you had applied an indexation

factor from the very beginning when the legislation was first passed, you would come out to exactly about that same level of compensation.

It provides good information to the Province of Manitoba, to its citizens, but it discloses at an adequate and appropriate level, we believe. Now, obviously, of course, this legislation comes with a very important provision, and that is to also provide additional disclosure for technical officers hired under the Civil Service Act, and we all know why.

Under the former NDP government, they had what we called a departure tax, whereby people like Anna Rothney and Paul McKie and Heather Grant-Jury and Liam Martin left government and were essentially paid to go, and yet the NDP government at that time did not disclose many of those payments to those technical officers.

Instead, they hid those payments for over a year from the citizens of Manitoba. We said when we took office we would clean up that practice, and we are cleaning it up, and all members of this Assembly should support these measures that would require the hiring of technical officers to be disclosed and the salary amounts within 60 days, and the leaving of any technical officers to be disclosed, again, within 60 days.

Now, in addition to this, Madam Speaker, a few other things sprung from the provisions. Number one, the current act doesn't require the disclosure of public sector compensation reports. We'll do that in two ways: on the websites of the organizations, and centrally, by government.

And, finally, Madam Speaker, we are, of course, making a provision for not-for-profit organizations so that they will no longer be required to have their compensation reports audited. That reduces red tape, and we think that is significant.

It's for these reasons, Madam Speaker, that I commend Bill 6 to all the members of this House.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Once again, we have a piece of legislation before the House that clearly demonstrates where this government's priorities, with regards to public disclosure, lie.

Now, you know, Manitobans want a transparent—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —and open government. They want to know what—where their hard-earned tax dollars are

going, and yet, when this government is given the opportunity to disclose that, time and time again, they are falling short.

Now they don't need legislation to do that; in fact, they could come out and make those moves right now. But do they do that? No. They focus on their own priorities, priorities like making sure that their 20 per cent raise for every single minister is protected, not just for today, not just tomorrow, but in perpetuity to make sure that every one of those ministers gets paid and gets paid no matter whether they are a minister or not in the future. Those are the priorities of this government.

The other priorities they have are making sure that their friends around them are well compensated, and we certainly know through freedom of information some of the information on what their own technical officers are being paid. Dave McLaughlin, for instance, he's charged over \$82,000 in travel expenses in 16 months to the taxpayers of Manitoba. Eighty two thousand dollars, Madam Speaker, to spend his time on Twitter, to spin for this government rather than providing a service that this government will stand behind. Eighty two thousand dollars just in travel expenses. This is on top, of course, of his \$133,000 salary. This is in addition to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I am having a lot of difficulty hearing the member. There is a lot of chatter in this House, and I would just urge some consideration please be given to the member that has the floor and also to the Speaker who is trying to hear that parliamentary language is being used.

We've got a long evening ahead, and I would urge everybody's support so that we can move this along and that I'm not having to stand up and take a lot of time to admonish people that aren't following our decorum and our rules.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, I'm not surprised that there's a lot of noise and a lot of protest from the other side; they don't want to hear this information read into the record because they know that they're trying to keep it behind closed doors. They don't want Manitobans to know what they're doing, all the while talking about how important it is to be transparent.

Well, let's be transparent. That's right. Let's be transparent. I hear the member for Morris (Mr. Martin). He's applaud, he's excited to hear about Olivia Baldwin-Valainis, who's getting \$130,000 a year. To do what? To spin this government's closure of ERs like in my community where the emergency room is being closed.

We heard today about phase 2 that the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) ramming through this process. And who is there to spin it all? It was Ms. Valainis. And \$130,000 per year is her salary. They don't want Manitobans to know how much those individuals are getting paid. They don't want to know about additional travel expenses. They don't want to disclose any of the information that Manitobans want to know.

The Premier has the opportunity to stand up, to table his tax returns in this House to give full disclosure about the activities that he has in foreign countries, that he has with foreign corporations. He had that opportunity. He doesn't need a bill before this Legislature to do that. He can do that and yet he doesn't.

What else does this government spend the hard-earned tax dollars of Manitobans on? Well, it's not just high-paid political staff, Madam Speaker, but it's report after report after report from outside consultants. And we have at this point, I think if I've got my math correct, over \$8 million—\$8 million—that's been paid to outside consultants, like the Health System Sustainability and Innovation Review, \$750,000; the fiscal performance review, \$750,000—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: The financial review of Manitoba Hydro—we know that one as Boston Consulting Group. How much was spent there? Four million dollars, Madam Speaker.

This is money that's being spent, and it's our opposition caucus that through freedom of information and other means has been trying to get the information, calculate all of these costs to taxpayers, and this government is not being transparent in that regard. They don't want to release that information. They don't want Manitobans to know how much they're spending. And there are outstanding reports that we're still waiting to hear information on.

So it's absolutely clear where this Premier's priorities lay. They lay in spending Manitobans' tax

dollars without any kind of disclosure, and then trying to add political—*[interjection]*

* (19:00)

Madam Speaker: I am asking, again, for everybody's co-operation. I haven't been sitting down for more than a couple minutes—in fact, about two—since I last asked for your respect for the Chair and what I'm trying to do here.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and, again, I think it's pretty clear why there's so much noise from the other side: they don't like to hear the truth. They don't like to hear when discussions within their caucus are exposed, in this case, by the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), who talked very openly, I might add, disclosed to all Manitobans exactly what the Conservative caucus was most concerned about, and that was their own pay. That's what the member said, you know, took up most of the time. He said several meetings were used to debate how to minimize the impact of changes to their pay and how to manipulate and maneuver around any kind of political spin they wanted to put on it.

And that's been the priority of this government. It's not been about disclosure. It's not been about being forthright with the people of Manitoba. We know this because when they did bring in their legislation initially to get their pay raise—all ministers wanted to make sure they got their pay raise, and they had to finagle that and they had to sort of go around and connect some dots and make sure, oh, how can we figure this out? Well, you know, what did the media say about that? They said it was farcical. They said that that was a rat's nest, this particular balanced budget bill.

And now, as I said, Madam Speaker, they've now come up with a way to make sure that they get this raise into the future for as long as they possibly can, because that's been the priority of this government. That's all that they're concerned about. They're looking out for themselves. They're not looking out for Manitobans. They're not looking out for the average Manitoban.

As I said, Madam Speaker, Manitobans are concerned about health care. They're concerned about education. They want to know that there's a government that's listening to them, and all they get are bills like Bill 6, which try to put on a façade of

being transparent without actually making any kind of substantial changes that will demonstrate what the depths that their government will go to to hire their friends, hire these political staff, make sure that they're well paid and not disclose that information to Manitobans.

So I would submit to you, Madam Speaker, that Manitobans see right through this. They see right through this, and they're very clearly focused on health, on education, on the things that matter to them, on affordability in this province, on making sure that they—that the minimum wage is protected, that they're getting a fair wage for the work that they're doing, that they're getting a living wage. These are the issues that are most important to Manitobans. Do we see that legislation here before us today? Do we see legislation that protects our health-care system? Do we see legislation that protects our education system and can make sure that the funding is there?

No, Madam Speaker. We don't see that. What we see are more and more ways that this government can make sure that they take care of themselves and their friends first. And I submit to you that that is shameful. I submit to you that Manitobans see right through that. And it—you know, this government can try and spin all they want, but Manitobans will see through that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, on this bill, we actually support an increase in the threshold, but we see a fundamental problem in the way that this bill is being administered, and we see no sign that the government is ready to change that. And the problem is this: that an unknown number of people who are getting money from the government, who are earning, or will be earning, more than \$75,000 a year are not being captured. And they're not being captured because they're earning from two different places in government. And because they're earning—they may get \$60,000 one place and \$50,000 another, and they end up earning \$110,000, but they're not even going to be listed at the \$75,000 rate.

So this is wrong. And so we can't support this building—this bill because it actually won't capture everybody who's above \$75,000. And, until that's done, then we won't support it. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 6, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act.

All those in favour—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 9—The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Enhanced Powers Respecting Governance and Accountability)

Madam Speaker: We shall now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 9, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Enhanced Powers Respecting Governance and Accountability).

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act be concurred in and that—report from the standing committee of Legislature affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third and final time.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Families.

Mr. Fielding: I moved, seconded by the member for Sustainable Development, that The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act be concurred in—[*interjection*—enhanced powers reported government and accountability, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third and final time and passed.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable Minister for Sustainable Development, that Bill 9, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Enhanced Powers Respecting Governance and Accountability), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Fielding: I've got a few comments in terms of this. This, of course, is the first phase of our community child-care standards. We think that there is too much red tape that's—are impacting the child-care sector. We think that there's a variety of ways which we can do this. This is the first of two phases. It's going to work to make communities more effective. It's going to help community child-care centres run more efficiently and more effectively. We think it's a step forward in the right direction in terms of making sure that the child-care system is efficient and is run effectively. It's something, after consultations with the sector, we think is a step in the

right direction. It is first of two phases, and we think it will allow community child-care centres, as well as child-care centres across the province, to be more efficient and effective, and we're very proud of this legislation.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The Premier (Mr. Pallister) failed to live up to his election, just like our minister that just spoke, promised to build 550 spaces here in 2006; he's failed to build zero. In 2017, again, failed to build any spaces with provincial money.

They've been given \$50 million from the— or from the federal government, which is going to boost our child-care spaces in Manitoba here, thanks to the federal government. We, of course, like to see our provincial government put some money into supporting families here in Manitoba so that they can get back to work, go to school, you know, have a space where their child is safe and that they know that they're being taken care of.

Then they failed to live up to their election promise to create 550 home-based spaces in 2016. Instead, a year later, they announced spaces which were already confirmed from our government, the NDP government. So, you know, this government continues to take credit from, you know, our NDP government work. Hopefully, they'll get to work on their own stuff.

This bill essentially is removing regulations, fire safety. As someone who's had children in daycare and that's worked in schools where there's daycares and now has a granddaughter that's in daycare, I want to, you know, be assured that when my child is at daycare, and many Manitobans want to ensure, that their child is going to have a fire safety plan, that they're not going to have to worry about discrimination under the Human Rights Code. These aren't in this plan. They fail to implement that.

*(19:10)

So—and we heard, too, at committee, that this was something that Manitobans were concerned about.

This bill also gives the right for this government to take families who require subsidy, low-income families, to court if they owe money to daycares—shame. Who would want to take families that are already struggling, that need that daycare, to court to recoup those funds that they don't have? So we have, you know, real concerns with that.

There's still 16,500 children waiting on this list. You know, we've heard that there's daycare spaces coming in schools that have yet to be built. So, you know, those are great once they're built and once those spaces are there, but for right now they're not there.

We also heard in committee that child-care workers and directors were asking for more professional development dollars because they're having to take it from their staffing dollars. We want to ensure that kids are getting quality education in these spaces, because we know that when children are born, that their education begins right away. It's not when they start school. Soon as they're born, education begins. So we'd like to see tuition supports as well for—

I want to just take this opportunity, again, to thank Pat Wege for all of her work that she's done in the child-care field. She certainly left a legacy.

We have six children max in home daycares, so if I have two children of my own and I want to take six more children, that's not allowed. I'm only allowed to take four more. So we also heard that that was a problem.

The MCCA has a real problem with the privatization of child care. Right now there is 1,900 underfunded daycare spaces here in Manitoba, so you have children in these spaces that don't have enough staff to support these children.

They also talked about workforce wages. They're underpaid, which creates retention problems because staff aren't going to stay in a job where they can't support their family. So we could, you know, certainly increase their wages. And I want to, again, take this opportunity to commend all of the child-care workers, ECE workers in this province that do a tremendous job in taking care of our children in Manitoba, our grandchildren, and, you know, making sure that they are safe over there.

We also have some real problems with inclusion supports. We heard in Estimates that a family that moves from one end of the city to the next end of the city and applies—has to move their family to another daycare has to reapply for those supports. So, if there's no space in that daycare, that family is left driving across the city back to that daycare to ensure that their child that needs the extra supports gets it because that does not transfer to another daycare.

Working in education, I know that when children move from one school to another that those

supports move with them, and it would be a good idea for this government to ensure that that happens for families, too. We're talking about red tape and reducing that. This is a good way to do that, but this government isn't doing it. So, you know, don't pat yourself on the back yet.

Child care, we know, is a crucial part of getting parents out of poverty. This government has failed to release a poverty plan yet. We heard it was going to be, you know, in the next couple of weeks, the next couple of months, the next couple of weeks. We don't know when it's going to be released. Families are waiting, you know. There's thousands of people in Manitoba that are in poverty, and this government has no plan to move people from poverty to getting jobs, to getting education.

This government continues to raise tuition. You know, they're raising housing, they don't—they're selling off housing, they're making it more difficult for Manitobans in this province. And if we're talking about moving people out of poverty, daycare is one of the pieces of ensuring that families can get out of poverty.

So, you now, I urge this government to, you know, get on this poverty plan, roll it out and let's see some real action behind it that's really going get people out of poverty and not continue to move them into poverty.

We know that 40–41 per cent of parents have had to delay their return to work. And, in fact, some parents have lost their job due to not having daycare spots. If you can't, you know, put your kid in daycare or have someone to care for your child, how are you going to go back to work? That employer needs someone to work. So they have no choice but to hire another employee, which means that parent's now lost their job, which means they don't have an income because probably their EI has run out. And now they're probably in poverty because there's not enough spaces in this province.

So, you know, \$45 million from the federal government is good over three years, but this government also has to put in their share to ensure that Manitobans have access to quality child care.

We—you know, Manitoba families deserve to have quality daycare, and I'm sure members opposite, they have children in daycare or grandchildren in daycare. And they want to ensure that they're putting their kids in a daycare that, you know, has regulations, that has people who are

qualified and that is affordable. And they know that when they leave there that their child is going to be taken care of just like they are in education.

So, you know, Madam Speaker, when we talk about priorities, families need to be priorities in this province and ensuring that there's daycare spaces.

This Premier's (Mr. Pallister) plan on the issue of child care seems to be out of line with the needs of Manitobans. Ninety-five per cent of parents want this government, this Pallister government, to focus on universal child care. But—57 per cent that, you know, say that it should be Pallister's top priority. But is it? No. We've seen—the Pallister government—

Madam Speaker: I would—I think the member has corrected herself, recognizing that she used a word inappropriately. So I would ask her to continue.

Mrs. Smith: So 57 per cent say that it should be the Pallister government's top priority, and more than half of Manitoba parents prefer public child-care centres, not private child-care centres.

So talking about red tape reduction, which I heard the minister reference in his opening remarks, Manitoba parents want to know that their kids are getting safe, quality—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —child care from trained professionals. Sixty-nine per cent of child-care directors find it hard to hire ECEs, and 49 per cent of centres have operated on a conditional licence due to staffing shortages.

So, again, I want to reiterate that our NDP understands that accessible and safe, quality child care is a right that parents need to have in this province.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, we—I stand because, as Liberals, we will support this bill. It is a step forward.

We want to thank the federal government for the major contributions that the federal government has made toward child care and early childhood education in Manitoba. And, in fact, we recognize that without the federal support, there wouldn't be much in the way of progress in terms of child care and early childhood education.

But we're glad that the Province and the provincial minister is working well with the federal

government in this area and that there's been some progress made. We think there could be more done. There are still, as we've heard, many outstanding issues. There are still long wait-lists. And the Province really could be doing more. But this is a step forward, and we'll support this legislation.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 9, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Enhanced Powers Respecting Governance and Accountability).

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

I declare the motion carried.

**Bill 10—The Boards, Committees, Councils
and Commissions Streamlining Act
(Various Acts Amended or Repealed)**

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions Streamlining Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed).

* (19:20)

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 10, The Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions Streamlining Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Pedersen: Many boards and commissions in this province haven't been reviewed in decades. Our government is taking a step-by-step approach to review boards and commissions to ensure they are meeting the needs of Manitobans.

What we found was red tape and duplication hold our province back, and we are working to ensure that projects vital to all Manitobans proceed in a timely manner. Our government is working to ensure that all agencies, boards and commissions have similar board sizes so that there is consistency across these boards.

Our government has promised to be open and transparent, and that means engaging and listening to

all Manitobans instead of just hand-picked advisory boards, such as the previous NDP government did.

The previous government set up advisory councils with no long-term mandate, no direction, meaning government lacked the proper role for many advisory councils. We found that many advisory boards created by the NDP provided Manitobans with little or no value for money and provided no concrete advice to government.

Teamwork is an important fundamental of our government, and we found that smaller boards and councils make better decisions as they are more engaged and focused. We are an open and transparent government, and we are committed to the work of ensuring all Manitobans have a voice at the table.

This legislation follows down the same path, ensuring all Manitobans are heard, rather than just a select few, as was the case under the previous NDP government. This legislation ensures that transition plans are in place for effective board members.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's kind of too bad that at this time of the day, we have to rise and once again try and convince the government to actually listen to Manitobans, because they seem to have a real problem unless it's one of their friends—well, even sometimes then they have trouble listening, don't they?

Speaking of boards, it seems to me there was a board that self—that was appointed by this government in charge of, I believe it was Manitoba Hydro that they wouldn't listen to them, so they landed up the hill quick. So the government short-circuited the process for several other boards and commissions.

They decided, well, instead of listening to them, we'll just do away with those boards and commissions, because we don't want to listen to people that actually give us good advice. We only want to listen to people that say what we want them to say.

Madam Speaker, the most egregious part of this bill is when they do away with the board that gave them good advice on workplace health and safety. We've already seen too many fatalities this year in workplaces in this province.

And that standing committee that had the duty, the responsibility and accepted it and worked at it in

making sure that Manitoba regulations were the best safety regulations in the country, this government decides we don't need to listen to them, because, in fact, we'll just do away with that board, because, I guess, they don't like working people, so why would we want to keep working people safe?

Now they're in the process of doing a review of workplace health and safety act and regulations. Well, who would have been better to do that review on an ongoing basis than a standing committee that was charged with the duty of reviewing the workplace health and safety act and regulations?

So now it'll be every five years that something will happen, somebody will review it, but what we've seen from this government is chances are they won't listen to what they hear anyway.

Let's look at the Labour Management Review Committee. Do they listen to what they say? Well, no. It seems they don't. They've given them recommendations—joint recommendations, recommendations that came together with management and workers to advise this government on the way forward on things like security guard wages. Did they listen to that? No, no they didn't. Labour Management Review Committee gave them advice on the age of young workers. Did they listen to that? No they didn't.

I'm surprised they haven't done away with that review committee yet. But I suppose they don't want to do everything egregious all at once, they want to save something for tomorrow. I hope not, because we've already seen this government cut too many of these boards. And yes, maybe some of them did need to be looked at, reviewed: Were they still being effective? Did they need to have their mandate changed to be more effective? Sure, there's nothing wrong with that.

But in particular—in particular—Madam Speaker, these boards, commissions are an important part of the democratic process in this province. They provide Manitobans a chance to sit on these boards and commissions and share their views with the government.

Now, a lot of governments appreciate that. This one, not so much. Because they've got good advice from many of these boards and commissions that they've just decided to ignore. So I guess it makes it easier for this government, rather than just ignore the advice they're getting, don't get the advice because they've done away with the board and commission.

And that's shameful behaviour for this government because it strikes at the very heart of democracy, which this government has done repeatedly since they got elected, Madam Speaker. They've attacked working people. They've attacked the poor people. They've attacked front-line health-care workers. They've attacked every possible person they could, except for their friends. It's two sets of rules with this government, so why would they want to have somebody telling them that they should do something different than that which they've already got their heart set on.

Madam Speaker, they've already decided before they ever listen to people, before they ever consult. Their consultation is really a sham for the most part. They put an online survey and then they have their friends fill it out. They get the advice that they want ahead of time, and even then they sometimes don't listen.

I mean, Madam Speaker, we've sat at committees of this Legislative Assembly and we've listened to people, night after night after night, tell this government what's wrong with a piece of legislation they've introduced. So far, all we've seen is one committee that they actually listened to some members of that committee, kind of. But there's more they can do there because they've only withdrawn one piece of the legislation, not the other piece that still is egregious to those people. So I suspect we'll see a fight on Bill 8. If we hadn't have held it off, it would be now, but it'll be when we meet again. That fight's not over.

The democratic process doesn't end just because this government decides that it should. They'll see more protests on the steps. They'll see more people standing up for their rights. This bill attacks Manitobans' rights—Manitobans' rights to be heard, Manitobans' rights to put forward ideas. This is the very heart of consultation with boards and commissions that are charged with certain duties, and this government has once again taken those rights away. And many of these boards and commissions serve very useful purposes that will be sorely missed for the next two years, and then hopefully some of them can come back into being with the next government that really understands the importance of listening to people, because this government most assuredly does not. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: So what all have they eliminated? Well let's see.

With this bill, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) would eliminate Restorative Justice Advisory Council, advanced education advisory committee, Caregiver Advisory Committee, Technical Safety Advisory Council, Milk Prices Review Commission, advisory council on workplace development and, of course, the one that's near and dear to my heart, the advisory council on workplace health and safety.

* (19:30)

And this government, this Premier, should be ashamed of the actions they've taken with this bill to limit people's ability to have their voices heard, Madam Speaker. Certainly I can speak with experience how the workplace health and safety advisory committee worked. I was a part of it. I've made representations to it. It didn't have to wait five years for how many deaths before they could make recommendations on how to change workplace health and safety, how to make workplaces 'safer', how to keep workers alive. They didn't have to wait five years—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: I'm hoping that, by raising my voice, maybe they'll hear, because when people talk less passionately, they clearly don't hear.

So many of these committees and commissions that they're eliminating serve such useful purposes that this would be perhaps the last opportunity that we have to tell this government: listen to what the people of Manitoba have said; withdraw this bill; put these committees back in place; never mind the ones that you forced people to quit because you wouldn't listen to. Let's get these ones that work actually back in place and back working. Let's listen to Manitobans.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, we're, in fact, in favour of a number of the changes in this bill and reducing some of the boards in size and so on, but we're not in favour—in fact, we're strongly opposed—to two of the changes. One is to the board of CancerCare Manitoba. That's a board which specifically has currently broad representation, which gives it a very effective position. And it has worked very well and given Manitoba very good health care in the area of cancer, so we don't agree with the change there.

The other is to the removal of the advisory council for workplace safety. Under this government,

we have seen problems with workplace safety. I have raised some issues recently related to the death of Todd Maytwayashing. I believe we need to improve the situation of workplace safety, partly because of these accidents and deaths and partly because we have one of the—maybe the highest time-lost-to-injury rate in all of Canada, so we need a particular emphasis on making sure that workers are working in safe environments and that workers can go home at the end of the day.

And so we don't support those changes, and we'll be voting against this bill. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions Streamlining Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

* (20:30)

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions Streamlining Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed).

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 34, Nays 14.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 11—The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended)

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act, liquor and gaming control act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation amendment act.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act is at the heart of our health-and-safety approach to the federal government's decision to legalize recreational cannabis.

Our Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) was at the RBC Convention Centre this morning to discuss these changes with Manitoba's outstanding business community as part of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce Breakfast Series. What our government has heard from many in the business community is

that they have confidence in our hybrid retail and distribution model. It is truly the best of both worlds.

The private sector will do what it does best in providing choice, service and competitive pricing, and the public sector will do what it does best in providing public protection through regulation, oversight and licensing.

In addition to establishing this innovative retail model, Bill 11 also establishes a higher minimum age for cannabis and prohibits home cultivation. Our decision on the minimum age has been strongly supported by the Manitoba School Boards Association. The prohibition of home cultivation has also been supported by the Manitoba Real Estate Association.

We are also taking a common-sense approach to youth possession offences under the act. In contrast with the claims from some of our Liberal members, the new maximum penalties in The Liquor and Gaming Control Act are meant for serious violations like trafficking and selling to young people. There is also no difference between how we treat 17-year-olds or 18-year-olds under Bill 11. Manitobans under age 19 caught possessing cannabis will face provincial sanctions established by regulation. These will mirror those currently in place for alcohol.

Madam Speaker, we are working to protect the health and safety of Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I am pleased just to put a couple of words on the record, a couple of brief words in respect of Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act.

* (20:40)

First, again, let me just begin by acknowledging all of the folks that came out to the standing committee meeting. There were quite a number of people that wanted to speak to Bill 11. And, certainly, I think that those of us as legislators that have those opportunities to stand—or sit in standing committee and have the opportunity to hear from Manitobans that are actually affected by the particular bills that are before us, you have an opportunity to really learn and listen and to see where Manitobans are coming from and how these bills will impact on their lives. And so I always really appreciate all of the folks that come out to present to us.

And, you know, some of the nights have been very long, as the Speaker knows. And so, specifically, I actually would like to just acknowledge Daphne Penrose, the Manitoba advocate for child and youth. She did a very thorough and robust analysis in respect of Bill 11 and citing some of the concerns in respect—and more particularly in respect of the age of 19 versus 18. I think that it was an opportunity to kind of situate Bill 11 within its total context and the potentialities of perhaps criminalizing Manitoba youth. And so I think that that was a real eye-opener. And I know that, for myself, certainly, I learned a lot, but I would hope—or, well, we did hope from members opposite that they would have heard some of the really good arguments that—to be made there.

And to that end, I just want to take a brief moment to acknowledge my sister colleague from Burrows and the amendment that she brought forward to the House to try and, you know, get the government to work in partnership with everybody here and reduce the age from 19 to 18. So I do just want to take a moment to recognize that and that work.

Certainly, we support the legalization of cannabis and urge the provincial government to work with all stakeholders and the federal government to ensure that Manitoba is ready for the June deadline. And I know that, you know, when we've heard the minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) talk in the media about the legalization of cannabis and, you know, they're always, as is their MO, blaming the federal government for everything. But the fact is, is that we've known that the Prime Minister was going to legalize cannabis for years now. And, in fact, I remember in a standing committee asking the minister—then-Minister for Crown Services what he was doing in order to prepare for the legalization of cannabis. And I asked that question seven times, and I didn't get an answer. There was no environmental scan going on about best practices in other jurisdictions and there was nothing going on. And so here we have the Pallister government kind of scrambling to get their legislation in place, but they actually had years where they could have been proactive and looked at and did more consultations with stakeholders.

For instance, I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, perhaps if they had actually done more consultations and engagement of community, they would have heard that maybe the private sector's not the best place to be selling cannabis. And we know

that the Minister for Justice yesterday spoke to—was at RBC and spoke about this myth about revenues from the selling of cannabis, but the fact of the matter is we don't actually know. But this government is actually losing out on potentially millions of dollars of revenues that could've went back into social programming and perhaps actually could have gone into social programming like a safe consumption site, which this government and the Minister for Health and the Premier himself are so adverse to and so not wanting to even look or even fathom the idea that we actually need a safe consumption site here in Winnipeg and probably other sites, maybe like Brandon as well.

So I think that had the government started to do their homework prior to the last minute and stopped actually blaming the federal government for actually—for everything and doing their job, we would've maybe seen a better piece of legislation before us today.

I think that there is still a lot that can be done. In particular, Madam Speaker, we still really haven't seen a robust or comprehensive public education in respect of the legalization of cannabis. I think that there's still a lot of work to be done there as well.

We know that from some of the folks that we heard from at the standing committee there is a concern for the prohibition of home growing. We know that—I don't know where that came from. I don't know if they just kind of picked it out of air. There's no legal analysis on that.

So I think, at the end of the day, we could have seen a better bill. And I think that members opposite owe it to Manitobans to do better and prepare better when we know that these things are coming down the pipe instead of blaming the federal government for the things that they're just not simply doing.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Over the next couple of months, the federal government's cannabis legislation will be taking effect. This government claims they do not have enough time, but our party has been very clear in our intentions to legalize cannabis since 2012 at a policy that was voted on at our biannual convention. This is not news.

Our caucus is not supporting this bill, because we have a serious issue with how this government is recriminalizing youth at a provincial level.

Madam Speaker, this bill makes it so 17-year-olds found with marijuana have the opportunity to go through the youth justice—Youth Criminal Justice Act, and 19-year-olds are safe because it's legal. But 18-year-olds can be incarcerated for up to a year or fined up to \$100,000 if found with any marijuana on their person.

Madam Speaker, we've urged the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) to close the gap from 19 years to 18 years. Instead, she called us—well, me, specifically—dead wrong without explaining why. I even sent her a very nice letter asking her to explain it to me, but I never heard back. There is no justification here.

Overlooking this age gap in the legislation leaves bad laws on the books and opens up the possibility of a young person suffering a grossly disproportionate punishment. Being tough on crime is not the answer. Madam Speaker, it is backwards approach that has overpopulated our prisons and our courts.

We need to be smart on crime. We need to educate young people so they can decide wisely on cannabis use, and we need to improve access and resources for addiction treatment.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I urge the members of this House to do what is right and don't criminalize 18-year-olds.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Did I hear a no?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: I heard a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 14—The Traffic and Transportation Modernization Act

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Traffic and Transportation Modernization Act.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox), that Bill 14, The Traffic and Transportation Modernization Act; Loi sur la modernisation des lois relatives à la circulation et au transport, reported from the stranding committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, brings me great pleasure to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 14 which is proof of this government's commitment to give municipalities a fair say, to review Manitoba's boards, to eliminate duplication and red tape and to align Manitoba with the New West Partnership.

* (20:50)

Bill 14 addresses the concerns one of this government's most critical stakeholders has raised with us, and that is the Manitoba municipalities. These municipalities have been asking government for many years to be allowed a fair say in making rational, independent decisions within their own jurisdictions for issues that affect their area, like setting speed limits.

Bill 14 eliminates the Highway Traffic Board along with the board's powers to set speeds on Manitoba's roadways. Going forward, municipalities will set the speed on their roadways under bylaws. The responsibility for setting speeds on provincial roadways will be moved to delegate authority to Manitoba Infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, Bill 14 does that and much more. It eliminates a lot of red tape, a lot of duplication, aligns us with the New West Partnership.

Madam Speaker, I would recommend Bill 14 to this Legislature.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): And I'm sure the minister would recommend Bill 14, but obviously he didn't consult very well with the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, who certainly delivered a scathing indictment on some of the provisions of this particular bill and I don't think the government has been able to answer the questions that the heavy construction industry did, in fact, ask, and in fact at committee, they were the—they made a presentation and they wanted to—clear rules that treat all players equally.

One concern of the heavy construction industry identified was the apparent impact the proposed changes to the tendering practices and just, you know, shortly after this government delivering a sole-sourced contract to construction companies in the Interlake and competitors, after having seen the tabulation sheets, were able to determine that in the case of the Sigfusson contract, that it could be done for half the price.

And so, you know, this is suspicious that Bill 14 comes out and the heavy construction industry is reeling from this sole-source tender contract, and here what do they find? They find a section in this particular bill—this is an omnibus bill; it's, I believe, a hundred and thirty-some pages—we used to see that in Harper days, eh, where they want to hide things; they'd pour it all in—it deals with, like, five acts. We have a briefing where we attend a briefing with the minister; we thank him for that, but never once did anybody, you know, anybody say, well, look at this, section 9(1). Let's take a look at that, you know.

But it was the Manitoba heavy construction industry did take a look at it and they feel that things are being changed. The ground is moving under their feet, that this—the provisions in section 9–9(1) are going to make it easier for the minister and a Committee of Cabinet to sole-source contracts.

And so prior to these changes the standard for bypassing standard tendered contracts was the presence of a public—pressing public emergency or where there was a risk to the public interest, and that standard is now been changed.

The standard will now be normal tendering practices may be bypassed if the minister—that's him—is of the opinion that the work is too urgent or can be done more efficiently.

Also, the proposed new act gives a committee of Cabinet authority an unrestrained power to set aside

the tendering process. It's not clear what prompted this change, but the industry is concerned.

The heavy construction industry has expressed concerns with these changes. The government has not adequately addressed their reservations. They've requested an unequivocal commitment that the standard would not change in practice, but the minister did not see to provide one.

So, you know, as the members know, the Manitoba heavy construction industry is currently running a campaign against the government spending program on highways and, you know, just the other day Chris Lorenc was on CJOB and he was patiently describing how, you know, the NDP invested \$628 million in 2015-16 in roads and bridges. The Pallister government promised to spend at least \$500 million on highways, roads and bridges every year in the last election, but they've broken that promise to Manitoba citizens and to industry.

The Pallister government's budget in '16-17 cut highways' infrastructure spending by \$88 million down to \$540 million. Then, in 2017, 2018—and you see a trend here, eh? They—and, in 2017-18, the Pallister government made another cut of \$38 million. That brought it down to \$502 million.

Now Chris Lorenc said that just four days before the budget, he was assured by the government that \$500 million was guaranteed. This was carved in stone. But, yet, four days later, they—the budget was reduced by another massive cut of \$150 million, bringing us down to 350, which is—how low can you go?

So this is literally four days after the minister told Chris Lorenc and the Heavy Construction Association that they would like to keep their—that they would keep their election commitment. Broke their word, cut the budget by 30 per cent. Over four years, that's—\$600-million hit to Manitoba's economy and our roads. And I believe he said \$150 billion out of construction workers' wages. This is money that won't be spent in our communities in the province.

So, on that basis, I think that we, in the opposition, are not happy with these developments and, quite frankly, not surprised. And so I would suggest, mister—Madam Speaker that we would be wanting to oppose this bill.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): There are parts of this bill which deal with transferring opportunities to the municipalities that we agree with. Right? We

also agree that there's areas where you can reduce duplication.

But when we saw that there was a Conservative government elected here, we thought that the practice of single-source contracts was ended. Right? But what happened was that the minister then had single-source contracts—two of them—and next thing we know we have a bill, and hidden in the fine print in the bill is what Chris Lorenc describes as a loophole big enough to put a Mack truck through.

You know, if—obviously, we can't trust this government to tender contracts, and now we're really concerned that this is going to be a ramp-up of single-source contracts with this Mack truck loophole.

So we're going to oppose this bill, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Traffic and Transportation Modernization Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on division.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* (21:00)

Bill 17—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 17, The

Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conducteurs et les véhicules et le Code de la route, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, Bill 17 takes on a very modern and serious problem in our society. I would like to put on the record, first of all, certain statistics that we received from Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, statistics that are sound, that have been tested and are true. Over five years, from 2011 to 2016, the number of vehicles involved in accidents went from 2,400 in 2011 to more than 11,000 in 2016.

Madam Speaker, distracted driving now equals as many deaths as drinking and driving. In fact, over that five-year period, the amount of accidents involved in drinking and driving went down, whereas the accidents involved with distracted driving went up. Distracted driving is a very serious road safety issue and a lead cause of collisions among—and causing serious and fatal injuries.

The consequences of distracted driving is a serious—is as serious as impaired driving. Manitoba and other Canadian jurisdictions are implementing stricter penalties as a result. Distracted driving can be addressed through using the right combination of tools: public education, legislation and enforcement, and Manitoba does not have a specific offence for distracted driving. Instead, police may charge drivers with using a hand-operated electronic device, or HOED, while driving or careless driving. Police also use careless driving to address a variety of distractions when the distractions have a serious negative impact on drivers' behaviour.

Madam Speaker, The Highway Traffic Act will be amended to create a tiered suspension of three days for a first offence for use of a hand-operated electronic device, such as cellphones, while driving in Manitoba. For a second or 'subsekin'—subsequent offence, a driver will have a seven-day suspension imposed. A driver whose licence is suspended receives a temporary permit valid until the end of the next day. The suspension will take effect once the permit expires. The drivers and vehicles act will be amended to make careless driving a reportable offence. This requires the police to immediately report charges to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles at Manitoba Public Insurance.

Manitoba's licence suspension scheme will be administered at roadside. This is to address the immediate road safety risk and to ensure the greatest deterrent impact on driver behaviour. Bill 17 will come into force on a future date to allow time to develop a complementary suite of regulatory measures, including higher fines and demerits for careless driving. This also allows time for public communication regarding the need for stricter legislation.

Madam Speaker, the Manitoba government looks forward to today's—looks forward to today the bill passing forward, and we look forward to working—to continue to work with our partners, with Manitoba Public Insurance, Manitoba 'justment' and, of course, the agencies.

We must change public perception, and we must change driving behaviour to help reverse the increasing rates of distracted driving, including hand-held electronic devices like cellphones, used while driving. Madam Speaker, this is a reflection of modern driving habits. Twenty-some years ago, we did not have this issue, and we know that this is increasingly becoming a 'prodem'—a problem, and I would recommend to this Legislature that we pass this piece of legislation.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I wanted to thank the minister for his briefing on this bill, and, as he admitted that this is a work in progress, because you know it's often prudent for jurisdictions to, you know, do some studies and look at what actually works in other jurisdictions.

I'll give you a good example. A number of years ago in the 1990s, during the Filmon government, we had record-high auto thefts in Manitoba, and there was—there were some politicians in the Legislature here who wanted to adopt a bait-car program that was used in BC, and it had some results to it, but, at the end of the day the Doer government, when they came in, decided to put an anti-lock system into cars and give discounts; after the first year it kind of didn't work that well. So they put a discount program in effect, and when that was put in, they found that there was a huge uptake. You know, they—the auto theft rates dropped like 80 per cent, something like that. The program was so successful that other provinces started to adopt the program, and that's an example of trying, you know, different things, looking at different jurisdictions. And, at the end of the day, the bait par—bait-car program, well, it was

moderately successful—had, you know, problems and wasn't really the answer.

So this is where the minister and the government find themselves today. They're looking at statistics that they think are showing an increasing problem here and they don't find another jurisdiction that has a program that has actually achieved results. So it's under—on that sort of basis that we're moving forward here.

So other jurisdictions across Canada have changed their highway traffic laws to reflect changes in the use of personal communication devices. Bill 17 does this by introducing temporary licences followed by temporary licence suspensions for the offence for a period of three to seven days. In our discussions on the matters, the minister made it clear that he was in uncharted waters on the issue and that he wasn't sure whether these were the right measures to deal with the challenge. There was a multitude of approaches across the country.

What has received less attention within this bill is that offences under The Highway Traffic Act will now be reported to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles. My understanding is that travelling with a dog, for example, that is not in a crate, for example, would warrant more serious repercussions as a result of this act.

Now, when we were in committee, we had Mr. Len Eastoe, who's well known in this town, appears on—in the media quite often, and he represents people who are dealing with traffic violation issues. Now, he did have a lot to say about this bill, and he explained that removing discretion from the designation of what was considered careless driving as opposed to the use of lesser charges of things like imprudent driving will result in lots of challenges in the justice system. He explained that, rather than these matters being subject to the deliberations of the courts, those charged with careless driving would have to appear before MPI, and, as Mr. Eastoe explains, that person is not legally trained to look at the balances of whether that meets the threshold of careless driving or not.

Similarly, Mr. Eastoe raised a number of concerns regarding suspensions being issued without judicial oversight, as this bill proposes. He used examples he had seen in his work. In one example, an elderly gentleman was charged with operating a cellphone even though the man didn't own one. The charge was ultimately dropped by the courts. He gave another example of a transit bus driver who was

incorrectly ticketed for using a cellphone while driving. As it turned out, the entire exchange was captured on video camera, which clearly showed the courts that the bus driver was not using a cellphone as was alleged. After a process that allowed judicial review, the charges were dropped.

That particular example was concerning for Mr. Eastoe as that bus driver depends on driving for his livelihood. With this bill we're debating, that bus driver would have lost his licence for three days without the opportunity for judicial review.

* (21:10)

For the average person, a short-term loss of licence would be an inconvenience, but for many people such as the bus driver or a cab driver, delivery driver, truck driver, loss of licence is a loss of significant amount of income. And an incorrect charge would have this immediate effect.

I would encourage the minister to plainly communicate these changes to the public, which I think he said he would do, and better educate the public about these more substantial changes.

And I'm certainly—certain that many, many Manitobans are currently not aware that they could face a charge for transporting an animal outside of a restraint—that'll certainly be surprised when they face fairly serious consequences for doing so when this bill passes. It would be patently unfair to make such changes without the public being fully aware.

Likewise, I'm certain that many people would be surprised to learn that they will face a suspension of their licences for cellphone use. The public need to be much better informed and aware of this substantial change before tickets are handed out that do not allow judicial review.

With that said, we understand just how important these issues are and that we are committed to improving road safety, and we will be voting for this bill, with some concerns.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, the statistics in terms of the increase in accidents where there is evidence that there's a distractive driver are certainly concerning. And I think we are all concerned, in particular, about young people who are texting, but anybody at any age who is texting or using a cellphone and being distracted. There appears to be something about using a cellphone which kind of grabs onto your brain and so that your brain is not paying attention as much

to driving as it needs to be. And, clearly, this is something which needs to be addressed.

That being said, there are real concerns with the way this legislation is put forward. It is, in my view, fundamentally wrong to punish somebody with a three-day driver suspension before they've actually been found guilty. Right? That there should be a—we don't oppose the three-day driver suspension, but we believe that this should be taken to a court and somebody—and found guilty before having the car and the licence taken away.

Scott Newman has—who's a defence lawyer, has talked about this. And he talks about the fact that when you're pulling somebody over for alcohol and you do a breathalyzer test or police does a breathalyzer test, they can actually have an accurate measure that somebody has got too high a level of alcohol. When you're pulling somebody over for using a cellphone, that's an observation over a few seconds, usually, as the cars are moving by. And there clearly are instances where there can be mistakes made.

And we believe strongly that instead of doing it as this bill is proposing, what should have been done was to have a court decision and then have the suspension so that you're not punishing people before they're actually shown to be guilty.

There is also a major issue with this issue of careless driving and making careless driving a reportable offence, so that once you have a careless driving mark, there will be reported charges to Manitoba Public Insurance. This will rapidly invoke driver improvement and control measures and may end up with your—the cost of your licence going up significantly. And yet we hear from Mr. Eastoe, and he's an individual who has had 12 years as a police officer, and he's had 27 years working as a traffic court agent. I mean, if anybody should know this area, he should. He's probably the most expert person, in fact, in—likely in Winnipeg, maybe in Manitoba.

And he says about 40 per cent, maybe even more, I would suggest—this is what he says—I would suggest probably 50 per cent of the careless driving charges are laid inappropriately. And when we had the briefing to lay this out, we were told by the minister that if somebody was drinking coffee or drinking tea while driving, that was careless driving.

Now, I mean, I think that, particularly for somebody who is driving long distances or driving at

night, that actually having a cup of coffee is useful in keeping you awake and alert, and I suspect that it cuts down on accidents instead of increasing them. So I think we have to be very cautious about what the real evidence is here before jumping too far.

Now, with that cautionary note, and I will add one more, and this is from judge—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —Murray Sinclair, Justice Murray Sinclair, Senator Murray Sinclair now, and he talked with concern about what happens to him in terms of racial profiling, that he's much more likely to be pulled over by police officers than other senators in the Chamber.

And I think that—and I would hope that the minister, in his efforts, will make a major, major educational attempt and major effort to make sure that racial profiling in Manitoba stops. This needs to be part of this whole effort, because if people are going to be picked out for careless driving, if they're going to be—have their licence suspended without having a chance to talk in court and to make their case, then we have to make sure that this is not used in a way that would be racially profiling people, that there is some fairness and equity in this and that people like Senator Murray Sinclair are not more likely to be picked up than other people.

So some major cautions with this legislation, some major concerns. We will, for the sake of safety, support this legislation, but there's some big issues here and we're going to be watching this government and watching what happens very, very closely. And if there's problems—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —we'll be here in this Legislature holding this government to account for those problems.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Prior to moving on to the next bill, I would just like to make a short comment about

another one of our pages that is going to be leaving us.

Lilja Best is graduating from Glenlawn Collegiate this year and will be attending the University of Manitoba in the fall to study history and political science. Lilja enjoys music. She plays five instruments and is currently enrolled in six different school music courses.

This summer, she will be volunteering at Folklorama as a youth ambassador to the United Kingdom Pavilion. Lilja would like to thank the members and all the staff of the Legislature for their dedication and kindness, which has made her time as a page an unforgettable experience and has inspired her to pursue a career in politics.

On behalf of all of us here, we wish you the very best.

* (21:20)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— AMENDED BILLS

Bill 19 – The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning)

Madam Speaker: So we will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning).

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke), that Bill 19, The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire (efficacité accrue), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and subsequently amended, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wharton: Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to put a few words on the record on Bill 19, The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning). Our government is pleased to work in partnership with municipalities to support the important work they do for Manitobans at the local level.

This legislation reduces red tape for municipalities and industry, delivering on our PC commitment to support economic growth in Manitoba's rural communities.

Unlike the previous NDP administration, our government works collaboratively with municipalities and listens to regular Manitobans, not special interest groups. The Department of Municipal Relations hosted five information sessions with nearly 200 participants in Steinbach, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, Brandon, Eriksdale, with representation from the livestock sector, municipalities, planning districts, developers and many more, Madam Speaker.

I am pleased to present this bill as amended, which demonstrates our government's commitment to listen and work collaboratively with our municipal partners. I want to thank the members of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force committee, members and AMM for their work on the legislation, as well the Department of Municipal Relations for the staff and their dedication for the many hours travelling throughout Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'm not a hundred per cent sure, but I think congratulations may be in order to the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen). I think he just won a—some sort of prize, a raffle, though wasn't as creative as the raffle to Costa Rica that the NDP held last year, but I think he can choose to maybe go to a similar destination if he likes, something like that. *[interjection]* Yes. I think he can go anywhere WestJet flies if I understand correctly. So, sincerely, way to go—nice to see a colleague get some good fortune.

Another one of our colleagues—I would note for the record that none of the minister's colleagues clapped for him, only the opposition members. Maybe there's still some hard feelings on the government side about who's entitled to what vacation time and not this and that.

But just in terms of good fortune befalling members of this House, you know, I was thinking this morning when we came in, I saw the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), his face was just beaming, he was just smiling and, you know, he's been so happy these past few days and with good reason. You know, the government finally came to its senses with respect to some of the provisions of this Bill 19. They amended their own bill after, you know, getting beaten over the head with newspapers and all sorts of commentary in public and comment at committee.

Again, there were certain provisions of this bill which, you know, would have reduced the requirement to have notices in newspapers. And many people in the newspaper industry, many other Manitobans weighed in, said this would be bad for democracy. This would be a bad idea.

And I want to take a second to shout out Kim MacAuley of The Clipper and of the MCNA, who's actually here in the press gallery right now. Because of her work, the work of Ken Waddell, who's not frequently an ally of the New Democrats, though, on this issue we were shoulder-to-shoulder with him, and you know, really battling it out on the amendments that—trying to get those things done.

So that just goes to show the bizarre style of governing that, you know, the Ken Waddells, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, all these are lining up to, you know, go to war on behalf on the same side as the New Democrats are in this House.

And, again, you know, we voted in favour of those amendments that the government brought forward on Tuesday and, again, we've been talking a lot about harm reduction in this House lately and the need for that. And that's the reason why we voted in favour of those amendments. It's sort of a harm-reduction approach to managing this government.

We know that they're intent on passing this Bill 19, and though we may not be able to prevent them from passing all the other negative aspects of Bill 19, we did want to ensure that it wouldn't be as bad as it might otherwise have been. And so, of course, we were collaborative, gracious even. My colleague from 'flin flam'—Flin Flon, rather—he took his own amendments out of the way and let these government amendments stand, and we were proud to vote in favour of them.

There are aspects of this bill that we heard people in the public speak in favour of, particularly those portions that deal with aggregate and quarries around town. We heard from the, you know, heavy construction industry, that they're in favour of those changes. And, you know, as a result, you know, took some meetings and had some good conversations with folks and they made some good arguments as to why these provisions of the bill made some sense.

I hope I'm not, you know, stealing too much of my colleague from River Heights' style, though, when I say: on the other hand. On the other hand—but there are many things in this bill that we can't get

behind. In particular, and I think all of my colleagues can probably back me up on this, there's been a torrent, an avalanche, a deluge of emails about concerns on the hog industry and about environmental concerns being brought forward with this bill.

And I hear my colleague from Radisson chiming in and saying, I've been getting the emails, too. I can't speak up in caucus. I can't speak up against the Premier (Mr. Pallister) on these changes, but I'm glad that you're standing up for our concerns. And I would say to the member for—from Radisson—to the member from Radisson, you're welcome, I'm happy to give voice to the voiceless. I'm happy to bring forward the concerns of the people of Manitoba here in the Chamber.

But, again, we know that there's many changes to the way livestock operations—the designations of conditional use would be changed. You know, those operations would be able to make significant changes to their operations without having to get approval. We also know that other parts of this bill would make it harder for people to object to zoning changes, would create a higher, perhaps more-difficult-to-reach standard for people who are simply trying to speak out about what they want for the future of their, you know, municipality.

You know, these sorts of concerns were brought forward by an NDP member from—who lives in a—not too far from Stonewall, actually. And I know the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) just perked up and said an NDP member near Stonewall? Wow, that's news to me. And I'd have him know, I actually went to Stonewall last summer and I sold a membership to a young man in Stonewall, and I increased our party membership by 10 per cent in the process.

But, on a more serious level, this—you know, this acquaintance, he does have real concerns about the expansion of the hog industry and also about the monitoring and the enforcement of the existing provisions. And the point that he makes is that, you know, the enforcement is not there today. So what is going to happen if the existing protections, the existing rules are watered down?

And so it's those concerns about the environment, it's those concerns about our democracy, about the voiceless having an opportunity to actually exercise their democratic right to be able to use their voice, to be able to speak

out. Those are the reasons that we will, in fact, be voting against Bill 19.

* (21:30)

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, we find the 30-day time limit for the Municipal Board to be unrealistic with the recent \$80,000 cut. It's hard to believe that a board that already has issues hearing appeals in a timely manner and having their funding cut so drastically would be expected to do more with less.

With this bill, 25 people are required to appeal a decision rather than one, and this makes an appeal very difficult for a community without the population density. What has also piqued our interest is the removal of a municipality to consult with school divisions, but this has become a common theme hidden in this government's agenda and appears to be a move towards removing school boards altogether.

Another part of this bill that appears short-sighted is the dissolving of the Interdepartmental Planning Board. This government may not be aware that many of the issues facing our province are extraordinarily complex and that changes in one department will affect another. For example, it's very well known that social determinants have a lot of effect on our justice and health system. Madam Speaker, this board could come together to look at these issues through education, CFS and housing, and this could co-ordinate best practices.

Our caucus also believes that moving towards this livestock operations is regressive and will ultimately be harmful for our environment. While we understand that the pork industry would very much like to see and have the ability to grow, giving any industry a free pass to expand operations and removing environmental protections is going to be harmful to our communities and our environment. Look—take, for example, Neepawa, Madam Speaker. The population continues to grow, and we know this is because of HyLife.

People all over Manitoba are engaged in what's happening. They want to know what's going on in their communities, and they want to be sure that they are informed and that the information comes to them in a way that is accessible.

Madam Speaker, we will not be supporting this bill.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please.

* (22:30)

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning).

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway,

Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 33, Nays 14.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 20—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2)

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 20, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2).

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 20, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2), reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: Bill 20 makes a variety of important amendments to the Employment Standards Code, which affords greater flexibilities for working families and for employers while reducing unnecessary red tape.

Changes to the protected job leaves introduced under this bill mean that Manitobans who become new parents or who face the difficulties that come with learning that a loved one is critically ill are now provided greater care-giving flexibility in alignment with available employment insurance benefits.

Further, employers and workers who wish to enter into standard hours of work agreements are afforded the autonomy to do so without seeking authorization from government, provided they adhere to the conditions outlined in the code.

Thirdly, this bill will also bring Manitoba in line with the International Labour Organization standards by raising the minimum working age from 12 to 13. It will improve knowledge of safety requirements by requiring completion of young-worker-readiness certificates and will reduce red tape for employers by replacing an outdated child employment permit system.

And, lastly, this bill will ensure employment standards resources are allocated where they are most needed by authorizing the director to refuse

frivolous and vexatious complaints and direct those in unionized workplaces to utilize the dispute resolution processes provided for under existing collective agreements.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Where to begin, where to begin. Only this bunch—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —only this government could take a good idea and wrap it in bad ideas, but that's exactly what they've done.

You know, the first part of this bill that the minister talked about, aligning the child-care leave with what the federal government suggested—what a good idea we had. What a good idea we had. Too bad it took them so many months to figure out that it really was a good idea. Now, if they stopped the bill at that point, just ripped the rest of it up, threw it in the garbage, man, they would have accomplished something. But that's not the way these guys think; that's not the way they work. They got some things that they know aren't that great of ideas, so let's wrap it all around a good idea and try and get it by without anybody noticing that the rest of the bill stinks.

So I'll do my best Liberal impression. On the one hand, there's some good stuff in this bill, but on the other hand, things like where they've landed with the employment age of children goes against the advice they got from LMRC.

Some of the things that they've taken away from working people are just plain wrong. The ability of a worker to file a complaint but leaving it strictly up to the discretion of the director to decide what's frivolous is wrong, but that's what this government has done. Deciding that just because you're in a union you can't go to the Labour Board is wrong, but that's what this government has done.

* (22:40)

The way they've structured some of the child labour parts of the bill will potentially leave young people less protected than they are now, which is wrong. It's very unfortunate that that's the kind of things that this government likes to do with their omnibus bills, is throw a bunch of things into a pot and hope that the good part makes us vote in favour of the stinky part, and I guess that's where we're landing up with this part is because this government

has waited so long to introduce the amendments to line up with the federal government's 17-week leave provisions, that the rest of it, hopefully, we can fix down the road.

It's unfortunate that the government, as usual, doesn't really listen, doesn't listen to the groups that are structured to provide them advice and they come up with flawed legislation. And that's what this is. At best, it's flawed legislation.

With that—few words, I'll sit down.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): After what has been said by some concerned citizens and groups during committee, our caucus will not be supporting this bill.

The extension of leave of absence—the parental leave—from 37 weeks to 63 weeks is a necessary thing. This is a huge sigh of relief because it ensures that those who need care get it, while ensuring that those who take a leave of absence are promised job security. This concept of the bill we completely support.

But, with that said, Madam Speaker, we will not be supporting this bill because of the reoccurring theme throughout committee that this government implemented amendments contrary to the advice put forward by the Labour Management Review Committee.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 20, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2).

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 22—The Queen's Counsel Act

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Queen's Counsel Act.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 22, The Queen's Counsel Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: This legislation restores Queen's Counsel appointments while at the same time making the process more open and transparent for Manitoba lawyers. This allows Manitoba to once again join many provinces across the country which make Queen's Counsel appointments.

Madam Speaker, we believe strongly in recognizing outstanding work and service in our legal profession. This legislation will allow us to recognize lawyers with a minimum of 10 years of service who have demonstrated outstanding work and abilities as a lawyer, a track record of integrity as a lawyer and have contributed to the development of excellence in the legal profession.

I know that our Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) was very grateful to have the supports of Melissa Beaumont, president of the Manitoba Bar Association, who waited until 11:30 to present at committee supporting our legislation earlier this month. She was very clear in her statements at committee. Ms. Beaumont stated, and I quote, the MBA has been asking the government to consider reinstating the Queen's Counsel designation for a number of years, end quote.

Madam Speaker, I hope that the members opposite will support this legislation this evening, giving outstanding lawyers across Manitoba the recognition they very well deserve.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Just a brief couple of words in respect of Bill 22, The Queen's Counsel Act.

Certainly, as everyone is well aware, we did away with this, understanding that often can be used as political patronage and we're not willing to engage in any of those types of behaviours that would actually pit lawyers against one another and making other lawyers feel that they're not as good as other lawyers when we know that we have extraordinary lawyers on all—on both sides in Crown and defense and we value all the contributions of lawyers here in Manitoba.

And, I guess, the only thing that I would say is that when the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) gets his designation and gets his silk robes, we will be having cake and a celebration, and of course, everybody will be welcome, and I'm sure that all of the members opposite, because they believe so much in this, will come to the NDP caucus and will help us celebrate

and honour our very learned and amazing colleague from Minto.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, this bill recognizes exceptional lawyers who have made substantial contributions for the legal system. The first individual to be bestowed such an honour was the lawyer and philosopher Sir Francis Bacon. His contributions have helped shape our own justice system into what it is today. This is the ideal that the Queen's Counsel designation represents.

Madam Speaker, our caucus believes in recognizing lawyers who have demonstrated excellence, have done beyond the call of the bar and are committed to the betterment of their community.

That being said, Madam Speaker, our caucus does have concerns over how this bill sets out to award lawyers with such—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Lamoureux: —a designation and we are concerned with partisan biases in the awards. Our caucus will not be supporting this bill, as we believe that the advisory council should have the final say instead of the minister in appointing new members to ensure that it doesn't become a political favour. I urge the minister to consider what we have suggested in order to have the Queen's Counsel members who are recognized for their merits.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Queen's Counsel Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: Oh—no. All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Queen's Counsel Act.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 36, Nays 14.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Prior to moving to the next bill, I just wanted to mention a little bit about one of the pages. He's not here, but I think so that his name is on the record I just want to read a little bit about him to you.

Scott Knight isn't with us this evening but I would like to put a few words on the record about him. Scott will be graduating from West Kildonan Collegiate this year. He plans to go into commerce at the University of Manitoba and to one day own his own business. Scott plays high school basketball, hockey and club baseball. Scott spends his free time watching sports, visiting the community centre to play hockey—sorry, to play soccer and working

another job as a baseball 'umper'—'umper'—oh, it's getting too late. Umpire.

Working as a page at the Legislature has been a great experience for Scott and it will be something he always remembers. He enjoyed learning more about the process that takes place in the Chamber and all of the work that goes into the betterment of the province. Thank you.

* (23:30)

Bill 25—The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places)

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 25, The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places).

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 25, The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living, seconded by the honourable Minister for Crown Services, that Bill 25, The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the federal government has committed to legalize the regular recreational cannabis in Canada in 2018. Last April, they introduced the federal Cannabis Act to achieve this.

The federal legislation will result in a significant change in our society, the end of the prohibition of the possession and use of recreational cannabis. For many Manitobans, this raises a number of questions and concerns. As we look ahead to legalization, we have to consider its impacts on our communities and our children's health. Our approach to this issue of the smoking and vaping of cannabis in outdoor

public places, as it has been for indoor public places, has been on the side of safety.

Bill 25 will amend The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Act to prohibit the smoking and vaping of cannabis in all outdoor public places like sidewalks, streets, parks, playgrounds, beaches, outdoor sports venues, health facilities and school grounds, outdoor entertainment venues and restaurant patios and decks. This approach is consistent with the approach taken in relation to alcohol consumption in outdoor public places under Liquor and Gaming Control Act.

Our goal in restricting the smoking and vaping of cannabis in indoor and outdoor public places is to protect the public health by preventing exposure to second-hand smoke, to prevent the normalization of smoking or vaping of cannabis and ensure the smoking and vaping of cannabis does not undermine the efforts that have been made and may be made in the future to denormalize tobacco use.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm now honoured to be able to stand and speak a little bit about Bill 25, the second of three bills that really are a suite of bills dealing with the upcoming legalization of cannabis. And I want to say at the outset that I don't think any member of this House doubts the necessity of proper and thoughtful regulation of cannabis.

Of course, this is my first speech as a Queen's Counsel designate, at this late hour. And I'm going to put on the record the name of another former Attorney General and Queen's Counsel, Vic Toews. Unfortunately, I fear that the government has veered into the Vic Toews school of politics.

We remember the day when Vic Toews stood up and said, you're either with us, or you're with the child molesters. And a lot of Canadians decided they really weren't with either side. We know there are serious ramifications from the legalization of cannabis. *[interjection]* Wow. As I say for the member from Emerson, all that sensitivity training down the drain, Madam Speaker.

You know, this is a serious issue and I would appreciate—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: And we are going to support this bill, but I think it's very important to put on the record the issues.

And I know—actually, the Minister of Health and I appreciate—we may be the only ones who appreciate that the words we speak in this place actually do get reviewed in future by people who are trying to interpret laws and understand laws. And it is quite useful to make sure that we're thoughtful in these—in our comments.

And the government has taken an issue, and they've said it's all about safety—that it's all about safety. And we understand there are major safety concerns, but we also realize this government has a confused front on this.

The Minister of Health will tell us it's all about making sure we don't normalize the use of cannabis, yet this is the government which has decided that they're going to allow cannabis to be sold through private stores—private stores, who are going to have an interest in selling as much cannabis as they can and upselling Manitobans on whatever kind of cannabis they can sell.

And it is only—well, it's only the Manitoba PC Party that could be in power when cannabis is legalized and tell Manitobans with a straight face that they don't see any possible financial benefit to the people of Manitoba. Only this government could possibly say that.

So with Bill 25—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: With Bill 25, there are very, very strict limits on where cannabis can be smoked, and, as the minister has said in his comments tonight, basically any outdoor public place. I'm actually disappointed, the minister raced through his speech. I was hoping he was going to give us a bit more information in his speech about what regulations he was actually going to pass.

We heard a number of thoughtful presentations at the committee meeting from people saying, you know, as the bill is written, it is effectively a use for some Manitobans and it is effectively prohibition for others, and there's problems with that. There's problems with that because, for example, one of every three Manitobans does not own their home; they are a renter. We know that landlords are going to have the ability to prevent the smoking of cannabis in their rented premises. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: You know, I don't think the member from Morris is giving this issue the appropriate

respect. I don't know if he's trying to be funny. This is actually an important night in this Legislature, and it would be appreciated if members of the Progressive Conservative caucus would give this matter the gravity that it deserves.

And under the bill, as it is now drafted, someone who lives in an apartment actually has absolutely no place that they can consume a product which is going to be legal within a short period of time unless they have access to somebody that owns private property. And maybe the members opposite don't know anybody who might be in that position, but, you know, I represent an inner-city seat and that's—probably half of my constituents live in an apartment block, and if you own your own home—I own my own home. If I was to use cannabis, which I don't, but if I did, I could smoke cannabis in my house, I could smoke it in my backyard, I could smoke it in my front yard. If I did not have a house, if I rented, there is absolutely no place—as the bill is now worded—where I can actually consume cannabis. We know edibles are not yet permitted, and I know we'll have a reasonable discussion, I hope, about how that will happen, hopefully in short order.

But, when this bill passes, unless the minister is prepared to listen to what was said at committee, what other people have said, we are effectively going to have prohibition for people who, through no fault of their own, do not have access to a place to actually consume the product, and that's not right.
[interjection]

Well, I hear people saying it's just like cigarettes. It's not just like cigarettes, because if somebody wants to have a cigarette they can walk out on the sidewalk, they can walk out of a building and smoke a cigarette. I would hope the members opposite would be a bit more thoughtful, and I know the Minister of Health is more thoughtful, and I know that when he brings in regulations, I know—I hope that he is going to listen to what Manitobans have said.

And I want to refer to what Mr. Ariel Gliner said at the committee hearing, and he says Bill 25 proposes to limit the smoking and vaping of cannabis to private property with consent of the owner. Once this bill passes, it will be strictly prohibited to vape or smoke cannabis anywhere else, including in places where cigarette smoking is currently allowed.

More distressingly, however, is that the bill does not contain any exception or exemption of any type for those that smoke or vape cannabis pursuant

to a valid authorization under the ACMPR, which, Madam Speaker, is a federal bill. This can be contrasted with Bill 11, which we've passed tonight, that specifically states that this act does not apply to the consumption, possession, distribution, purchase, sale or cultivation of cannabis for medical purposes that occurs in accordance with the requirements of the applicable federal law.

I am hoping the Minister of Health, when he brings in regulations, will make sure that those who require cannabis for medical purposes will be exempted from all of the impacts of this legislation, because it means that people that require medical cannabis are going to have to be tethered, effectively, to their homes, and that's not right.

He also goes on to say Bill 25 has no exemption and it's difficult to understand why. Medical cannabis in Canada has been legal since the year 2000. Since that time, numerous court decisions, including *Allard v. Canada* and *R. v. Smith* have reaffirmed that individuals who have been medically authorized to use cannabis have a right to reasonable access to that cannabis. In the past, this has led to changes in the appropriate legislation to allow for designated growers, permitted 'alterisation' of cannabis products and has also led to human rights decisions that have ordered employers to accommodate those individuals using cannabis pursuant to a valid authorization.

* (23:40)

So there are serious issues. As I've also pointed out, Bill 25 effectively, unless there is wise regulation-making power that's used by this minister, is going to create prohibition for people who don't have access to private property. And, you know, it was almost 14 hours ago I was standing up talking about The Human Rights Code and some changes that we thought were valid. The last time we changed The Human Rights Code, we brought in protections for gender identity but also for social disadvantage. And I'm hoping that the Minister of Health recognizes that if this law passes without reasonable regulation, it is going to result in those people who do not have access to private property, who tend to be younger, who tend to be poorer, who tend to be more likely the member of a disadvantaged group, are going to be the ones who are going to get tickets for the illegal use of cannabis.

And I expect somebody is going to say that a law which effectively imposes prohibition of a legal

regulated product, well, that is not a reasonable rule at all.

So I appeal to the Minister of Health, who I—even though some days in this House, maybe some members might doubt it, he and I have a great deal of respect for each other. And I'm hoping that he will listen to what was said in committee; I'm hoping, too, what he's heard from people who used medical cannabis for their own health and well-being and will make sure there are regulations which are reasonable, which make it something other than prohibition for those who have the least, and make sure that it makes provisions for those who require, who use, medical cannabis.

And we are going to actually give this minister the benefit of the doubt, and we're going to support this bill in just a couple of minutes, in the hopes that he gets it right. And, if he doesn't and if this government continues on the same course, well, then, in October 2020, then we will improve the regulations under this bill, which, apparently, we can—we'll be able to do by regulation to deal with this in a reasonable manner.

So I hope the Minister of Health will listen and will bring in regulations which will be reasonable to everybody, accepting that there has to be proper regulation of cannabis as it becomes legalized.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, this bill is about regulating where people can smoke or use cannabis. And, in fact, the bill that the minister brings in will make it illegal to use cannabis in outdoor public places. There are a lot of uncertainties. We believe that it's necessary to have some framework, and we will actually support this legislation, but there are some critical questions here.

One of these is—are—somebody who uses medical marijuana, cannabis, going to be treated exactly the same in terms of where they can use it, as everybody else? And, if the answer is yes, it may be very difficult for somebody who uses medical marijuana, as they're travelling around the province, because they're not going to be spending all that much time when they're travelling around in their own home.

The second question, which is important one, is what happens with 4/20 here at the Legislature, as an example? Will the—requirements to use it, what kind of approach is the minister going to use in terms of 4/20, whether this is going to be legal or illegal activity.

The third issue, which has been raised, and that is: What happens with somebody who's living in a building which they don't own—not their own home—people are going to be able to use it in their own home, but, if you don't own your own home, and you're in a multi-unit apartment building, what's the status?

The MLA for Minto is quite right that the words that the minister says are very important in the way his bill will be interpreted as things proceed. And it was for that reason that I listened very closely to the minister's remarks throughout the whole debate.

And, of course, we had quite an opportunity to ask questions of the minister. The question was: What happens about buildings which are rental multi-units and people don't own them? And I recorded the minister's response. He says: There needs to be more discussion about where those in multi-dwelling units can smoke. No clue as to where they can smoke, but there's more discussion coming.

We tried, again, to ask the question, and the next answer was: Well, we're not at that point of consideration—straight from Hansard. We don't know where we're going, but we're going there.

The next point was, you know, we tried to pin him down and, you know, is he going to make any decisions? But then the answer was—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —oh, we don't know where we're going, but the law enforcement will use their discretion. Oh.

And, then, following that—trying to pursue that line of law enforcement, the answer was: Well, I'm not really going to answer that—from the minister—I think the member's drifting a little into areas that are more Justice than Health. Oh. Boy, he really wriggled.

And then we tried one more time to pin him down, right, and—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —his final answer was: Well, I don't know what I'm doing, but I will never say never. And we thank the minister for his guidance, and we look forward to this passage of this bill. But we also look forward to the world of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —uncertainty which still lies ahead.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 25, The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places).

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

I declare the motion carried.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— AMENDED BILLS

(*Continued*)

Bill 26—The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended)

Madam Speaker: We shall now proceed to concurrence and third reading of Bill 26, The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended).

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 26, The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: This legislation establishes provincial sanctions to correspond with the new impaired driving offences in the federal Bill C-46.

* (23:50)

Bill C-46 creates three new Criminal Code offences for different levels of THC in the blood while driving, including low drug offences, high drug offences and mixed drug and alcohol offences. Under the federal bill C-46, the drug-screening devices will be approved by the Attorney General of Canada and the blood-drug levels will be approved by way of federal regulations.

It is our duty as a Province to protect Manitobans on the road by responding with complementary legislation, just like we do with alcohol. As such, the provincial sanctions outlined in Bill 26 largely mirror those currently in place for drunk drivers.

Our government is proud that this bill is supported by CAA Manitoba and other stakeholders who take road safety seriously. In closing, Madam

Speaker, these are common-sense measures that will keep our roads safe, by mirroring what is currently in place for alcohol. We are hopeful that members opposite will support road safety by supporting Bill 26 tonight.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, so I'm pleased at this late hour to put some words on the record in respect of Bill 26, which, as the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) noted, is the last in a sweep of bills, in respect of the legalization of cannabis, which is certainly fast approaching.

I would believe that everybody in the House understands and agrees that all families should feel safe on the road, and certainly I know—I think all of us know in this House that Manitobans are concerned that the legalization of cannabis will lead to an increased—potentially, an increased number of people driving under the influence of cannabis.

Certainly, we're all in new territory, not only here in Manitoba, but federally. And I think that every province and territory is dealing with how this will unfold within their jurisdictions and what that will look like. Certainly, I think that it's important to put on the record some of the concerns that we've already seen and that we would note, particularly in the fact that there's really no set limit on the amount of cannabis that you can have in your blood in the same way there is currently for alcohol.

I would suspect that we know that all different weight types, different body types, male and female, those individuals that use medicinal, I don't think that there's a homogenous amount that would work for everybody and I think that these are some of the issues that everybody's grappling with. And certainly, when we look at the oral fluid testing that is available, I don't think that they are 100 per cent accurate.

So I think that those are some really serious concerns that we need to look at. And what I think is interesting is when we look at Bill 25 that the member from Minto just referenced, and we look at it in combination with Bill 26, the Minister of Health has created a space in which folks actually have to drive somewhere to go and be able to legally smoke cannabis.

And so, I mean, one could suggest and submit here that actually Bill 25 could contribute to more people driving under the influence of cannabis, because they simply do not have the particular means

or the private property or the space to do it at home safely.

So I think that that begs the additional consideration, as we move forward. We know that police already have the ability to arrest drug-impaired drivers. The member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and I were speaking just while we were waiting on the last bill, and we were talking about how, you know, there were some concerns that have been raised in respect of racial profiling in respect of this new cannabis legislation that's coming down the pipe, and ensuring that we're not contributing to a space where more people are going to be racially profiled, simply because how do you—how are the police now to discern if you're just swerving because of something else or are they going to be looking for a particular type of person that they believe is smoking cannabis.

So, again, another concern. And I think it's important to recognize that that—the oral fluid test, again, doesn't actually show levels as it exists right now. It's simply just a pass or a fail, which I would suggest, too, is extremely problematic when we have criminal offences attached to that and we have the potential to—you know, if you have a trace of THC, there's very real consequences. And so what are those levels?

And, you know, certainly, we believe that repercussions are an important part of deterring people from driving while impaired by drugs like cannabis. We want to, obviously, support and protect families and workers and seniors and all Manitobans who may be harmed or potentially could be killed due to impaired driving to cannabis. And, certainly, we know that. And, tragically, you know, we've seen across the country, this is especially true around places—accidents that take place around crosswalks and playgrounds and schools. Certainly, we on this side of the House—and I would suggest everybody in this House—wants to ensure that people are safe, and particularly children, are safe as we move towards this new regime of legalization of cannabis.

So, you know, we—I do think that it's important, as well. I would like to put on the record that, you know, under our NDP educational programs and advertisement, we were actually able to see the number of accidents caused by impaired driving in our province decrease from 230 per year in 2011 down to 145 in 2016. And I think that that's a testament to understanding the importance of marrying legislation to public education. You can't

have legislation and nobody really knows about it and doesn't understand the consequences.

And so I think that we spoke about this in some earlier pieces of legislation: the importance of ensuring that this government undertakes a robust, comprehensive public education with the new rules and legislation and regulations, like the member from Minto has discussed previously so that we have less people—or, more people informed and less people making those maybe unhealthy decisions that put all of us at risk here.

So I do want to say that I think it's important as well that, you know, defence lawyer—I want to put this on the record—that defence lawyer Danny Gunn also raised the issue that people who have a buildup of tolerance to marijuana, such as medical users, could be considered legally impaired as soon as they get behind the wheel. So that certainly is a little bit problematic for folks, as well. And so he goes on to say we want to try and limit the amount of people who are impaired on the road. And I agree with that. But part of the challenge is we don't have a serious connection between the levels of marijuana in your blood in terms of nanogram percentage like we do in terms of alcohol.

And so, again, I think that it is so important to understand that we are on this new path in this new regime, and I think that this government has to, maybe, be a little more proactive than we've seen them be in the whole, you know, moving towards the legalization of cannabis.

As I said in my previous comments, you know, that—and actually, like the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) said, that, you know, back in 2012, the Liberal Party of Canada said that they would be, you know, legalizing marijuana. And, certainly, when they were elected as our federal government, surely, this government would have understood that that was going to be a huge piece to their governing. And we saw that they didn't really do anything and they kind of waited.

And, as I indicated, I think that they could have had a lot more proactive—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Fontaine: —be a lot more proactive in respect of the legalization of marijuana—or, cannabis. And simply because we are on this new path that none of us really know. I mean, I know that we see in the

States, Colorado has had legalization of cannabis for a couple more years than us and could have been researching that as best practices and looking at how they are dealing with this within their legislation. But we didn't really see that effort or the proactive approach in dealing with the legalization of cannabis.

So I hope—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (00:00)

Ms. Fontaine: —hope that as we move towards this and when Bill C-46 actually makes its way past Senate, with or without amendments, that the government proactively engages and makes sure that Manitobans are safe and that, actually, people's liberties are also safe as well, and that we're not going to intrinsically criminalize people that don't deserve to be criminalized and that we have—we ensure that the levels that we are going to be putting these offences on are true and accurate and adequate. So I think that those are important.

I also do just want to put on the record—because I know that my colleague opposite spoke about how this bill is supported by CAA, I do also want to say that, you know, MADD Canada, you know, understands that a trace amount of THC does not—is not indicative of impaired driving. So I think that that's important to put it on the record.

So finally, I will just say that we will, you know, be supporting this bill tonight and giving the government our—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): It is evident that road safety is a big concern and our caucus takes it very seriously. We need to recognize that implementing a one-size-fits-all approach for marijuana does not work and we need to be aware of the unique circumstances associated with it. Madam Speaker, Bill 22 allows for changes to the regulations should any difficulties arise in the future. I hope that the minister is ready to adapt fairly quickly and diligently as the situation develops over time.

Our caucus will be supporting the bill, believing that this bill lays the important foundation for creating safety on our roads in a time when marijuana has been legalized for consumption.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 26, The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended).

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

The hour being after 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 31, 2018

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