

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXIX No. 29 - 1:30 p.m., Monday, June 27, 2016

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 27, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee of Supply

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

I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer), that the reports of committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I am pleased to table the Report to the Legislature Pursuant to Section 63(4) of The Financial Administration Act Relating to Supplementary Loan and Guarantee Authority as of March 31, 2016.

Madam Speaker: And in compliance with section 4 of the Members' Salaries, Allowances and Retirement Plans Disclosure Regulation, I am pleased to table the report of amounts claimed and paid for members for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Sport, Culture and Heritage.

The required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with the statement.

Multiculturalism Day

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, as minister responsible for multiculturalism, I rise to recognize June 27th as Multiculturalism Day in Manitoba.

This is an opportunity for all Manitobans to celebrate the rich diversity of our province and reaffirm our commitment to equality and mutual respect. Manitoba is fortunate to be home to such a dynamic array of ethnocultural groups, and today we reflect on their many contributions in making Manitoba a better, brighter and more inclusive place to live, work and raise our families.

Diversity is now a fundamental characteristic of the Manitoba identity. We are a welcoming and supportive home for people from around the world. There are currently more than 250 ethnocultural groups in Manitoba working to enhance our communities. They represent 150 countries and speak 148 languages.

We embrace the many immigrants and refugees who arrive each year. Manitoba's commitment to providing relief and resettlement for the thousands is a reality, as recently welcomed Syrian, Iranian, Congolese, Eritrean and Ethiopian families are creating roots in our province, along with many other newcomers. We continue to work toward inclusion, and true inclusion means opportunity: the opportunity for all our citizens from all walks of life to learn, advance and contribute together.

I am proud that Manitobans are free to celebrate not only the heritage of their family and the community but the backgrounds and beliefs of our neighbours as well. Multiculturalism is rooted in our past, lives in our present and sets the direction for our future.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to promoting peaceful coexistence for all Manitobans. Let us continue to work together to build a better and brighter Manitoba for all. Celebrate Multiculturalism Day in Manitoba on June 27th.

Thank you.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for her statement.

Madam Speaker, I can speak from experience when I say people from all over the world recognize that Manitoba is a great place to live. In our province, we speak more than 100 languages, and there are some 300 organizations that actively represent our unique ethnocultural communities. By 2031 more than 25 per cent of Winnipeg's population will be people from visible minority communities, including our growing Aboriginal communities. It is no surprise that The New York Times called Manitoba a hub of parka-clad diversity. We call it home.

Madam Speaker, our NDP team is incredibly proud of our multiculturalism. We have a diverse team of people that reflects the Manitoba of today, and we are standing on the side of Manitobans that think we should do even more to attract new Manitobans and help them start a life here.

We've long believed in creating partnerships and encouraging co-operation among cultural communities. That's why our previous NDP government was a driving force behind starting the Manito Ahbee Festival that celebrates indigenous culture. And we consistently funded Folklorama, a celebration of the many cultures found in Manitoba. Our NDP's focus on steadily growing our province with immigration has had significant and positive results for our province's economy and—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the member to speak? [*Agreed*]

Ms. Lamoureux: I am delighted to rise today on June 27th to speak to Canadian Multiculturalism Day.

Awareness of our Canadian multiculturalism has expanded the equality of citizens here in Canada. It has enabled us to preserve our identities and take pride in our ancestry. It has given us a sense of belonging, security, confidence and the ability to be accepting of diverse cultures.

Multiculturalism will continue to grow here in Canada, which is why we need to embrace it. Robert Alan says it well: Cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that we can all benefit from.

* (13:40)

We need to remind ourselves of what unifies us. It is because of the multiculturalism here in Canada and Manitoba specifically that we can experience events such as Folklorama. Folklorama is the largest and longest running multicultural festival in the world that has been celebrating cultural understanding since 1970. This allows us to learn about our diversity by admiring cultural attire, partaking in good food, which is always my favourite, and watch and even perform in traditional practices.

Canada would not be the amazing country that it is today without multiculturalism, so it is important for us to embrace our differences and strive to be the friendly Manitobans that I know we are. Together, we stand strong for a peaceful society.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Congratulations to Graduates

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to congratulate the graduates of the three high schools within the constituency of Tuxedo.

Tuxedo is proud to have these three high schools serving the students in our community and beyond its borders. The Gray Academy of Jewish Education, Shaftesbury High school and St. Paul's High School have the reputations of producing graduates of academic, athletic, artistic and community-minded scholars.

The Gray Academy of Jewish Education opened in 1997 at the Asper Jewish Community Campus. The history and the roots of this school date back to 1902. Over the past century, the Gray Academy has become the largest Jewish day school in western Canada and the only day school in North America providing a Jewish-based education to both Manitoban and international students.

Shaftesbury High school opened in 1969. It has a long list of provincially and internationally recognized alumni. Shaftesbury is one of a few public schools that has established a wall of fame for its alumni. Each year in convocation, a committee honours a deserving alum with a plaque that is featured in the school lobby for a year and then added to the permanent presentation in the school.

St. Paul's High School opened in 1964 as a result of an amalgamation process to accommodate the growing enrolment at Catholic schools for boys in Winnipeg, the first of which opened in 1926. The mission of St. Paul's is to provide young men an environment which, through the commitment of staff, parents, alumni and friends, the opportunity to become graduates that become lifelong learners open to growth, dedicated to the community that raised them and committed to reciprocating their assistance whenever possible.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to recognize the three graduates that I was honoured to award my annual MLA scholarship to this year: from Gray Academy, Matais Pelich; from Shaftesbury, Han Eol Kim; and from St. Paul's, Daniel Stokes.

At this time, I'd like to ask all members of the House to join me in not only congratulating these three individuals but all of the 2016 Manitoba high school graduates. We should all be dedicated to working towards facilitating a strong Manitoba education system and a province that compels our young men and women to choose to remain within our borders in order to bring their achievements—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Maples Collegiate Graduates

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Madam Speaker, one of the many benefits of working in the Legislative Building is seeing all of the many Manitoba graduates dressed to the nines and celebrating the start of a new chapter in their lives.

Every summer, myself and my fellow MLAs try to attend as many graduation ceremonies as possible, and last week I celebrated with the eager graduates of Maples Collegiate at the Centennial Concert Hall. I presented Gabriel Uy with the Mohinder Saran scholarship award and joined in congratulating the hundreds of other students who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in academic fields, the performing and fine arts, trades and practical skills, philanthropy and Aboriginal culture and community.

Today being Multiculturalism Day, it is fitting to celebrate the diverse graduates of Maples Collegiate. This school is doing an excellent job reinventing the wheel to include other perspectives and identities in their graduation ceremonies. This year marked their seventh graduation powwow which brought together the Aboriginal community to honour and celebrate the graduates.

Congratulations to the many teachers and administrative staff who have worked hard to make their students' high school experience positive. They should be very proud of the work that they do every day to make Manitoba high schools a welcome, productive place for young people to learn and discover their talents.

Across the country, we are seeing cuts to education and a reduction in supports for students who need extra attention. In the recent—our government reduced class sizes in early years, hired hundreds more teachers and expanded schools and invested \$30 million to upgrade shops classrooms around the province. Our antibullying legislation ensures students feel safe and welcomed no matter how they identify themselves.

We know that the future of Manitoba lies in the young people, and investments in their education is key—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Aurora Donaldson

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House to acknowledge a wonderful high school student who has found her passion and is pursuing and excelling at it at the provincial and national level. Aurora Donaldson took on fashion design in grade 9 and has achieved excellence in the field and has found a way to express her innate artistic talents and bring her creative ideas to fruition. Aurora, I am proud to say, attends Murdoch MacKay Collegiate, the former high school that I, a very long time ago, graduated from.

This past spring, while still in grade 11, she was awarded the gold medal in fashion tech at Skills Manitoba, an Olympic-style competition that showcases trades and technology for up-and-coming students in vocational programs. There, she had to take her design from drawing to completion in only six hours, and in talking to her, you can visualize getting those last few stitches done and finishing her creation just under the wire.

As of today, she has already been offered a \$3,000 scholarship to attend M.C. College to study fashion design when she graduates a year from now.

Madam Speaker, this passion doesn't grow without the support, encouragement and direction of her teacher, Denise Miller, and Brenda Speirs-Fryatt of M.C. College, who saw her potential and fostered

it to help prepare her for the competition. She took her skills and that gold medal and, with the guidance of her mentors, she was part of Team Manitoba at the Skills Canada National Competition in early June in Moncton, New Brunswick, and although she finished just off the podium, we are all very proud of her showing. She is already planning for Skills Canada 2017, which will be held here in Winnipeg, with an eye on gold and potentially representing her country at a future Worldskills competition.

Please join me in acknowledging and celebrating Aurora and wishing her future success in this field, for not just achieving excellence but for finding that one true thing that you were born to do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Flin Flon Community Choir

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's been 20 years since the Flin Flon Community Choir was first formed, and today they are doing better than ever. Earlier this month, the choir travelled to New York to perform at Carnegie Hall. Flin Flon has fast become a northern arts and culture hub, a fact that no sensible northern strategy could ignore.

On June 12th, 35 members, from teens to seniors, joined choir masters from The Pas and Winnipeg. They performed *Lux Aeterna*, Latin for eternal light, by Morten Lauridsen, a renowned American composer. This is the third time the Flin Flon choir has appeared on the iconic New York stage. It's also the second time that Distinguished Concerts International New York invited northern Manitobans to an international event. Jonathan Guilford [*phonetic*] the artistic director and principal conductor, has developed such foundness for the choir that he travelled to Flin Flon personally to work with them in May.

None of this would have been possible without Crystal Kolt, the choir's artistic director and conductor. The community choir has been the anchor of the artistic community, but Crystal has also worked tirelessly to create a space for all types of artistic expression, including the artists' co-operative, the Northern Visual Arts Centre, the NorVa 'cento', opened in 2012 as a studio and gallery space for local artists.

From the recent Culture Days to the theatre troupe Ham Sandwich to the earliest days of settlement nearly nine decades ago, the arts have been a vital part of Flin Flon's identity. Johnny's Social Club, a live music venue attached to the

NorVa Centre, is one of the newest additions to the cultural scene.

It's discouraging that this Conservative government's limited northern strategy, wherever it may be, has made no mention of the thriving artistic community in Flin Flon. There's an energy in the North that needs to be nurtured and recognized. You only need eyes to see and ears to hear—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Brandon Pride Parade and Relay for Life

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to congratulate the organizers of the second Brandon Pride parade, held on June 18th. I was joined by my colleague from Brandon East. It is always a colourful event at the Pride parade, and this year was no exception. As organizer Ken Jackson said about last year's parade: What if no one comes? What if they laugh? Are we safe?

* (13:50)

As I walked with Brandon Chief of Police Ian Grant last year, we saw that many people came out from the LGBTTQ* community along with friends, family and supporters, and they were safe. This year, the safety issue was at the forefront of most participants' minds with the thoughts for the victims in Orlando. I noticed an increased police presence, but there were no incidents.

It is a testament to the diversity in Brandon that at the same time as the Pride parade there was a dedication of the Wall of Remembrance which commemorates the service of local veterans. It was not lost on the MLA for Brandon East and myself that the sacrifices made by our veterans have enabled events such as the Pride parade to take place in our communities. We often take our freedoms for granted.

The afternoon was spent meeting with constituents, listening to their concerns, and then it was off to the Relay for Life. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) spoke and shared his poignant memories of his brother, who passed away last year from cancer. It is tremendously uplifting to see the survivors making their victory lap, but we always remember those we have lost to this horrible disease.

Madam Speaker, that is but one day in the life of an MLA. We can't make it to all events, but we try.

I am saddened when I hear and see some who try to shame elected officials into attending an event. We try to share our time with many people and causes both in our communities and in the rest of Manitoba. We are very fortunate to have been elected to represent our constituencies.

Madam Speaker, somewhere in all this we try to include time for family and friends. They are our loved ones and supporters through thick and thin, and it is critical that we maintain those relationships. I know it takes more than just maintenance, but we all know the demands that are placed on us by the electorate.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Highway and Road Construction Capital Spending Plans

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Our NDP government left this government with one of the highest economic growth rates and one of the lowest rates of unemployment in Canada. It didn't just happen. One of the key factors was our economic strategy of investing in infrastructure.

Now, in the words of Chris Lorenc of the heavy construction industry, quote, the new PC government has cut the provincial highways budget by \$48 million and stalled further tenders pending review, unquote.

Why has this government jammed the brakes on investments in Manitoba highways?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank my colleague for raising the issue of infrastructure and, with a heavy heart, I let the—all members of the House know of the passing of Mr. Wilf Taillieu, who was a great Manitoban, a great member of the industry, past president of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, a giver to his community in so many ways, the reeve of the RM of Headingley for many years.

And so it is with a heavy heart that we wish condolence to a former member of this House—Mavis, his wife—and their family and friends.

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

Ms. Marcelino: We're very sorry to hear of Mr. Taillieu's passing, and we wish Ms. Taillieu comfort and grace at this time.

Madam Speaker, the Premier clearly didn't get it. In our first decade in office we tripled the highway budget. As part of our five-year plan we increased the highway investments, including a historic 70 per cent increase in capital.

This government continues to take the 1 per cent of the dollar revenue but is jamming on the brakes.

Why is the Premier putting our construction industry and our economy in jeopardy?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, what would jeopardize our economic growth is what the previous administration did, which was to underspend in that department, underinvest, year after year after year after year take money out of the infrastructure budget and use it for every other thing, but not for infrastructure, and then, in the rush to get popular just prior to the last election, flood the province with showy projects designed to make conspicuous construction the order of the day. This is not strategic. This is not how you get a return on investment.

And the approach we will take is a record investment over a steady period consciously invested in strategic structure improvements that will make sure that Manitobans get the return on investment they deserve from this very important category of public investment.

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

Ms. Marcelino: There are several wrong statements there, but anyway the Premier clearly doesn't get the impact of his cuts. And the fact that he has frozen issuing further tenders, the heavy construction industry today is sounding the alarm bell today that cuts to capital spending and slowing the tendering process are going to have a negative impact on steady growth for our economy.

Why won't the Premier admit he was wrong and reverse his cuts to highway construction in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: There were several erroneous and false statements contained in that preamble, so I will just use the opportunity to say to the member opposite that no one in this province who has watched the NDP in government believe their commitment to infrastructure was real; it hadn't been real for years before, and no one actually took it on face value as being a real commitment.

Our commitment to infrastructure is real. It will be demonstrated in an actual investment that equals the commitment, as opposed to underspending, underinvesting for years, as the NDP did. In fact, this year we will have the second largest investment in strategic infrastructure in roads in the history of the province of Manitoba, a record that all Manitobans, I think, will understand demonstrates our willingness to keep our promises, as opposed to the NDP who broke every significant promise they made to the people of Manitoba and are where they are because of it.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding, I would just like to indicate that the use of BlackBerrys are not allowed during question period, and it has come to my attention that there may be a member using a BlackBerry. So I would just remind all honourable members that that is not allowed during question period.

Highway and Road Construction Capital Spending Plans

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure.

The heavy construction industry is claiming that industry is being negatively impacted by the \$48-million cuts to highways and stalled tendering of projects. If the construction in the province continues down this path, Chris Lorenc says that there will be a devastating result for the Manitoba economy.

We all knew during the budget that this government had hidden the full extent of their plans to reduce capital investment, and we're now hearing from the front lines about the devastating consequences.

Will this minister renounce his wrong-headed approach and ensure that the Province makes the needed investment for the future?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Just so that the member is aware, this is—this year will be the second highest spending ever on record for infrastructure in Manitoba. The Manitoba heavy construction industry knows that the difference is between making promises and keeping promises. They know that under this government we will have strategic infrastructure moving forward each and every year, not on the raid, raid, raid and parade that the previous government did.

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

Mr. Maloway: The minister has admitted that his performance is not as good as that of the previous government when we, the previous government, increased the capital by 70 per cent on highways, tripled the highways budget.

Our government used revenues to invest smartly in infrastructure and ensure good employment for Manitobans. This new government continues to take revenues, such as the 1 cent on the dollar, but are quickly slowing down the necessary capital spending. The heavy construction industry today said that it's concerned with companies faced with laying off workers or not hiring at all.

Will this government change their approach and keep Manitobans working?

* (14:00)

Mr. Pedersen: You know, the difference is the NDP always made lots of promises, but in reality they underspent and underinvested by an average of 27 per cent in the infrastructure portfolio each and every year until there was an election year and then they ramped it up. This is not how you build consistent business within the heavy construction. They need to know that moving forward they can count on us for a \$1-billion infrastructure investment each and every year, strategic infrastructure moving forward.

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

Mr. Maloway: Well, the minister should obviously talk to Chris Lorenc about this because we certainly aren't on the same page.

The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics recently confirmed that Manitoba's breaking modern-day population records. Our government—previous government—understood the need to invest to ensure a strong economy and continue this record population growth. If you're growing you cannot stand still on investment, yet this government is slowing down on highway construction and we're seeing the impacts: lost jobs, less economic activity.

Will this minister please wake up and acknowledge that their policies are dragging down the Manitoba economy?

Mr. Pedersen: The impacts that we're seeing is that previous government cut the maintenance and preservation all across this province on highways to the point where they deteriorated so badly now that many of them are beyond being able to be

maintained and brought to standard. Now we have to get into a capital program to fix them.

This government—this previous government should have recognized that and should have understood that maintenance prevents having to do capital in the long term. But they ignored that and we will have to—just another one of the challenges that we will have to face to fix up the mess that this previous government created.

Northern Infrastructure Budget Highway Construction Concerns

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): This government continues to collect 1 cent on the dollar, but is slowing Manitoba's infrastructure progress to a crawl, cutting the highway program by \$48 million. The minister has refused to say how much will be committed to all-weather road construction now that the east-side road project has been dismantled and has cut northern infrastructure down to almost nothing.

Each year the NDP was office—in office, we exceeded the previous Conservative spending by as much as 20 or 30 times. When the minister says in Estimates, quote, that's not going to happen this time, end quote, northerners know they're not a priority for the current Conservative government either.

So will the minister explain, with the major cut to northern—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): What won't happen is the raid, raid, raid and parade of the previous government.

Madam Speaker, this particular member asked me about roads, particular roads in her constituency in northern Manitoba. If they would have maintained these roads over the last 17 years, they wouldn't be in the position that they are now where they're being ripped apart by traffic.

So this is the problem. This is the dilemma that we face right now and our government will fix this by steady, predictable, strategic investment in infrastructure.

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

Ms. Lathlin: The Minister of Infrastructure has refused to provide details and exactly what the impacts are going to be from cutting the highway

program by \$48 million. But it's clear the social impacts of ignoring the North will be significant.

Our NDP government's major investments in highways, like Provincial Highway 373 and Provincial Highway 374, along with historic commitments to Moose Lake and Nelson House, created good jobs for northerners and improved their access to education and health care. These highways were quite literally the path to economic prosperity for our northern communities.

With \$48 million less in the highway capital program, how will the minister invest in the future of our northern families and ensure that they're able to participate in our province's northern economy?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, the difference is that Manitobans did not believe the empty promises of this previous NDP government. They spoke loud and clear on April 19th that they were tired of empty promises, the lack of maintenance, lack of preservation on the highways, and they want strategic infrastructure moving forward on a predictable basis. This is what the industry is asking for, this is what Manitobans are asking for and this is what we will deliver.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Our investments in northern infrastructure resulted in record construction seasons over the last two years. These were good jobs for northern young people, good business for local companies and a way out of poverty for hundreds of Manitoba families.

Will the minister reconsider his plan to slash the northern infrastructure budget and instead continue our commitments to good jobs and steady growth in the North?

Mr. Pedersen: What the construction industry has asked for and what this government will deliver is predictable, strategic infrastructure. Unlike the hollow, empty promises of the previous government, this government will deliver on our promises. We will work to—we realize the importance of infrastructure all across Manitoba, and we will deliver on that.

Canada Pension Plan Reform Government Position

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Just over a week ago, the federal government and provinces met in Vancouver and

reached a historic deal to improve CPP. The Premier expressed his frustration that the federal government and provinces went to the meeting to reach an agreement. He then spent the rest of the week lecturing Manitobans on his personal vision of investing in private pension. In the process he dithered in terms of his position on the CPP agreement.

Today the Premier finally put forward some suggestions in terms of CPP.

My question: Exactly what is the Premier's position on the CPP agreement that was negotiated just over eight days ago?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, that's an excellent question, Madam Speaker, and a great opportunity for us to put on the record that we are—we are—on this side of the House, standing up for Manitobans and all Canadians to make the Canada Pension Plan not just bigger but better for all Canadians.

I encourage members on the other side of the House to get on board with this effort because this is an opportunity. The CPP is a half century old. It hasn't been reformed to benefit Canadians. This is an excellent opportunity. When we see a consensus emerging on making the plan bigger, we say why not build on that consensus and make the plan better for all Canadians?

I encourage members opposite to support that, and I do not understand why they care so little for Manitoba seniors and retirees, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Lecturing minimum wage earners to save for retirement when he's not even raising minimum wage is totally unacceptable.

Madam Speaker, more than a week has passed with an agreement with the federal government and eight of nine provinces within the CPP. This Premier was the odd one out. He spent more than a week trying to figure out exactly what position to put forth. He still hasn't been clear today. There are a lot of additional improvements that could be made to the Canada Pension Plan.

Is he arguing for further changes in the future, or does he want to reopen discussions and negotiations that could potentially put the CPP agreement reached in Vancouver in jeopardy?

Mr. Pallister: Always appreciate it when the members opposite raise the concept of team work.

I think it's very, very good to mention that we are working diligently to work as part of a Canadian leadership team to advance the opportunities for reforming the CPP to make it better to serve the people of Manitoba and Canada better. And we believe very, very strong changes can be made not just to make it bigger, not just to make it bigger for members, younger members like the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief), a millennial, but also to make it better for everyone else in the plan because there are opportunities here, and they'll pass us by if we don't seize them.

*(14:10)

Now, the NDP only sees opportunity to jack up taxes on minimum wage earners by raising the CPP and hurting them. We see an opportunity to make the CPP work better for all Canadians and that's what we'll be pursuing.

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

Ms. Marcelino: At best, the Premier is trying to have it both ways, and when you're in government that's just not possible.

This Premier's position on CPP reform is not clear, and he clearly does not have much credibility either with other provinces and the federal government. He also doesn't have credibility with Manitobans who saw his true agenda last week when he actively promoted private pension fund investments.

Why won't the Premier work with Manitobans and other governments across Canada to build on the CPP agreement? Why is he putting public pension reform at risk with his dithering?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I appreciate the member using the phrase: trying to have it both ways. That's exactly what the NDP did over the last year and a half of their mandate. They tried to have a new leader, the same leader, a new leader, the same leader; they tried to have it both ways. You can't have it both ways, and now they had it neither way.

We want to have it so it benefits Manitobans now and Canadians now and it benefits them in the future. We think having it both ways is a good thing. A stronger CPP that's bigger and better is a great thing for all Canadians.

The NDP saw every problem could be solved by raising taxes. That created greater problems. Manitobans have faced greater challenges in saving for retirement than all other Canadian citizens as a result of that government's agenda to jack up taxes.

We're going to lead the Canadian agenda to make pensions work better for all Canadians now and in the future.

Canada Pension Plan Reform Government Position

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Madam Speaker, you know the government's position on CPP has been nothing short of baffling. First, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) condescends to Canadians and says, I'm a Sun Life salesman, I know what I'm talking about; nobody else does. Then the Finance Minister says, no, that's not it. He says, well, I haven't talked to anybody; I need to go consult. And then, without schooling anybody and without talking to anybody, eight days later they table a whole new set of amendments.

But what we don't know, Madam Speaker: Does the government support the agreement in principle signed eight days ago?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): In 1966, the authors of the Canada Pension Plan designed it to be one pillar, designed it to represent one area of adequate retirement savings for Canadians. But that was a half century ago and it is time to bring this CPP into the 21st century, into the new millennium, but not just for millennials but for all Canadians. Manitobans and all Canadians deserve a CPP that isn't just bigger; it is better. This is the conversation that we are inviting from all Canadians at this time.

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

Mr. Allum: Madam Speaker, if we wait for an answer from this government, it'll be the 22nd century, not the 21st century.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order. The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Mr. Allum: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I'm not sure what the wolves are howling about over there while we're looking for—what we're looking for is a simple answer to a simple question.

Regardless of the amendment they put on the table today, will they be signing the agreement in principle that is supported by eight out of nine provinces and the federal government and by Canadians from coast to coast to coast—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

I guess, at this time, too, I would just caution members with their language to—that people in this Chamber are considered honourable members and I don't think putting forward some provocative language is going to serve everybody's best interests. So I would ask for some respect and decorum in regards to that.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, let me update the member and let him know that in the past week I have enjoyed the opportunity to accelerate discussions on this matter. I have spoken to colleagues across the country numerous times. We've spoken to industry. We've spoken to ordinary Manitobans, and these are ideas that are met with a receptive audience. I can tell you that our counterparts are indicating these as valuable ideas that are worthy of discussion at this time. This is exactly a window of opportunity for Canada right now.

So, whereby the member advocates a position to forgo that process, no, we invite that process for all Canadians in order to get this right.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, we'll get the Finance Minister a calendar because the meeting happened eight days ago, not now.

So he spent a week talking to his colleagues. He didn't talk to any Manitobans about this. He didn't make it clear what their position is. And then suddenly, boom, out of nowhere, there's four amendments on the table, but we still don't know what their position is. He's the ultimate mystery man. We're just looking for a simple answer to a simple question.

Is he, on behalf of the government of Manitoba, going to sign the agreement in principle, or is his four amendments a deal breaker? Which is it?

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member is very enthusiastic, but he does not actually disclose that for 17 years his party had the opportunity to do something for CPP, but they brought no changes for CPP.

Manitoba's new government will not take that path. That's why we have made a number of proposals for consideration. We have written a letter to Minister Morneau. We have copied all other Canadian Finance ministers and we believe that we have an opportunity at this point to engage on these important issues, issues of substance that really matter to Canadians, both in retirement in the future but in retirement right now.

It's important to get this right. That's our commitment to all Canadians.

Children and Youth in Care Children's Special Allowances

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, in Estimates, the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) did not appear to be aware of monies held in trust for children and youth who have been in CFS.

Today I table a document which shows that \$1,027,000 of money held in trust for children and youth in care for when they turned 18 was taken from them. Surely, Madam Speaker, this is morally wrong, to take money held in trust funds for children and youth when they turn 18.

I ask the government: Will the government investigate this matter and will the government make sure that the missing money is put back in the trusts for these children and youth where it rightly should be?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question. He brings forward a very interesting point.

Previous government had a long history of dipping into Children's Special Allowances dollars to balance their books within Department of Families and beyond, and which—something, I think, is very reprehensible and I think that they should be all very ashamed for that action.

But we have no intention to follow that process. We're certainly going to be looking and, in fact, we are looking into the issue to make sure that this is handled appropriately.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, more than \$1 million held in trust funds for children and youth was taken from them, effectively, stolen from them. It is easy to understand when more than \$1 million

are taken from them, why these youth would have so little respect for authority when others have so little respect for them. This may be, in part, why in a recent report 84 per cent of all missing women and men in Winnipeg are youth who are wards of CFS.

* (14:20)

What is the government doing to provide conditions so that the youth will not run away, so that respect for these youth is restored and the money which was put in trust for them is returned?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member for the question. Certainly, he brings forward an excellent point, something that was actually discussed the other day when we tabled our new bill protecting children in Manitoba. And then I made the announcement at Snowflake Place down in Winnipeg—or downtown Winnipeg which brought forward the point that for many years CFS children in this province have been repeatedly victimized and nothing has been done to improve the situation for them. This government is proud of the fact that we have taken the first step.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, there is something fundamentally wrong with a system which takes away money held in trust funds for children and youth. There is something terribly and fundamentally wrong with a system which is the source of 84 per cent of all missing persons in Winnipeg.

I ask the government: Will the government act today to restore the trust funds which were taken, or will the government wait for a class action lawsuit? And will the government act quickly to change the system so that instead of youth in care running away, these youth feel respected and loved and enabled to achieve their potential?

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

We share his concern of the 11,000 children in care in this province. That number is far too many for any population, especially when 90 per cent plus are Aboriginal children. It has obviously targeted a sector that is very vulnerable.

I appreciate his concern, in particular with the missing children. Very often, under the CFS situation, those were—the most vulnerable children were missing, and it has led to some very poor outcomes.

I can tell you our government is committed. We have taken the first step, and we will be the ones to solve this problem.

Canada Pension Plan Reform Government Recommendations

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, last week Finance ministers from across the country discussed changes to CPP for the next generation of contributors. This is an important issue that will have long-term effects for Manitobans and all Canadians, especially—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Curry: —of my wife's and my generation.

Over the weekend, I had many discussions with constituents and neighbours about our ability to save for retirement.

Can the Finance Minister update us on what recommendations our government will be submitting to the federal government to make CPP work for all Manitobans?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for his question on this very important issue.

When federal, provincial and territorial ministers met in Vancouver last week, we felt that more could be done in terms of making CPP work for the next generations of seniors and also seniors right now. That is why we have written to the federal Finance Minister and copied my counterparts with a list of recommended improvements to the CPP, including eliminating the GIS clawback for low-income widowed seniors, restoring the death benefit to an amount equivalent to—or that would be more reflective in a modern society, extending the time frame for the phase-in of the upper incomes earning limit and other changes as well.

We believe these changes will benefit Manitobans and all Canadians to make CPP not just bigger but also better.

North End Sewage Treatment Plant Project Completion Date

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Last week during Estimates, the minister said, and I quote: "We have people who work to protect our water system and each and every day make sure that there's licences in place." End quote.

So I'd like to ask the minister: What does the current environmental licence from the Province to the City of Winnipeg indicate is the deadline for the completion of upgrades to the North End sewage treatment plants?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Thank you to the member opposite.

First of all, I would just like to say that, with regard to the floods that occurred on Friday evening, that I'd like to just pass on my regrets to all of the cottage owners and the individuals who were evacuated as a result of those floods and also thank our people who are working so hard in infrastructure and hydro and in the parks department to ensure that everybody was out safely, that the roads are trying to get back in some type of fashion so that people can get through to get back to their cottages, and just thank them so much for all that they've done for our province.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, if the minister's government wanted to give proper recognition to the legitimate issue she just mentioned, they may have wanted to actually give a ministerial statement on emergency measures issues as they had indicated they were going to do today and then decided not to.

The correct answer, in case the minister doesn't know, is December of 2019. That's when the upgrades are supposed to be finished. The minister last week also said, quote: I don't know where you've heard that the dates have changed, but if you've got something in writing, I'd appreciate seeing it.

I didn't know I would have to table a media report, Madam Speaker, for the minister's benefit, but here it is, three copies, wherein Mr. Geoff Patton, who is the engineering manager for Winnipeg's Water and Waste Department—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cox: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that question.

If you have information that indicates they've contacted my office to ask for an extension, I appreciate you tabling it. But, as of yet, we haven't heard anything from the City of Winnipeg, and if we do we look forward to talking to them with regard to this important issue.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Madam Speaker, it's difficult to keep track of all the questions not being answered today.

The quote from the chief engineer at the City of Winnipeg was: "The project completion date of December 2019 is not achievable." That would seem to be in contradiction to the environmental licence she is supposed to be responsible for. Manitobans want to work. They want to build a better world.

Will the minister agree with this side of the House that investing in cleaning up sewage heading into the rivers is a good plan for Manitoba?

Mrs. Cox: Madam Speaker, thank you to the member opposite.

Obviously, the government opposite on the other side was the government that negotiated that contract with the City of Winnipeg, so they would have that information on the negotiations. And Manitobans have spoken. They want a change and they want a government that's going to listen to them, and that's what they did on April 19th is they elected a new government to make sure that we would work for the people of Manitoba.

Merchants Corner Project Construction Commitment

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Madam Speaker, the Merchants Corner project is helping to change Selkirk Avenue. I remember in 2010, reporting on the story of Gerald Dumas who had been set on fire walking home from the then-Merchants Hotel.

However, since that hotel closed, violent street crimes have gone down by some 27 and a half per cent, and property street crimes have decreased by some 20 per cent in the surrounding area.

Now a group of local institutions are remaking that site into an education centre which includes affordable housing.

Is the minister committed to seeing this important capital project through to completion?

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

And I know this government is very committed to affordable housing in Manitoba. It's a major issue for many people in this province, and I know that we're planning a significant investment and

significant upgrade in housing investments in the coming years.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the commitment broadly to social housing, but anyone driving by the site on Selkirk Avenue can see that construction has already begun.

Is this another example of a new government being beset by inertia? Why won't the minister commit to a project that has already reduced crime in the area and has the potential to permanently replace that with opportunity in the form of education?

* (14:30)

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

We're always supportive of any project that will reduce—or increase public safety and reduce crime in an area. It's always a positive move and certainly builds the respect and strength in the community.

We're committed to an increase this year of \$48 million in terms of public housing, and I think that that's a very significant investment, especially when you look backwards and see the history of this previous government when it came to not only housing investment but their impact with poverty in this province.

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

Social Housing Units Construction Commitment

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): There's definitely a great need for affordable housing units and social housing units in a constituency like Point Douglas. There's also a need across the province, including in the constituency of Fort Rouge.

So, following up on the dollar value commitment that the minister has alluded to, can he tell us specifically how many net new social housing units will be added in the province over the next year?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the question. We're certainly working constructively not only with the dollars that we have designated ourselves but to—in discussion with the federal government who have shown a significant increase in interest to invest in social housing.

We're going to work together, something that this government didn't have a great reputation for. And we're going to get better results for Manitobans.

**WCB Review Committee
Terms of Reference Change**

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Will the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade please tell the House if the terms of reference provided for the WCB review committee last January have changed and, if so, what those changes are?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I do appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I do appreciate his comments earlier in regard to Flin Flon. And certainly there's a lot of culture and arts in Flin Flon, and it's certainly encouraging to see.

In terms of the WCB, we are just in the terms right now of putting together a letter to have a look at the terms of that very important undertaking. We're looking at actually adding to the value of that particular review. We think there's lots of opportunity of—to review the Workers Compensation Board, and it is a very important undertaking, and we will provide that committee with plenty of direction and plenty of opportunity on a broad basis going forward.

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bell's Purchase of MTS

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by dozens of Manitobans.

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

Grievances?

**ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

House Business

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, I'd like to table the opposition list of government ministers be called for concurrence on Tuesday, June 28th, 2016. These ministers will be questioned sequentially.

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you please resolve into Committee of Supply?

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Capital Supply

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

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

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,283,753,000 for Capital Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

In accordance to the rule 76(3), as 100 hours are allocated for the considered of Supply has expired, there will be no debate on this resolution.

Resolution agreed to.

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION**Committee Report**

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

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

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Will the House please resolve into Committee of Supply.

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017, which have been adopted at this session whether by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: On June 24, 2016 the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Maloway) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for sequential questioning today to debate on the concurrence motion: Agriculture, Sustainable Development.

The floor is now open for questions.

* (14:40)

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): In the last—other day in the Estimates we were talking about that population is shrinking in the rural side and more people are leaving the agriculture and coming to the cities—cities' population is increasing; rural population is decreasing. And I mentioned there was a kind of a limit to how much property you can have in the other country. I gave an example about India.

What does the minister think about that? Is there should be any kind of limits so people can have that big farm not because now that some more people can be in the rural area in the population and all the other businesses could be sustainable?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I thank the member for the question. He raises a very significant issue in regards to keeping our youth in rural Manitoba, and we're committed to that.

I would like to share and put on the record that when I have been doing my consultation process, and I know that in regards to the chicken industry we've seen a growth at 1 to 2 per cent. Then, over 2014-15, and we seen a 2.5 to a 3.5 increase in 2015-16. And '16 is anticipated, we have 4 per cent; 2017 is anticipated to see a 2.5. Of course, with this, we've seen an increase in those jobs that are going to be created in those areas. So this is great news for us seeing those have the opportunity.

Also, we've seen two major processors that have had expansion: Dunn-Rite is one of those, and, of course, the other is Granny's, which contributes to a \$40-million expansion just on those two processors alone.

And, in regards to the Manitoba egg industry, six laying-hen increases from 2010 to 2016; egg sales growth of 22 per cent in the last nine years; and an average rate growth of 2.2 per cent. Graders and processors are looking for future expansions as well. In fact, when I met with them, they did tell me that their anticipating about a 10 per cent growth in just the egg industry alone.

And also I just want to put on the record once again, we're very proud of our egg producers. They were ahead of the curve in regards to making sure that the caged hens were no longer in cages. They took the proactive approach in ensuring that they would be cage free, and I'm happy to report that our egg producers have achieved a contract with McDonald's to ensure there's eggs that were raised free—cage free, and we're hoping to get more of those restaurants, just not McDonald's, but, certainly, a significant step.

In regards to the dairy industry, 2015 we seen a new 'intric' quota that was brought forward there. The last three years' quota has increased by 2 per cent per annum, and this growth is forecasted to continue for the next two years.

Also Parmalat, I know the member's familiar with that as well. We're trying to move forward with

getting that open, which will be another significant increase for our processors in order to have more milk processed here in Manitoba.

Saputo was also going to double their size of their plant in Brandon. Agricore is a major producer co-operative. They're part of the Quebec plan that is going to see things happen here in Winnipeg. And also they've purchased Lucerne, which was a Safeway milk plant in Winnipeg, and it's unclear what investments will be made there, but significant. I know the producers are working with them and certainly looking forward to see more jobs created on farm in order to increase those jobs that are so important to us in rural Manitoba.

So I thank the member for the question.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for that answer, and considering all those developments the minister had mentioned, I'd—all those outfits will need more labour and how that labour demand will be fulfilled.

Next question, I will be after that.

Mr. Eichler: Again, I thank the member for that question.

We take every step we can to ensure that proper training is in place. We know that these supply-managed groups take extreme pride in making sure the checks and balances are in place, not only for biosecurity reasons, but their staff is trained to ensure that the biosecurity is in place and make sure that diseases are not part of that process in order to see that there be risks taken. We want to minimize that to the utmost.

I can share with the member that my family's in the turkey business and I know in the hen barns they shower in, shower out. This, again, is part of the training process. These jobs are good jobs that are created in rural Manitoba. In order to ensure that we keep those good jobs, we've been able to work with the various supply groups. In fact, I can tell the member, share with the member, Mr. Chair, that it's imperative when we talk about biosecurity even in the dairy industry, as well, they take it very seriously, as well, making sure everything's clean, making sure everything's up to date, the best equipment that's out there, and I know millions and millions of dollars have been spent on upgrades for these facilities to ensure that they have the best rate of return on their investment.

I know, growing up, myself, I milked 14 cows by hand. I know the member from Arthur-Virden, he

was more of the modernized version with the milk parlours but he said he did his share of hand-milking as well, but certainly a little hard work didn't hurt us any, and I know that those jobs will be sustainable as well. They'll be long-term jobs. And, when we see the kind of growth that we've had, it makes me feel very proud of those supply-managed, and of course, you know, on the non-supply-management as well, they take them very seriously as well. So I thank the member for the question and I know that we have a number of other things we're going to talk about, as well, so I'll share with him as we go onto the next question.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for that answer. And for that we have Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program and we also have one section—skill section, and other section is business section. And in the business section actually, perhaps, both sections are applicable to farm industry as well, although we have not taken that much advantage.

In 1970, I was in Vancouver in BC and there was—there were just a few people from foreign countries who were newly immigrant—new immigrants and who were doing farming at that time. But there are many people came during that time from the other countries, especially from India, from Punjab province, which is the agricultural breadbasket of India, and they have all those skills. But they came as a worker and worked in the farms to produce strawberries, were picking apples, blueberries all those farms they worked there.

Once they found out—get acquainted with that kind of system, then they started buying farms and it developed, I think, BC's farm industry.

* (14:50)

I think something in the same manner can be done here in Manitoba because I mentioned it. People are leaving the rural area coming to the cities, so perhaps if those workers come from other countries over here, they work for a while, then they will know how the farming is done over there. What is the difference between farm back over there, farm back over here? So we will have no more people in the rural area. At this time, all the immigrants we are bringing over here only concentrating in bigger cities.

And perhaps there should be some kind of initiatives to bring those workers over here for their—encourage them to invest money in the farming, and I would like to know what kind of initiatives the

minister has in mind, whether he discussed with the Provincial Nominee Program or not or he will be going to, so I hope we can be more vital in the rural area.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the question.

The Provincial Nominee Program doesn't fall under my privy, but with respect to the agricultural sector, he brings up some very good points that I would like to address in regards to the rural areas, and that he's bang on when he's talking about berry picking and strawberries, blueberries. We've seen a significant increase in those businesses within the province of Manitoba with the U Pick.

In fact, I know that the strawberry plants in particular have been very successful in the uptake on those. Most of them become a U Pick rather than creating the jobs. It's—it gives families the opportunity from the city to come out and enjoy rural Manitoba. We're certainly proud to have them. On the way out, usually they'll fill their vehicle with some fuel and they'll maybe go for lunch. In fact, I know one of my colleagues in my office was out in Stonewall on the weekend looking at the berry farm and stopped in the McLeod teahouse, stopped and had some lunch and, of course, that helps rural Manitoba grow and prosper as well. But specifically to the Provincial Nominee Program for farms it's—they'd have to be part of a different sector.

But I know with processing, that's another part of it that falls under agriculture that we could see possibly some more growth there, which I would be very much in support of. And one of the things we have not done a real good job on and that's more value added, and I think that's where the member could probably see some growth there. We have the opportunity to export products that are finished rather than leave the province raw, and I know there's some technologies from other countries that we should be utilizing and have more value added. So I'm looking forward to that challenge.

I wish I could share with the member more detail on that but I don't have that information. But I know tomorrow the member will be part of the process where we reach out to the various sectors, which we're going to have right here in the Golden Boy room. Some of the larger commodity groups, they're going to provide us feedback with some of those initiatives.

So I encourage the member, and I know he's agreed to come; I know that he will learn a lot. I will learn a lot. There's lots of things for discussion to happen in regards to that and so anytime we have the opportunity to listen to, you know, those commodity groups and that sector group in order to move Manitoba forward, I'm going to be up for that challenge, and if it comes to the Provincial Nominee Program, that'd be even that much better, but I don't think that that's really part of the mandate of the Provincial Nominee Program. It's more along the lines of creating jobs in a particular sector. But, certainly, if it has programs that we can dwell down on and have a scope on, I'm certainly open to that conversation.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for that answer.

And—but still I am interested to know about the labour situation. Is there any demand and that demand is being fulfilled. We have a local population or we need more skilled workers, farm workers from outside, maybe under their work permit, maybe under their immigration permanent residence immigration system.

And what is the situation in the farm industry considering the labour? Is there a shortage? Is there oversupply? Are there enough? And where we stand?

Mr. Eichler: As the member may know or may not know, I know that in regards to the food processors, I know that we've had to rely a lot on immigrants to come in, in particular the Philippines. HyLife, Maple Leaf, both have had a hard time attracting enough workers.

I'm able to share with the member, and Mr. Chair, that HyLife is planning a major expansion to increase more processed pigs within the province of Manitoba for export purposes. We're very pleased about that opportunity. I know they'll be outlining more details as we go forward. But part of the process is to ensure that we have enough workers to meet that demand as well. So we're more than prepared.

I think the name needs to be changed from Temporary Foreign Worker Program to permanent program workers in order to ensure that when they go they have the ability to be able to say to their family, look, I want to be able to bring my family here and create those good jobs, too, and have the opportunity to stay in Canada on a permanent basis. And I think that message would be well received within those countries that we've reached out to.

And I know a number of the companies, Maple Leaf and HyLife in particular, have reached out and hired staff, hired lawyers, in order to make sure the process is done efficiently to the best of their ability in order to ensure that we do have the immigrants that are going to be here to take those jobs and move Manitoba forward.

Mr. Saran: In the farm industry, I think there's kind of a balance we need and for a language requirement. Because those people—because the farm industry needs physical labour and it's a hard job, and the majority of the time those people who do that kind of work in the farm industry from the other countries, they are a good worker, but they don't have English skills because they did not go to school that long. And so they are more involved in farming as compared to be interested in having study then having a job. Therefore, they don't have a chance to develop their English skills.

What they—perhaps there should be some kind of a compromise over there. The English requirement could be lowered as compared to the other skilled workers. But I think there will be situations, like we will talk about safety, because they won't be able to understand, therefore there is more chance to get accidents. And in that situation possibly those instructions can be translated in different languages.

Actually, some of the industry over here, I think we—in Winnipeg I have found, like, there's instructions in different languages as far as safety instructions go. Perhaps the same thing can be done in the farmer side, especially in those hog plants or other meat plants. So maybe we should look into those situations, and, at the same time, those language classes also can be provided within the—those plants.

So I would like to get the minister's view, what he thinks can be done and how we can do it.

Mr. Eichler: Fair enough question.

I know that the vegetable market growers bring in immigrants to help, mainly from Mexico, in regards to harvesting those vegetable products. And I can assure the member that they take it very seriously. They don't—provide housing for them. They also provide food for them as well and training. And training is utmost important.

* (15:00)

I could not agree with the member more, Mr. Chair, that whenever we talk about safety, we can

never take enough steps in order to ensure that those requirements are met. I don't think there's any individual that would go out to intentionally put someone in harm's way. I don't think that's out there. I've never—it's never been brought to my attention. Even in opposition I've never had that brought forward to me, but I know that there's never enough training when it comes to safety. But the main component, of course, in all this is making sure of awareness, that we make sure that those steps and challenges are brought forward on an individual basis in order that each member or each employee is safe, and that's the most important thing.

And the member brings up a significant issue in regards to the languages, and I know that whenever we have individuals come from different countries, whether it be from the Philippines or Germany or whether they come from France, whether they come from Poland, it really—it doesn't matter. But the No. 1 thing is safety and I know every member takes that very seriously and employers take it very seriously.

I know that I did have a constituent that come from Germany. They were here for a very short time and their son become ill, and none of them could speak English and they were at a severe disadvantage, without a doubt. They bought a dairy farm. Unfortunately, the—as the son got sick, they were unable to explain to the medical system what was wrong and ending up losing their son because of the language barrier. So I understand how important that is. I think if we would have known earlier, we could have brought some translators in in order to ensure the safety of that individual. They did go back to Germany. So we lost those investment dollars and the life of a young man for no reason at all.

But I take this very seriously in regards to the safety issues and we want to make sure that we have the checks and balances in place to ensure that that does happen for not only the immigrants, but also for the employers as well, because they are held to a higher account in order to make sure that that safety is there for them and for their employees.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for that answer, and the minister raised a good point: those workers when they come from the foreign country, perhaps their families also should be allowed to come. And there is a—sometime problem of coverage for health resources coverage in which a visitor cannot be covered under the Manitoba Health. But they can buy the insurance which is really costly and perhaps is something we have to bring into Manitoba Health.

If visitors come there, if they buy from other companies—and Sun Life or whatever the company—it will be really expensive. But, if they have money to buy health, maybe charge them a minimum amount, a certain amount, but at least a reasonable amount so they can be covered under Manitoba Health. Otherwise, it's a really expensive item.

I remember one person, he came as a visitor. They did not have insurance. They went to—he had to go to hospital, stayed about I don't know how many days, 20 days or whatever—and the bill was about \$100,000. And his son was really worried—and what can be done, whether he can be exempted from that or not. I don't know what happened at the end; he never came back.

So there is some problems which normally workers, foreign workers face and we have to look more closely to those problems so that we can make their life a little bit worry free, a little bit easier, and I hope the minister will have some insight into their situation.

Mr. Eichler: Thank the member for the question, and I think this would be a good question for the Minister of Health. I really don't have a solution for him, but I can share this with him, though, Mr. Chair, that any time that we leave the great province of Manitoba or Canada and we go into another country, it's imperative that we make sure that we're covered for any type of health issue. We never know when something's going to happen, but it's incumbent upon us to make sure that we do have sufficient insurance to cover off any medical cost.

I don't have a position in regards to whether or not Health will be looking at this or not. But I would certainly encourage the member to ask the minister of that whenever he has the opportunity in the Health concurrence.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for that answer.

And there is some other issue about the workers. When the workers come from the other country, sometimes they are forced to work on cash. And sometimes also they're forced to work extra hours without paying overtime. And those workers, because they are afraid they have to go back, they will lose jobs, and they won't be able to stay and if they—and why the employer—so is there any kind of checks so that those workers are not be treated differently than our own skilled worker over here?

Mr. Eichler: You bring up an interesting conversation.

I'm not aware of anyone being paid cash for a job, but it may be out there, I don't know. But it's certainly one that I have not been brought to my attention.

But I can assure the member that we all know—and I know he had his farm back in India—farming's not a nine-to-five job. That don't happen. When the crop has to come off, whether the chickens need fed, the cows need milked, there's some times in there that, you know, and rain days come into play, and they need those extra hours in order to make up for the time that they're not dealing with production at any level. So we know that there's times that there's no money coming in. And so they look forward to those extra hours.

And there's strict regulations in regards to overtime and labour practices. Those are in place. And most of them are adhered to, that at least I have not, again, any has not been brought to my attention. So there is checks and balances in place. But, to my knowledge, there's been nothing that has been put an employee at a disadvantage because he's a temporary foreign worker or an individual that, born and raised in Manitoba, we have all those in place to ensure that they're being treated fairly.

But, having said that, as I said in my onset, farming's not a nine-to-five job. It's not a Monday-to-Friday job. It's a job that goes seven days a week. I know many a farmer will not work on Sunday. I try not to work on Sunday. But sometimes I do, for whatever reason. But I know that most families want that opportunity to be able to sit down with their families as well and enjoy that family time together.

But, if the crop has to come off, the crop has to come off.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for that answer.

But I understand farming is not a eight-hour job, it's a whole day. You will go in the dark and come on home at the dark. And I know my father, they used to plow farms, they will go 4 o'clock in the morning and come home when dark. So I know it's not eight hours or five-day job.

And—but there should be some kind of protection if somebody works—there's at least there should be a number of hours per week and after that it should be overtime. But sometimes that then they come into play and sometimes there are contractors, middlemen, and they take advantage of those people.

* (15:10)

I remember we used to pick strawberries, and the contractor used to pick up—pick us up from the—from Vancouver, bring to Abbotsford. And he promised he will give 90 cents per flat—no, 6 cents for a bucket that would be 16. It should be 96. And when he started to paying us, he paid only 90 cents instead of 96 cents. So I argued with him: you promised this, but how come you are paying only 90 cents? He said if you are talking—speaking too much and—get out of the farm. And other workers were there. They said, no, he won't go alone. And we all will go alone. He said, okay, okay, then keep—continue.

So those kinds of situations I think sometimes some people might dare to speak up, but the majority of people don't dare to speak up. So somehow there should be checks and balances in those situations.

I think we can talk about this labour situations, but I would certainly like to have some kind of a system where medical is covered, where the—if a worker comes over here, their family comes over as well because there were families staying, waiting over there, and workers over here. They're working, then they have to fulfill two years' commitment, then they will apply for immigration for their people. And consider husbands and, well, wives staying three, four years apart. Consider how hard it could be, how hard it could be, children staying back over there, not having their father with them.

So we have to have a better system, and I hope, although it will go under health, it will go under immigration, but I think in the Cabinet when ministers sit together these things can be discussed and we can have some kind of a resolution of those kinds of situations.

Now, I will go to the other topic. The other topic is pig diarrhea. Could the minister please provide an update regarding the status of PED cases in Manitoba?

Mr. Eichler: I thank the member for the question, and I'm pleased to report that we've had three cases in Manitoba that have all been resolved.

The PED is a very significant issue, and I can assure the member and all members of the House that I'm looking forward to my meeting with the federal minister. This trailer washing is a very important issue for us, and I don't think what's in place right now cuts it. We did have PED last year as well. We were not really overly surprised that we had three new cases. But right now those barns are in

the transition stage in order to ensure that the checks and balances are in place.

And I would love to share with the member that, you know, perhaps once we're out of the building, we can take you and go to the lab and meet the Chief Veterinary Officer. I think it'd be a very important meeting for him. And I know that in the 'twood' of—flood of 2011 that disease control centre become the hub of what happened within the various departments. And decisions were made; the computers were set up. Every minister had staff there in order to ensure that things was a smooth transition.

And also I want to take this opportunity to brag a little bit about our Chief Veterinary Officer that's in charge of this and her staff. I would love to be able to share that with you. I know that the—it's more than just talking about the disease; it's also preventing the disease in order to ensure those checks and balances are in place to make sure biosecurity is up and the foremost of it.

And even with the sows that was—that had PED and then re-infected in order to take them back to the processing plant, those are processed in the States. Those particular sows were. So they also had to provide a route plan for them. And that's the importance of making sure that we have those hog operations in our database in order to make sure that there's not going to have an opportunity for re-infection of those barns.

So we're very pleased that it's all under control now, and I'm very proud of the fact that the staff did it in a way that was very finely contained within, basically, a three-mile area. So any time we can do that, we're seeing the results that we need. But as I said on the onset, I'm looking forward to having a conversation with our federal minister in order to see that perhaps they can get onside with CFIA as well, in order to ensure we do have proper trailer washing here in Manitoba and, of course, that followed through, and that we get it right.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for the answer.

Further, I think, first of all, I would like to—the minister to convince himself that mandatory cross-border washing is important, and if a minister is convinced with that notion, then I would like to—the minister to put pressure on the federal government so they can have mandatory cross-border washing. And what is the stand of the minister?

Mr. Eichler: Thank you for the question.

We've been working with Manitoba Pork diligently on this issue. And it's not only us; it's the call of the industry, and it's making this very clear that it's important to them, as well. They have an opportunity to express their views to the federal minister as well. It should not be driven politically, but it should be driven by those that are involved in that sector.

I can share with the member all is well. They'll be at the table tomorrow, and you'll have that opportunity to sit down and talk to them yourself as my critic. And I encourage you to do that, to hear their views first-hand, and that's the reason not only just for this particular issue but all issues in regards to clubroot, for those diseases, for the dairy sector, for the poultry sector, for the grains and oilseeds. This is a fabulous opportunity for us to learn from them and find out what their issues are, so we can go forward in a way that's going to be 'beneficial' not only to see the province grow, but their sectors grow as well. And I think that's the opportunity that we're going to be able to share.

And I hope the member's able to take advantage of those meetings tomorrow so that you can, in fact, learn first-hand from them because this is driven by them. I'm certainly proud to carry on as their minister, to carry on those discussions with the federal minister, and very important. I would appreciate his support in this.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister.

What is the status of the wash facilities in Blumenort and Brandon that had been built to conduct cross-border washing when PED first emerged in Manitoba?

Mr. Eichler: The process has been followed through. As you know, your government invested significant dollars into the Blumenort operation, and it's been quite successful. But what we're not doing a good job on is the washing of the trailers in the United States. It's more of a kiss and a promise; that don't just cut it. There's no standards in place for them, but I can assure the member that the Blumenort plant is running at high efficiency; Brandon, same thing; Neepawa, same thing.

When we look at these issues, we need to make sure that there's certain criteria that needs to be put in place in order to ensure that there is no biosecurity at risk. In order to ensure that, they are followed up on a regular basis. And this is driven mainly by Manitoba Pork, who are the ones that need to ensure

those producers are protected to the best of their ability.

So they, again, have been the driving force behind this, but we've been seeing lacking is the US side; there's just not the standards in place. They say that they need to be washed, but there's nothing there that's going to be carved in stone in order to ensure that the biosecurity's not at risk, and I think that there should be.

* (15:20)

Mr. Saran: Could the department not work with the Canadian Pork Council and use the PigTrace system to monitor shipments from the US into Manitoba?

Mr. Eichler: As the member may or may not know, Mr. Chair, Manitoba is—the pork business is well over \$1 billion. It's bigger than Manitoba Hydro, and when we look at the business, our export business is absolutely huge.

Not as many provinces do the export 'visio' weanlings the way Manitoba does, but it's certainly important and the member brings up a good point. Again, I would encourage the member to have that conversation with that sector in regards to perhaps having the Canadian Pork Council—the Canadian Pork Council's very progressive in their thinking. And I know they belong to the—and attend the state agricultural leaders conference that I'm secretary of, of that board. I would encourage the member—as my critic, you'll get an invitation to attend that seminar. I think it would be very beneficial for you to. We on the board and the Province is very proud to support that initiative where we have the opportunity to meet and work with the different sectors in the United States as well.

So we have twofold. We not only have the opportunity for the Canadian council, but also for them to meet with their US counterparts, and I would encourage the member to be part of that solution and part of the discussion at the table and, hopefully, we can get the federal government to buy in to our program.

Mr. Saran: If the federal government is not going to reintroduce mandatory washing, will this government consider imposing mandatory washing on cross-border swine shipments and, hopefully, prevent future PED outbreaks?

Mr. Eichler: The problem that we have, Mr. Chair, is the fact that we cannot legislate the United States into doing what they will or will not do. We can

encourage those washes, but it's not to the point where it should be. And within Manitoba we certainly can, but the business is much larger than that.

And I'm not sure if the member knows, but 67 per cent of our agricultural products is exported, which is a huge part which we rely on very heavily. And when the border closed to BSE in 2003 and then we finally got that re-opened, and then we had the country of origin labelling come in, again, which we worked very hard to get rid of and which we were very successful. And we did work with the federal government on that, and I think that it's more than just Manitoba. It's more than Manitoba, Ontario; it's more than Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta. This is a national issue and we've seen nothing in regards to PED that has happened in the States, and that's where the largest portion of it comes from so we need to ensure that we have the checks and balances in place.

And we do have very good recordkeeping—I want to share that with the member as well—to where these trucks have been, what farms they've been at and also with our same, with our vehicles in Manitoba. I give full credit to the pork group in order to ensure that they're doing their part in order to try and keep PED at a minimum as well.

But to sit here and tell the member that we have everything in place we need would be wrong because we have more to do. And we will have more to do in order to ensure that we have biosecurity at the utmost importance, and the member knows that we've talked about this over and over again not only in the pork industry, but also with the crops. And we've talked about that with Bipole III, and the member is full aware that, you know, we can never be safe enough when it comes to prevention of diseases.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister.

Will this minister recommit his vote for the hog barn moratorium in 2006?

Mr. Eichler: Could you repeat the question please?

Mr. Saran: Will this minister recommit his vote, v-o-t-e, for the hog barn moratorium in 2006?

Mr. Eichler: I believe the member's asked me about the hog moratorium in regards to what our position would be on that, and we know that Maple Leaf is running about 67 per cent of capacity without the increase in—of hogs being grown in Manitoba, finished in Manitoba. They're not going to be able to be sustainable. Maple—or HyLife will not be able to

see increase in production if the moratorium stays in place. There is areas of the province that meet the criteria that was set up by the previous government and we will be looking at those areas where there is potential to see expansion of the hog industry as we move forward.

At this point, the previous government did open the door to a number of options where they're looking at barn expansion, and we will look and follow the previous government's lead on that as well.

So there is some areas where an expansion can move forward, but there's other areas where it's overpopulated and I think the member knows where those are. And so we'll be doing our due diligence in order to ensure that the checks and balances are in place to make sure that the industry does move forward in a sustainable way.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister.

Does this minister intend to continue the Pig Production Special Pilot Project Evaluation Protocol with Manitoba Pork?

Mr. Eichler: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the question. In regards to any development of anything that we're doing at Agriculture will be through a consultation process, and I can assure the member I have met with Manitoba Pork once, very briefly, not near long enough. They have a number of issues that they want to be able to share with me, and I know the member will hear a number of those tomorrow in our outreach.

And I want to ensure all members of this House that—and every member over there knows that I've harped on consultation, consultation, consultation. So I can assure the member and all members of the House that whatever we do will be impacted by those discussions not only on increase in hog production, but also the red tape initiative we'll be talking about later on as well.

But, certainly, going forward 3 will be part of that as well. So we need to have those discussions as well. But, of course, Manitoba Pork, again, will be part of that consultation. KAP will be part of that consultation.

So we worked hand in hand with various commodity groups and—to ensure that we do get it right.

Mr. Saran: I thank the minister for the answer.

Had there been any new applications for hog barn construction since the introduction of the Pig Production Special Pilot Project Evaluation Protocol?

Mr. Eichler: My understanding is there's two pending that was brought forward by the previous government, and other than that I don't know of any others at this point. But I could check and get back to the member, if he would like. But at this point that's the only two that's been brought to my attention that was under the previous administration, those two projects were moving forward according to my knowledge.

Mr. Saran: Does the minister intend to make changes to the Pig Production Special Pilot Project Evaluation Protocol?

*(15:30)

Mr. Eichler: As a new government, we're responsible to ensure that checks and balances are in place, but not hamper development of any industry in order to make sure that it's run properly and smoothly. But, again, it comes back to the question that was asked earlier, will it be done in consultation? You bet it will be. We need to make sure we get it right and I'm not going to be a minister that's going to be 'authoritative' and exercise my rights as minister on any commodity group, whether it be Manitoba Pork, Manitoba Chicken, the dairy producers, this is done in harmony with those groups, so we'll make sure that that process takes place, and also make sure that the checks and balances are in place to make sure that food safety is No. 1 priority.

Mr. Saran: Could the minister please elaborate on the manure treatment system studies that the agri-resource Branch is providing technical support on?

Mr. Eichler: Yes, there's been significant dollars invested in manure management regulations that was brought in by the previous administration. A number of those that—not only in the pork industry but also in the dairy industry as well, and I believe all those have been brought up to code with the exception of a few that they're working now with them in order to make sure that they're brought into place as well.

Now the member may know that anaerobic digesters were also part of that and the uptake on that has not been sufficient, at least to what I've had shared with me; the cost of those are very prohibitive and limited to those larger operations where they're able to put in place those anaerobic digesters. So that

was one of the steps that was taken by the previous administration but not to the level that probably was expected at least at that time.

As the member knows that the pork prices took quite a tumble for quite a long period of time so it was very hard on that sector in order to upgrade manure storage facilities and still try and stay afloat, and there was a number of barns that were shut down because they couldn't meet that criteria. So, unfortunately, we have lost some of those barns that will never be reopened again, but in the essence of safety they decided that rather than stay in the business and be forced out they decided just to close those operations down.

Mr. Saran: That was my next question and the minister already has the answer to that question.

Now I would like to talk about bees. As a pollinator, honeybees form a crucial role in the bio conductivity—connectivity of the prairie environment while the cause of colony collapse is still being debated. What is clear is that it is occurring in Manitoba and there, the negative potential impact is on Manitoba's agriculture economy are real.

Could the minister please report on the 2015 and 2016 winter loss of Manitoba's bee population?

Mr. Eichler: I thank the member for the question, and it's an important one.

Honey is a large sector for the province of Manitoba. In fact, it's a growing industry as well, and I know that my role as opposition. I did—as the critic for Agriculture I did meet with the bee industry and they will be at our meeting on July the 12th, again which I encourage the member to be at. I don't have the exact numbers; I could be happy to get those for the member if he wishes, but I can tell we've been working hand in hand with the bee operators.

And I know that the chair of the honeybee organization comes from my area, a very smart individual, very articulate, and it's interesting that depending on the area of where the bees are kept is significant to the loss, various parts of the province have a different outlook in regards to net loss of number of bees, and those that are in a different area have a higher number. So those are part of our studies as well as we move forward, and I know that we will see more growth in the honey business and we want to work hand in hand with them, of course, to find solutions.

We are very limited to the imports of bees as they come in to Manitoba as well. And it's significant that the other provinces have a role to play in that as well. The bee association has federal regulations in place as well. I'm not—I don't know for sure if the member knows, but most of our bees come from New Zealand. And some come from the States; mainly just various sectors of that comes from the States because, again, the import quota is limited. But I look forward to working with them as we go forward in regards to making sure that the honey business does, in fact, grow under this administration.

Mr. Saran: Is the minister aware of any projected impacts continued Manitoba bee population laws will have on Manitoba's agriculture sector?

Mr. Eichler: I thank the member for the question. In regards to checks and balances, this is the same as what we've been talking about earlier, biosecurity, in order to make sure that those checks and balances are in place. And the organization has been working very hard with my department to ensure that they're around in the years and months to come.

I know in our household we use a lot of honey. And we know that Manitoba, it's not only good for our crops, it's also imperative that we get it right. So we will be working hand in hand with them, in order to make sure those steps are in place to minimize any loss of those bees, those worker bees. But we can say that the department's doing an outstanding job in regards to working with that organization.

Mr. Saran: Yes, I understand we are celebrating pulses and soybeans, I think, the international year. And I think if we start growing more pulses, soybeans in Manitoba, it will have some kind of effect on the meat industry. And what effect that will be and are we prepared to educate the public? Maybe soybean and the pulses are a more healthy food as compared to meat, and what the minister is going to do.

Mr. Eichler: Well, I encourage the member to drill down a little more on pulses. And he's right; it is the year of the pulses, and I took the pulse pledge. I would encourage the member to take the pulse pledge. I know that not everybody can afford to eat beef, pork or chicken, but it is another alternative. And I know in particular with the First Nations, that's a fantastic opportunity for protein. We know that it's a viable option for all families, all Manitoba families, a jolt of protein within their diet.

As far as the impact on meat, I personally don't see it, and we have seen significant growth within the pulse sector and not only for its value as a food but also as a nutrient load for those other crops. It's a natural inhibitor of the process that sets those other crops up in order to ensure that they have a good return on their investment. So it's twofold. It's not only 'environmal'—environmentally well for the soil, but for the consumption of humans, it's a great alternative. And we know there's never enough food for our food banks for those in need. And we've never seen the number higher than it's been at the current rate.

So as a minister of the Department of Agriculture, I'm pleased to see that the year of pulses here and look forward to working with them as we move forward.

Mr. Saran: I think on that I can challenge the minister. I have a—I eat more pulses and soybeans because the country I come from, the majority of people are vegetarians around there, and meat was a luxury once a while. And so meat was not that much available. So, therefore, every in—every day, we are eating these meals, chickpeas and all those legumes and that kind of stuff, so I think maybe, unknowingly, I'm getting healthy food.

* (15:40)

Other question about—I was discussing with one of the persons about soya bean, and he pointed out one disease, is SCN. He said something like that—soya cyst nematode. That's the name of the disease, and is the minister aware of that and what kind of precautions we are taking to stop that disease?

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the question, and I honestly cannot answer that question. I've not been briefed on that, but I will get the answer for him, and I'll put it on the record as the days come forward, but I don't have the information that he's talking about.

Mr. Saran: Okay, I thank the minister. I hope we both can—we'll try to find that answer.

There's another rare disease which he was mentioning that is in the Alberta, but it might—possible it may come to Manitoba, that's known as the canola clubroot disease, and if the minister's aware of that and is there any precautions that we are taking?

Mr. Eichler: The member is right, and if he remembers back, the member from Midland brought

this up over and over again in regards to Manitoba Hydro and the biosecurity that was in place in regards to the trucks not being washed from one farm to another.

But there's more than just Bipole III and this has to do with almost every aspect of biosecurity. As I said on the onset, we take it very seriously. Even a recreational vehicle that comes out from the city and plays in one area of rural Manitoba one week and then goes into another area the following week, they could transfer diseases as well, or while they're in Alberta or Saskatchewan visiting and make a trip back and if those vehicles are not washed properly, we can see significant problems arising.

So the member's right, but we do need to make sure that—and we have very strict protocols in place. We have trained Manitoba Hydro, but we do not have the authority to deal with them on an individual basis, but I can assure the member that we do take biosecurity at the utmost importance in order to ensure that we do everything we can in our power to make sure that we prevent those diseases.

So I'm glad to hear that the member's on side with us and I just wish we would have had that stance prior to the election when they were building Bipole III. We might have not had some of those discussions, but certainly do appreciate the opportunity to talk about it and I assure the member that we do take biosecurity very seriously and protect our farmers because it could wipe out a crop or several crops, and once it's there, it's very hard to get rid of.

Mr. Saran: I think other members also want to ask some questions, and I think the member from Flin Flon.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): My questions are pretty brief, although, hopefully, important. It concerns agriculture and agricultural products and availability in the North in particular. Looking at nutritional aspects for so many people in the North that they can't afford the same kind of food that we enjoy in the south.

Is it the mandate of your department to figure out how to make food affordable for people in the North as well?

Mr. Eichler: And I thank the member for the question, and yes, I can assure the member that it does fall under our department and our Northern Healthy Food Initiative is very important to us. We have 15 northern remote communities that we

provide expertise to in greenhouse planting management, including expertise in running and managing those greenhouses as well, but also in regards to raising chickens, safe food practices, food orchard development, northern development.

And I know the member is very much aware of this; I know I wasn't, but The Pas has the same energy levels that Altona has. So they can grow a large number of products—*[interjection]*—heat units, thank you—so it, there's a hidden jewel up there that needs to be developed more. And I know that the livestock up there, as well, is a key and important ingredient there.

And I know I'm meeting with a Black Angus ranch up there. They grow the cow-calf finish right through and actually send finished product to Toronto as a family group. And so we have the opportunity to see more and more opportunities for growth up there.

And would encourage the member to encourage his communities to contact our department, and if you have specific initiatives that you want to talk about, I'd be happy to have our staff provide you more details on those.

Because it is really important that homegrown food is the best you ever get. And if we have that opportunity to share that knowledge we're certainly prepared to help the member and those communities that take it so seriously.

So, yes, we do have that. And we are very important—it's an important aspect for us to move that forward.

Mr. Lindsey: Thank the minister for that.

I'm certainly aware of the northern food initiative. I believe there was a plan to potentially expand that initiative so that there could be further growth.

Is that still this minister and this government's plan, to expand that program so that there'd be more greenhouses, more small agricultural things in the North?

Mr. Eichler: In regards to that, we're working with the department of indigenous and municipal affairs, as well.

Any time we can have people sustain their livelihood in order to take advantage of the vegetables—I mean, they're fairly simple to grow, as long as you have the tools to do that.

I can tell you that my neighbour does a wonderful job year-round. He's built a little greenhouse porch on the back of his house and he's constantly bringing over vegetables year-round. And we have the technology now that—where we can capitalize on these growth centres. Our restaurants are starting to use them. So we have a fantastic opportunity.

And I would encourage First Nations and particularly with their own communities, those that are under reserve status, that have the opportunity to see some of these growing operations move indoors, because they have the technology for that now. So it's more than just a summer opportunity, it's more of a seasonal opportunity and a year-round opportunity, in order for them to take advantage of that initiative.

So we look forward to working not only with this—through our department but also through municipal government and indigenous affairs as well.

Mr. Lindsey: Recognizing that The Pas, for example, has potentially undertaken a project for a different style of greenhouse growth that shows potential, does your department have any plans or would they consider any plans for expanding those kind of initiatives?

One thing we have in several of our northern towns is abandoned mines that may be able to provide year-round growing opportunities with some entrepreneurship and some government investment to look at doing those kind of things.

Is there any plans to look at those kind of initiatives to hopefully expand it and be able to keep the cost down but grow the industry in the North?

Mr. Eichler: I appreciate the question, because Northern Healthy Foods Initiative has partnered with a number of regional organizations, including Food Matters Manitoba, the Frontier School Division, which I know the member is very much aware of, also Four Arrows regional health authority, which I know you're familiar with as well, and the Northern Association of Community Councils and the Bayline Regional Round Table. These groups come together and they talk about food projects.

* (15:50)

So I would encourage the member to reach out to them and we'll have them part—we have two full-time staff that work just on food initiatives in the North. And, when we have those opportunities to see

the food being grown and developed right in their own community, it is significant, because it's a important part of the diet. So any time we can have them have the opportunity to learn more about it, we're certainly—our department's more than happy to work with them. But that's kind of been the mandate of the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative. So I would encourage the member to encourage those others to reach out and bring those ideas forward because we're more than happy to try and work with them the best that we can.

Mr. Lindsey: I thank the minister for that.

Is there any budget within your department to look at research and development of different types of crops that may be sustainable in northern climates with minimal soil or that mix in well with the trees, the forest and the rest of it? Is there any budget for that kind of research and development?

Mr. Eichler: Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair.

I can share with the member that our department's always looking at ways to expand our products, to get more products grown in Manitoba. And so not only with the University of Manitoba, the University of Brandon, the Assiniboine Community College, we're looking with—working with them as well, and when we're looking at going forward programs, this is where we have buy-in from the federal government as well, where—why we can look at initiatives just like that, and that's part of the process that we're going through tomorrow and on July the 12th, whereby we can—and by the way, some of these people will be at that meeting on July the 12th, which they'll be able to share their views and initiatives. And so I would encourage the critic to share that information with you once he gets back from that consultation process.

But, certainly, as we look at going forward projects, this would be where that would fall under. So, if there's ideas or concerns that we can actually come back with and bring forward new initiatives, because that's really what life is all about recreating those opportunities and new initiatives. We go forward in order to ensure that we're looking at every possible aspect, whether it be on First Nations communities or outside those that, as the member knows, the—one of the mines that was abandoned was used for growing marijuana. I'm not sure how feasible it was. I'm not sure the reasons why it was shut down, but, obviously, there's a cost involved with that as well. But, certainly, we're open to looking at different initiatives as we go forward. But

part of that process would be part of the programming and predictability of that program going forward as well.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Yes, could the minister please tell us what her definition of his—as a minister in terms of enforcing regulations under her department?

Mr. Chairperson: This is for—sorry, member for Wolseley, this is still for the Agriculture. We're going to start at 4 o'clock for Sustainable Development.

Okay, the member for Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes, with the pleasure of the House, I think, for today, today only, we can thank the Minister for Agriculture for his time with us in concurrence. We are done with Agriculture at this point, it's my understanding, and we're ready to move on to the next department.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, thank you, the member from Wolseley.

The honourable member for Wolseley, can you repeat your question, sorry.

Mr. Altemeyer: Certainly.

Could the minister please share with the House her understanding of what her role is as a regulator?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Thank you for that.

Mr. Chairperson: I'll just—are you ready, Minister?

Mrs. Cox: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, I'm just going to reintroduce you again. Sorry about that.

The honourable Minister for Sustainable Development.

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question.

I have been mandated by our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this new government to undertake the role as the Minister of Sustainable Development and mandated to improve our province in several key areas. And I know that we'll be judged on how well we deliver this. The government will work relentlessly to focus on results. And I expect us to be a government of results. We will strive each day to deliver public services to citizens at a reasonable cost to taxpayers. And a fundamental part of our platform commitment to Manitobans is to ensure our province improves in key areas. And we want to ensure that

we're the most improved province in partnership initiatives with business and communities, most improved province in job creation.

And, as the minister, I've been mandated to implement a number of platform commitments, such as the province-wide program based on the Alternative Land Use Services, ALUS model; to help reduce flooding and improve water quality and nutrient management in partnership with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), who was just here, as well as stakeholders including landowners, NGOs, federal and municipal governments; implement watershed-based planning for drainage and water resource; and develop comprehensive harvest co-management strategies in consultation with First Nations, Metis and licensed hunters and anglers, to give local communities a greater voice and ensure long-term sustainability of our wildlife populations.

Also been mandated to curtail unsustainable and unsafe hunting practices, such as night hunting, to keep all Manitobans safe; implement effective and innovative big-game surveys to improve and increase the transparency of population data for managers; develop and implement a credible strategy to secure certification of Manitoba's commercial fisheries; and develop a framework to reconcile the needs of industry and rural and northern communities while continually—continuing to enhance the network of protected areas in Manitoba's natural regions. Also act on the required consultation for the future of land under park reserve status, institute a two-year moratorium on all lease and service fees for cottages found within provincial parks, and work with the federal government and other jurisdictions as we develop a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan.

So I think those are some of the regulations and the rules that I'm responsible for.

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes, it wasn't so much the specific topics, obviously, that I was looking for, Mr. Chair. I was asking the minister what her role as a regulator is. So maybe let me try this again. Which FTE position or positions is it in her department that are responsible for the setting and enforcing of regulations?

Mrs. Cox: Well, there's a number of them. I would say that all of the departments have different areas where they're responsible for enforcing rules and regulations. I think that, quite similar to what we see in all of the departments, there are rules and regulations to be followed, and it's an important part

of the work that our department does within Sustainable Development.

I know that within the Parks department, you know, those people are mandated to provide services and regulate what happens in the area with regard to hunting and fishing and protecting our lands, a very important job. I think that the mandate that I received from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the tasks that I've been given are hugely important to ensure that future generations have the same opportunity as we currently do to enjoy our fish and wildlife and our forests and all of nature. And I know that all Manitobans, you know, appreciate the parks and the just—the amazing, I guess, settings and sights and parks and other nature that we have that we're actually able to visit each and every day in our province. We're fortunate to have that freedom. There's so many trails across our province that offer Manitobans an opportunity to get out and enjoy this province not only in southern Manitoba, but central, east, west, northern Manitoba. It's just a huge, broad array of parks and areas; people can go camping. So that is one department.

* (16:00)

I guess, also with regard to environmental stewardship, they're responsible for many other areas within our department, you know, such as environmental compliance, climate and air change, Green Manitoba, which is the—another department that works with organizations to keep materials out of landfills, works with—and I know that just last week I was actually out at Red River Co-op, and what a great event that was, working with the recyclers to ensure that less waste and containers from drinks, Tetra boxes, things of that nature, less of those go into our landfill sites. And I guess they've set a target of 75 per cent reduction in that, and I think that just based on what they've done, I think that they'll probably achieve those targets, and, you know, good work.

I know that the member opposite is interested and was interested in reducing the amount of waste that goes into landfills, so I think that, you know, that's something that all of us certainly support and we ensure that—or we hope that other gas bars and gas stations also will support that initiative and implement blue boxes, recycling—Recycle Everywhere boxes in their—and their gas stations and their gas bars to reduce the amount of waste that goes in there. I know that quite often what happens is a person gets out of their car and they, instead of

taking that, you know, recycle—that container from their water bottle or their Tetra box, and putting it inside a Recycle Everywhere container, they quite often just put it in the closest depot for garbage and place it right in there and, as a result, our landfills are filling up faster than they really should. So a great initiative, something that I hope that others support and something that I know that we're a leader in, here in Manitoba, with regard to recycling, and I think that Recycle Everywhere could probably serve as an area or a company or a business that could probably connect with a lot of other provinces and teach them the benefit also of keeping those types of items out of the landfills.

So, you know, again, important areas. Course, we do have the other area, which is water stewardship and biodiversity. And also play a very important role in—our water licensing and water, drinking of water and things of that nature. So thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: Could the minister share with us which forms of carbon pricing her department is actively pursuing?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question, and it's a very good question. I know that member opposite and their former government had looked at, from what I've read, you know, some forms of carbon pricing and have met with different countries and different provinces to try and develop and lead that role within their time as government.

And, you know, we've taken a made-in-Manitoba approach. We—I think that the member opposite has probably heard us talk about the fact that we are a government that's inclusive and believes in listening to Manitobans, engaging Manitobans, and that is something that we plan to do with regard to this issue. You know, we're not going to jump into anything. We're a new government. You know, I think, eight weeks in this ministry, for me, we want to make sure we get it right.

We want to make sure that whatever we do is done in consultation. And, as I said before, I think it's important to consult with Manitobans. I know that when we were in Estimates last week, I did indicate the importance of talking to Manitobans, because sometimes the members opposite failed to do that. And as a result, you know, the—April 19th, the election, I think, was a good indication of, you know, when someone or a government or something makes decisions without those consultations. And as I've said to the member opposite previously, you know,

the consequences of what happened on April 19th may have been, you know, well, the—responsible—partially not listening and consulting with Manitobans caused that consequence on April 19th.

So I think that, as I said, we want to have a made-in-Manitoba approach. There's many forms of carbon pricing, as the member opposite is quite aware of, and, you know, we'll consult with Manitobans. We'll listen to them, and we'll continue on that path. I think that eight weeks in, I think it's a little, you know, unusual for a government to be making huge decisions without talking to other individuals and other Manitobans. So, you know, we'll get it right and we'll talk to Manitobans. We'll engage stakeholders.

And there are many stakeholders that are available for us to talk and discuss with. I know the international institute of sustainable development just last week—I know the member opposite was there. And we did have an opportunity to talk to Scott, and I know that that group and those scientists and all of them are very keen to work with government. And I know that they've worked with the government opposite. And we will seek their information and their knowledge on any decisions that we make, just as we will do that with stakeholders within the province and also talk to Manitobans, most importantly, on that issue. I think that's something that we've always said we're going to be open, inclusive and consult. And, like I said, I think the consultation process has to be worked out yet, and we will work it out. And based on a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan, part of the carbon pricing or whatever source we plan or whatever form, we plan will be part of those discussions.

So, again, I look forward to having those discussions with Manitobans and opening up that consultation process. And I thank you so much for that question.

Mr. Altemeyer: The minister referenced she's been doing some reading. I wonder if one of the things she's read is the climate change plan our government had in place prior to the election. I'll give her a hint: There were three different forms of carbon pricing that we were examining. Could the minister list those for us, just so I know that she understands what I'm talking about when I ask subsequent questions?

Mrs. Cox: Thanks for that question. I know that on April 19th, Manitobans did vote and elect a new government, and so I think that they are interested in hearing what our plans are and moving forward with

a made-in-Manitoba solution. So, you know, while I appreciate what the minister has said, and, yes, I've, you know, been doing some of that information reading and things like that, I think that's what's really important is our plan for Manitobans and, you know, what we plan to do and move forward with regard to climate change. It's something that's important, and it deserves a lot of thought, and that's something that this government does plan to do. I think that we will—as I said, we will use the resources that are available to us: the scientists and the other individuals, people from Nature Conservancy, all sorts of people from IISD, again, as I said before. And we're going to work on a plan that is reflective of what Manitobans have told us.

* (16:10)

So, while I appreciate, you know, the member's question, I think the question really is that—or the answer really is that we're not looking backward; we're looking forward. And, you know, we plan to implement a climate action plan that reflects what Manitobans are looking for and reflects the recent election that Manitobans told us, quite clear and strong, that they wanted a change in government. They wanted a new government, and they wanted a government that would listen and be inclusive and listen. And, as I said before to the member opposite, I think listening is an important thing to do. So many times we've seen the members across the way not give Manitobans the opportunity to listen and consult and be part of those discussions, so, you know, as we move forward, we will allow Manitobans to be part of that process. Climate change is something that is so important, and I appreciate the member opposite asking that important question. And, as I said, we will look forward to those discussions and to having an action plan, I guess, developed in consultation with Manitobans. I think that's first and foremost; we want to make sure that we do our part. We will do our part. We've talked to—I've talked to Minister McKenna a number of times, and I think we need to talk to other ministers responsible for the environment, and I know that we are planning to do that as well in the very near future.

So we'll have those discussions. We'll have an opportunity to consult and discuss with stakeholders and move forward from those—that plan.

Thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: There is a line, Mr. Chair, between deliberately burning time in Estimates and bald-faced incompetence. The minister is getting

dangerously close to the latter option. It is not at all acceptable that a minister of the Crown charged with addressing climate change and a host of other extremely important issues is either unable or unwilling to answer a very simple question.

My question, to be clear, was not for the minister to present a comprehensive climate change plan right now. My question wasn't even what general direction or targets is she looking at. I asked her to list three broad approaches already in place around the world that different jurisdictions are using to reduce their climate emissions. She either couldn't or didn't answer.

I'll give her another chance. Name at least three ways she and her government could reduce carbon emissions in Manitoba by putting a price on it in different ways.

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question, and I don't think that our government by as—in any means, shape or form is incompetent. And I think that we only have to look at some of the targets that the members opposite failed to achieve, within their 17 years in government, and, you know, it's reflective of, as I said before, the April 19th vote.

There are many forms of carbon pricing, and we will be exploring those forms. I think that, you know, there's, well, there's, you know, strong—there's strong evidence that—that climate change is something that we have to deal with and there's different types of carbon pricing. You know, there's cap and trade, there's carbon pricing, just taxing, and there's other prices which is—as in Saskatchewan, where they're actually containing their carbon.

So, you know, there's lots of different forms available, and whether or not you want to sequester carbon—I know that the former government did do that, in some shape or form, had had discussions with regard to cap and trade, and, I guess, initiated that. But, you know, there's so many different carbon pricing forms that this government is not going to jump into something unilaterally and not going to jump into something without giving Manitobans the opportunity to be part of those discussions.

So, you know, as we move forward, we will give Manitobans an opportunity to talk about them, and we will consult. So thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Before I recognize the member, I would like to take a moment to caution the honourable members on their language in the committee today.

And I will continue with the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

Mr. Altemeyer: Quick point of clarification, Mr. Chair.

Are BlackBerrys allowed to be used during concurrence?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, in silent mode.

Mr. Altemeyer: The reason I ask about BlackBerrys or phones or whatever, it's quite clear the minister was reading something that her staff up above had sent to her, because she didn't know the different ways to price carbon until she got that message.

The third option, in addition to a carbon price put on there by carbon taxing or through cap and trade, the third option, which we put in a public document, was the concept of carbon stewardship.

So I'm wondering if the minister, or maybe her staff, if they can type fast enough, might be able to share with us the pros and cons of each of those three approaches as applied to Manitoba.

Mrs. Cox: Carbon pricing is a tool that helps reduce greenhouse gases emissions while creating green jobs, allowing our economy to prosper and helping to reduce pollution.

Carbon pricing, by virtue of putting a price on carbon emissions, ensures that the polluter pays, while rewarding those who adopt cleaner technologies. Carbon pricing will be a cornerstone of Manitoba's new made-in-Manitoba climate action plan. And in partnership with Manitoba Finance, the department will review various options for pricing carbon that take into consideration the unique nature of our economy, potential competitiveness issues and impacts on families. This analysis will also consider how revenues would be managed and used. Both British Columbia and Alberta have implemented a carbon-pricing mechanism in the form of carbon tax.

And there is cap and trade, another carbon-pricing mechanism that sees the government set the overall level of carbon emissions and issues enough permits to meet these levels. Emitters who purchase the permits may use them to emit or they may sell them to other emitters. For example, if a company invests in more efficient technologies, they may be able to sell their excess permits and reinvest the proceeds in further clean technologies. Cap and trade allows market forces to determine the cost of emitting carbon and gives companies the flexibility to innovate. The ability to trade permits in a

cap-and-trade system ensures emission reductions occur at the lowest possible cost.

Manitoba has signed a memorandum of understanding with Ontario and Quebec to collaborate on the climate efforts, including joining the provinces' cap-and-trade systems under the Western Climate Initiative carbon market.

Saskatchewan has pursued a capture carbon and storage approach, where carbon emissions from industry are directly captured and processed into liquid from which they can be stored underground. And the Boundary Dam Power Station is the world's first commercial-scale, coal-fired power plant equipped with carbon capture and storage technology and produces 110 megawatts of electricity and can reduce carbon emissions by 1 million tons per year.

Saskatchewan's CCS project injects carbon dioxide underground, which can also serve to enhance the amount of oil and gas recovered from wells. As such, CCS has been criticized for being costly and of lesser environmental value. Saskatchewan has the highest per capita emissions in Canada and is the fourth largest emitter.

I guess there's building the economy. Manitoba can benefit from opportunities presented by climate change by investing in a more resilient, sustainable economy, high-quality jobs and healthy environment.

We'll work with the federal government and other jurisdictions to implement carbon-pricing mechanisms that reinvest the revenues in Manitoba to stimulate innovation and clean energy, businesses and jobs.

* (16:20)

And we will position Manitoba to take advantage of opportunities as the world transitions to more clean energy and a low-carbon economy. We will reduce emissions from commercial building codes and other measures, putting government operations and infrastructure on a path to carbon neutrality. And we will encourage the adoption of fuel-saving technologies and measures within the transportation sector. Thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: Does Manitoba have a carbon tax?

Mrs. Cox: I believe that the former government had initiated cap and trade, and I'm not quite sure whether or not that worked out too well for you because I know that I don't think the former government was able to meet their target.

So we want to make sure that we do our part and get it right. We want to make sure that, as we've said previously in our plan during the election, that we will do carbon pricing that fosters emissions reduction, we keep investment capital here and stimulate new innovation in clean energy businesses and jobs. We want to make sure that land use and conservation measures that sequester carbon and foster adaptation to climate change will reduce emissions from commercial buildings through building codes and other measures, putting government operations and infrastructure on a road to carbon neutrality. And we will encourage the adoption of fuel-saving technology and measures within the transportation sector.

So I would say to the member opposite that we are going to do a good job on developing a climate action plan and determining what our form of carbon pricing will look like. It is different within our provinces across the nation, and it is different within different countries. So I think we need to develop a carbon pricing plan that listens to what Manitobans have told us. And, as I said to the government—or to the member opposite, we do believe in listening to Manitobans, and we will continue to do that well into the future. Thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: Has the minister informed industries and stakeholders associated with the growing biomass industry in Manitoba that she has apparently cancelled their funding source?

Mrs. Cox: I—thank you for that question.

As a new government, I'm not aware of any funding cancellation that we've done, but we do plan to make things improved within this province. As I said, we're going to work with the federal government and other jurisdictions to develop a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan. I think what's important is the fact that we don't make unilateral changes or unilateral decisions on this side of the House. We listen and we consult, and we will continue to do that with Manitobans.

I know that the minister opposite had provided me with a document that he tabled that indicated that we had changed the date for the City of Winnipeg and the plans for the licensing when, in fact, it was something that did not really, in fact, support that. So I'm not quite sure what the minister—or the member opposite is indicating by that comment that he made, but I'm not aware of any cancellation of funding that we have done.

I mean I've said clearly that, you know, we plan to listen to Manitobans. We plan to consult with Manitobans, and we will do that. You know, we've seen a 2.5 per cent increase in this department, unlike the member opposite; their government, I think, over a four-year period, there was an \$18-million decrease in funding to the department. So, you know, we know that was tough on the department; it was difficult and there were some real pressure points there. And we've made it clear that we support the environment, we support this department, and we have, as I said, increased funding for the Department of Sustainable Development.

We want to make sure that Manitobans can enjoy clean water, the environment, forest—the trees, all of those things that are so fondly welcomed and enjoyed by Manitobans and families and people all across this province. And that's something that we plan to do. With that 2.5 per cent increase that we did add to the budget for this department, we can move forward and we can ensure that we do protect important programs such as dealing with zebra mussels and invasive species, a huge investment that we've made into that area to make sure that we do protect Manitoba's waters.

And it's unfortunate that under the former government we did see invasive species move up, zebra mussels, into our waterways. And, if we perhaps would have acted a little quicker and faster, we could have reduced that movement into the lakes and prevented it from moving further.

But anyways, we plan to move forward with this department and ensure that it's well funded.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, allow me to spell this out for the minister's benefit. If she can find the briefing note in her book related to the coal tax in Manitoba, she might find out that, in fact, we already do have a carbon tax in Manitoba. It is applied to the burning of coal. And wouldn't you know it, all the revenues from that program go to support green energy such as the biomass industry?

Now that the minister knows it exists, does that sound like the kind of thing she wants to cancel or keep?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that, member opposite.

I believe that I did say about the carbon and—or I should say the coal was one of your plans, and, you know, as we move forward, as I said, Manitobans have said clearly that they want—they elected a new government because they want change. And they

don't want the same-old, same-old as they've seen with the—in the last 17 years.

So we plan to consult. I know that word is something that, as I said before, often gets a lot of jeers and a few chuckles and laughs, because that is what we believe in doing. We believe in being inclusive and listening to Manitobans and giving them the opportunity to be part of these discussions and these very important discussions that we're going to have regarding climate change.

And I think as we move forward we're going to talk to Manitobans, listen to them, and the stakeholders, as well, and give them the opportunity to participate in this made-in-Manitoba plan. That's what we're about. We're about listening, consulting, talking and changing. We don't want to be—we are definitely not the same government as the member opposite was involved 'winth' for the last 17 years.

That's why Manitobans voted a new government. They want change. They want to see some positive changes within our government. And we will do that for Manitobans. We will give them the opportunities to participate and to discuss and to be part of those discussions.

So thank you so much for that question. And I think Manitobans appreciate the fact that we are going to give them strong representation and allow them the opportunity to discuss and participate in these aspects and our made-in-Manitoba climate action plan.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Miigwech for that.

I'd like to ask the minister, I know that the minister, in her narrative, keeps trying to indicate that members on this side don't take the environment and climate change seriously, but I can assure the minister that we fully understand the particular moment that we are at right now in our history. And it's not something to be trifled with.

You know, we're talking about our children and our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren's future. And so, I mean, I think that, honestly, it's disheartening to see—to hear some of the answers coming from the minister.

* (16:30)

In respect of your wanting to consult with Manitobans, can you please provide us with a list of everyone that you're going to be consulting with? And, actually, I know that sounds funny to members,

but, I mean, if you keep—if the minister keeps referring to who she's going to be consulting with, I don't think it's an unreasonable question to ask who she will be consulting on on such a serious and critical matter.

As well, I'd like to ask the minister as well in respect of her strategy and her time frame in executing all of those consultations.

Miigwech.

Mr. Chairperson: Before we—I—let the minister answer that question, if all the questions can be directed to the Chairman. Okay.

Mrs. Cox: Thank you to the member opposite. I concur with you a hundred per cent that, you know, our environment and our province, our wildlife, our fisheries, our forests are no laughing matter. And that's why this is something that we take very seriously. I've said many times, you know, to the members opposite that this is something that is—you don't get a second chance with. And we want to make sure we do it right. And that's why now that we have the opportunity to develop a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan, we will make sure that we do it right. And, as the member said, we will consult.

Give you the names? I mean, I guess I could start going through maybe a list of individuals who will be emailing us, consulting, discussing. I don't know how broad that is. I've had individuals who have approached me and very interested in being part of those discussions. I don't know how much time or paper we could use or emails by providing you with a list, but I can tell you that once we've had that opportunity and once we develop those—that strategy for climate change, you will have an opportunity to be part of it, and all of the members across the room will have the opportunity. All of your constituents will have the opportunity to do that, just like all of Manitoba taxpayers will have the opportunity to participate.

So it's not something that we take lightly—definitely not. It's a task that I've been given by the Premier (Mr. Pallister), and it's one that's of utmost important—I can—importance. I can say that. I am a big proponent, just as the members opposite are, of ensuring that our province is taken care of and all of our resources are taken care of and that it's not something that I've taken lightly, and I never have.

So I agree, with respect, and I agree with the fact that this area is one of great importance. I mean, the member opposite may have children. I have children,

grandchildren. And I want to make sure that we have the opportunity to pass on the beauty of this province and ensure that we have an environment that allows our next generations to enjoy everything that we currently do.

With regard, again, to a list, I mean, a list could be huge. It could be a—you know, people who are from the phone book and want to, you know, start phoning and telling us what their decisions are or what their thoughts are with regard to a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan.

But I can tell you that we will consult, and we will do that. And once individuals—once we've determined the process, I'd be happy to share that with the members opposite and have them partake in those discussions. And, like I said, all of the—all Manitobans, regardless of your, you know, your political stripe, will be involved and have the opportunity to talk and discuss and provide those—their thoughts and their feelings about how they feel that we should address climate change and different forms of carbon pricing.

So I would welcome the opportunity to hear from your constituents and all constituents and all Manitobans on this very important issue as we move forward. Thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: Is the carbon pricing scheme going to be applied to all sectors?

Mrs. Cox: Would you repeat the question?

Mr. Altemeyer: Certainly. Is the carbon pricing scheme going to be applied to all sectors?

Mrs. Cox: Well, I think that, as I said, you know, it's the early, early stages, eight weeks into government and—a new government and a government that believes in listening to Manitobans, so I would be remiss if I started saying that, you know, we were going to do this or that. I think that we need to consult and we need to talk, and we need to talk to stakeholders.

I know that the member opposite last year—or just last week actually indicated that we had a great staff, and I agree with him. We have such wonderful staff who are there and available to ensure that they're there to help us and assist us as we move forward with this plan. And we will develop a strategy. We will develop a method of engaging Manitobans and listening and talking to them.

So I mean all sectors will be listened to and all stakeholders will be listened to. It's not an area that

we just believe in listening to one group of businesses or industry or agriculture; we're inclusive and we will do that. It's something I've been mandated to do, and I will continue to ensure that all Manitobans and all sectors have the opportunity to participate in this process. It's a process that requires a lot of listening; it requires a lot of discussion.

But it's a worthwhile process because we want to make sure that we get it right, and I think that's what Manitobans expect from this government. They expect us to do the right thing. That's why on April 19th we had a change, and I think Manitobans are looking forward to that change and looking forward to having the opportunity to participate in discussions and participate in decision making that we make within our term, our first eight weeks as government. And we will move forward, and we will give an opportunity to all Manitobans to participate in these discussions.

So I thank the member opposite for that question, and, as I said, at this point in time we will engage all sectors, all Manitobans, stakeholders, the experts as well, and in ensuring that we have a made-in-Manitoba plan.

Mr. Altemeyer: Speaking of the excellent staff in her department, I—in Estimates last week I asked a question: By what year does the world need to achieve carbon neutrality to have a half-decent shot of limiting worldwide average temperature rise to 2°C? I'm wondering if the minister remembers what the answer was that her staff gave her to that question.

Mrs. Cox: Well, I do remember that question and the answer but, as I said, I think that, you know, we have professionals, we have experts, we have people from IISD who are willing and able and want to discuss with us all of those questions, discuss with us and work together on a made-in-Manitoba climate action plan. I think that protecting and preserving our natural resources is important, and that plan will ensure that we get it right for future generations.

We're not a government that maybe doesn't believe in engaging Manitobans; we do believe in engaging Manitobans. I know that we want to make sure that we get it right, and, like most departments, we have experts. We have people that we sometimes listen to, rely on for their suggestions, just like we do with IISD, and look forward to talking to those experts and discussing.

* (16:40)

I think what's important is the issue at hand, and the issue that we need to address it and do our part, and we will do our part and we will ensure that we address climate change and that we have those discussions with Manitobans and with those key stakeholders.

As I said, just today I met with people from many different areas, from people up North and from Churchill and discussions there, people from Nature Conservancy who are also, you know, quite excited to work with this new government and have discussions that could lead to a new made-in-Manitoba climate action plan.

So, you know, this is not something that we plan to do alone. It's not something that we plan to do unilaterally without holding those discussions, as I've said to the member opposite and the government—or the former government. It's something that we plan to do in consultation and that is what we will do together with Manitobans, and I think that they mandated us. On April 19th they gave us that mandate and that's what we will continue to do, is ensure that whatever decisions are made, are made together with Manitobans and not unilaterally as some decisions were made previous with other governments.

So I thank you again for that question, and we will move forward. We will do our part.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, I honestly thought the minister was just burning time so she wouldn't have to face as many questions from us, but she actually didn't provide an answer. So I'll—I mean, maybe she and her staff need another five minutes to look up an answer she was already given last week by her very own staff.

By what year does the world have to become carbon-neutral to have a shot at limiting global average temperature rise to 2°C? If you don't get the answer to that one right, your climate change plan is probably not going to be appropriate. I think it's a fair question.

Mrs. Cox: Thanks again for that question.

You know, I think that, as I've answered before, Manitobans gave new government a very clear and—

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

The minister has an answer here. Go ahead, Minister.

Mrs. Cox: Thank you.

They gave us a clear mandate and we will work together to ensure that there is a climate action plan that works for Manitoba, and we've—we're going to develop that plan and we're going to ensure that Manitobans are part of that plan, as I've said many times before.

It's not something that we can do without consulting with Manitobans and I know that, as I said before, Scott Vaughan and those people in—of that knowledge and stature, those scientists look forward to working with us as we develop a plan.

So it's not just about, perhaps, answering the question from the member opposite, but it's about achieving targets once we develop that plan, and we want to make sure that we're able to achieve those targets and reduce our emissions based on the plan that we've developed.

So we will work hard. We will ensure that Manitobans are part of it whether or not whatever form of carbon pricing we determine in consultation with Manitobans. That will be part of our discussions that we have as we move forward.

As I said, I think it's important to set goals and set targets that we can achieve, and to set a target and not meet those targets makes no sense. I know that members opposite have had some targets that weren't achieved and not only in this department, but in other departments as well. So, you know, when you look at some of our wait times in some of the different departments, and you look at where we stand with regard to other areas, and education, where former government was—had 17 years to get it right.

We're just new into this whole process, and eight weeks in, I think we want to make sure that we do get it right. It's too important an issue and too important a department to not give careful consideration to. So we will do that. We will do our due diligence in ensuring that whatever plan we do determine, whatever form of carbon pricing we determine, will be done in consultation with Manitobans. And I think that's what Manitobans expect. I think that's why they elected a new government and we will move forward with that with Manitobans and together in consultation with them.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, if this was actually a game show, which seems to be what the minister is treating climate change like, her time would have just run out after 10 minutes. The answer her staff shared and which is widely understood in the international community is 2030 is the year. The fact that she

didn't know that is stunning, so I'm going to reflect on that for a bit. I cede the floor to my hard-working colleague here from Fort Garry-Riverview for a bit.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The minister has made a great deal out of consultation in approving the environmental licence to—regarding rapid transit in the Parker wetlands.

Did she talk with the Parker wetlands community about that particular issue?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question. The work that was done there was, I guess, a licence that was originally issued from the environmental licence which was brought forward to the government—former government opposite, and I know that that was something that was reviewed by the task force and discussed, and I think that the members opposite are quite aware of that information and what was—what—Manitobans did, in fact, bring forward some concerns and they also listened to those concerns from Manitobans just as, I guess, the environment commission did, and, you know, we did, in fact, listen to those concerns, and I know that moving forward with the Harrow project, most of that work has already been done with the transmission lines, and so the one individual who appealed that Harrow road decision with the relocation of the hydro lines, that—most of the work has been done and so, as a result of the department, I know, thought that there was no impact on the—on the one strain of plant life that was there, and therefore we did approve that licence.

Mr. Allum: Well, I appreciate that. The minister knows, or should know, it didn't go to any environment commission particularly, but the question wasn't around the ruling that she made. That's within her purview. She spent the afternoon, the last hour and change, talking about her desire to consult and speak to every single Manitoban, and so the question was has she spoken to the Parker Wetlands Conservation Committee before making her decision, and I'm hearing that she didn't.

Will she tell me now, did she talk to those folks or not?

* (16:50)

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question.

As I said before, I know that the technical advisory committee did review the appeal, and also I think that—or I know that in consultation with discussions with our department, it was determined

that that one type of plant life did not—it did not impact, actually, that one type of plant life that was mentioned within that appeal. And so, based on that, we did decide to dismiss that appeal and move forward.

As I said, the majority of the work had already been done with regard to relocating the transmission lines, and we do believe in listening to Manitobans and giving Manitobans the opportunity to participate in those discussions. So, you know, we did have those discussions. I know that they did listen to Manitobans, and I know that they did listen to the one individual who did file that appeal and, unfortunately, that individual is passed on recently. And I am saddened to hear that, most definitely, and, you know, I think that, moving forward, we did, in fact, listen. We consulted and had the opportunity to participate that individual in his concern with regard to his appeal.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Chairperson: Before we continue, I just want to acknowledge in the gallery pages Julia Anastasia [*phonetic*] and Marissa Swirl [*phonetic*]. Welcome.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, we'll continue with the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

Mr. Altemeyer: Could the minister perhaps share with us her understanding of the largest sources of climate emissions in Manitoba by sector?

Mrs. Cox: Well, I mean, I think that member opposite—I thank him for that question.

Of course, there's many sectors that lead in that field, and I would suppose that, of course, transportation is a huge one. Coal plants, things of that nature; agriculture, even animals, cows, things of that nature, also emit a lot of methane and things like that and—but not carbon.

Anyways, so those are a few of the sectors that contribute to it. You know, as well, I would say that there's many other sectors that contribute, and we will ensure that we include all of those individuals and those sectors in those discussions that we have regarding climate change. I think that it's a lot about where we move forward and where we go and where we ensure that we have those discussions with those sectors.

I know that the members opposite did not always meet their targets, and we want to make sure that we

do meet our targets and that we include all of those different sectors in those discussions. So as—moving forward, we will do that. We will talk to them. We will include them, and we will, you know, ensure that we can have, maybe, a greener plan as well, for Manitoba and try and reduce the amount of carbon and greenhouse gases and all of that within our province of Manitoba to make it greener and make it better and make it more sustainable for Manitobans now and Manitobans well into the future and future generations. So thank you for that question.

Mr. Altemeyer: All right, I'll give her a hint. Animals is not a sector. Could the minister name the top three sources by sector of climate emissions in Manitoba?

Mrs. Cox: I think that, moving forward—I appreciate the question from the minister. And, as I said, we have resources available to assist us with all of that development and that process as we move forward.

There's so many different components of it that I think that we need to have those discussions. We need to listen to Manitobans. We need to have discussions, as I said, with those sectors. And we will do that. I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

And, seven weeks in, I think that we will make sure that we have a very broad and open discussion with Manitobans, with those sectors, with the transportation sector, with the other sectors that contribute. And we will make sure that Manitobans have the opportunity to participate in that, and all stakeholders. As you had said before, we have wonderful staff, and we have people that are the experts. And we will consult with those experts and we will talk with those experts and ensure that we have the opportunity to get it right. Thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: There's probably a pie chart in the minister's briefing book which will show her the answer to my question, but if she doesn't know the answer, I'll let her do the research to come up with that.

Let's just keep the questions broad and general and simple, though. Will the minister be applying her carbon scheme to the largest sources of emissions or the smallest sources?

Mrs. Cox: Well, I think, as I said many times earlier, that's, you know, something that we need to develop a process for and ensure that, you know, we give Manitobans an opportunity to develop a made-in-Manitoba plan and discuss that plan with

Manitobans. You know that there's many forms of carbon pricing. There's many forms across Canada in the provinces. They—many of them are different and some are the same. But we will have those discussions, and that is something that we plan to work on as we move forward in government.

Eight weeks in, we plan to have those discussions. We plan to engage Manitobans, and I think that that is all up for discussion.

I don't know that the members opposite, you know, how long it took them to develop their plan. I know that they went over and they had those discussions in Paris and took their group of members, including the premier opposite—or the former premier—to Paris and had those discussions. And we will also be involved in discussions with other countries, with our country, with Minister McKenna, and ensure that we get it right.

We don't want to maybe rush into something and then not meet our targets. We want to ensure that we are able to meet our targets. And that is something that we will do in consultation with Manitobans and in consultation with those organizations who are the experts and those individuals who have that scientific knowledge much more than many of us do, than the average person, and ensure that we do get it right.

So I look forward to having those discussions in the future, and I look forward to continuing to allow Manitobans the opportunity to participate, just as we will allow the members opposite the opportunity to participate in all of those discussions. I think that we will be open and transparent and willing to discuss that with members opposite.

So thank you so much for that question.

House Business

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Chairman, on House business, we've

concluded our questions on this list of ministers for the day. And tomorrow we'll be starting on the new list that I tabled earlier, which is Infrastructure, Crown corporations, Indigenous and Municipal Relations, and Sustainable Development, in no particular order at this point.

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

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

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

CORRIGENDA

On June 23, 2016, page 1398, first column, tenth paragraph, should have read:

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, it's very interesting to hear that from the minister. There are headlines in local media with titles such as, no completion date in the pipe for North End sewage treatment plant upgrades. So there certainly used to be deadlines in place, put in place by our government. We are now getting reports that those have been removed.

On June 23, 2016, page 1398, second column, sixth paragraph, should have read:

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes, well, this very same minister is quoted in the article written by Bartley Kives from CBC News as saying that her government is now open to a different approach on this project, and it will be interesting to see what comes out of this. I'm sure the reporter will have some questions for the minister.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 27, 2016

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